



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Liverpool Community College

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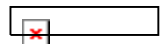
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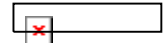
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Basic information about the college

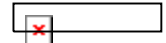


Name of college:	Liverpool Community College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Wally Brown
Address of college:	Clarence Street Centre Clarence Street Liverpool L3 5TP
Telephone number:	0151 252 4891
Fax number:	0151 252 4886
Chair of governors:	Gideon Ben-Tovim
Unique reference number:	130487
Name of reporting inspector:	Tony Davis
Dates of inspection:	7-11 February 2005

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Liverpool Community College is a large general further education (FE) college with provision on six sites in and around Liverpool city centre. Of the 11 Greater Merseyside colleges, seven are general FE colleges and four are sixth form colleges. The college is the only FE college in Liverpool and serves a population of approximately 439,500 of whom 5.7% are from minority ethnic backgrounds, according to the 2001 census, compared with 5.6% nationally. The college is entering the final stage of a major rebuild and refurbishment of its premises. Community-based education is provided in 19 community learning and drop-in study centres and in over 50 further venues around the city and surrounding area.

In 2003/04, the college enrolled 4,481 students aged 16 to 18, and 20,762 aged 19 or over. Some 67% of the full-time equivalent students were aged 19 or over, and 13% of all students were from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds. Some 76% of students studied part time, with the remaining 24% studying full time. The college also provides a small amount of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded work-based learning and post level 3 provision.

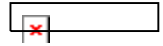
In 2003, the proportion of school leavers in Liverpool who achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 44.6%, compared with the national average of 53.7%. Individual school results vary significantly from some schools where over 90% of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at grade C or above, to around 33% of the city's schools where this same rate was below 25%. These pass rates broadly follow the levels of local economic deprivation, with 50% of the population of Greater Merseyside aged 16 to 59 living in wards identified in the top 10% of the most deprived in England. Some 79% of the college's students are from widening-participation postcodes. According to the Basic Skill Agency, 29.3% and 32.3% of the people in Liverpool aged 16 to 60 have poor literacy and numeracy skills, respectively, against a national average of 24% for both.

The college works closely with a number of the other local colleges and training providers. It has its own centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in media and journalism production technology. It also leads on construction crafts and professional trades in collaboration with Knowsley Community College and Wirral Metropolitan College and works in partnership with St. Helen's College on the building services CoVE, with Knowsley Community College on the event and performance technical management and production CoVE, and with Hugh Baird College on the tourism and hospitality CoVE. For entry-to-employment (E2E) students, the college subcontracts much of the provision to four training providers.

The senior management team is made up of the principal, three vice-principals, responsible for the curriculum, resource management and corporate services, two assistant principals, responsible for resource management and curriculum, the director of learner services and the director of finance. Ten heads of faculty and the director of learner services manage the curriculum and report directly to the curriculum vice-principal. The college has 502 full-time and 160 part-time teaching staff, and 455 support staff.

The college's mission is 'to provide high quality education and training which is inclusive and matches the needs of our diverse students and the economy'.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of provision to be outstanding in four of the curriculum areas inspected and good in six. One curriculum area and the two areas of work-based learning were judged to be satisfactory. Standards of teaching and learning are mainly good or better. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- good and improving pass rates

- consistently good teaching across the college

- students progress well relative to their prior attainment

- extensive range of courses meeting the needs of the local community

- outstanding implementation of the Skills for Life agenda

- outstanding approach to social inclusion and widening participation

- outstanding support for students

- very good literacy, numeracy and language support for students across the college

- strong strategic leadership

- effective quality assurance

- good use of accurate data

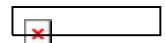
- strong financial management.

What should be improved

- poor student punctuality and attendance in some areas of learning
- the proportion of outstanding teaching
- apprenticeship pass rates
- retention rates on some advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) courses
- pass rates at level 4
- the adequacy of some teaching accommodation
- the use of information and learning technology (ILT).

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



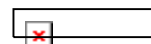
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
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Construction	Good. Pass and retention rates are high . Much teaching is good and students' progress is monitored well. Key skills are managed effectively and made vocationally relevant. Accommodation for building services courses is very good, however, workshop facilities are inadequate for the trowel trades and unsatisfactory for carpentry and joinery.
Engineering	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Retention and pass rates on most courses are good, but there has been poor framework achievement for apprentices. Students' progress is closely monitored and effective action is taken to help them progress well. There is a wide range of programmes and progression opportunities and good partnerships with external agencies and employers. Resources are very good, with some excellent facilities in electronics and motor vehicle engineering, however, some practical lessons are overcrowded. Students' punctuality and attendance are poor in many lessons.
Business administration	Good. Pass rates are high on level 2 programmes. Much of the teaching is good and promotes current business practice. Students receive good support and guidance and the curriculum is managed well. Teaching facilities at the Bankfield site are poor. Pass rates are poor and declining on national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 3 accounting and AS-level business courses.
Information and communications technology	Good. Pass rates are high on level 2 courses. Much teaching is good and motivates students. The curriculum is managed well and assessment practices are good. The extensive range of courses meets the needs of the community. Some teaching accommodation at the main campus is unsatisfactory and there is insufficient use of ILT in lessons. Vocational students have insufficient opportunities to experience current industrial practice.
Hospitality	Good. The individual coaching in practical lessons is good and achievement of vocational skills and qualifications is also good. Resources are very good and there are excellent partnerships to promote learning with schools and employers. Students receive good academic and pastoral support and the curriculum is managed well. However, there are low and declining retention rates on many NVQ programmes.
Health and childcare	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learners is satisfactory . Pass and retention rates are high on some courses. Progression into employment and higher education (HE) is good. Teachers plan and manage teaching effectively to meet individual students' needs. Students receive good learning and personal support and key skills provision has been developed well. However, retention rates on advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses are declining and there has been slow progress towards the achievement of frameworks by work-based learners.
Visual and performing arts and media	Outstanding. Achievement of vocational skills and qualifications is excellent and teaching is very good. The specialist equipment in media, music technology, journalism and technical theatre is excellent and curriculum management is good. The college has particularly strong links with industry and the local community in media and journalism and a wide range of programmes and progression opportunities from level 1 to level 4. Some accommodation is unsatisfactory and students arriving late disrupt too many lessons.
English and humanities	Outstanding. Teaching and learning are excellent, and the highly effective assessment practices help students to progress well relative to their past achievement. Students develop good independent

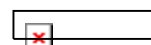
	learning skills and receive very good support from their teachers. The curriculum is managed well and the wide range of courses meet the needs of individual students well. Retention rates on some level 3 courses for adults are poor.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Outstanding. Students gain confidence and achieve high levels of literacy, numeracy and language skills . They progress very well within both Skills for Life programmes and vocational programmes. All teaching is good and some is excellent. Teachers are well qualified to implement the Skills for Life agenda and effectively support students across the college. Partnership work is outstanding and leadership and curriculum management are excellent.
Entry-to-employment	Satisfactory. The E2E programmes are well designed and students develop good personal and practical skills in well-resourced practical workshops and off-site activities. Students receive very good individual support and develop good literacy and numeracy skills. Some lessons lack challenge and there are too few opportunities for work placements. Although the college supports its partners well, there are weak practices at one large subcontractor.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Outstanding. Leadership and curriculum management are very good. Very good teaching meets the individual needs of the students. Initial assessment is excellent and the highly effective support helps students to achieve their individual learning plans. Outstanding partnerships with external agencies provide excellent opportunities for students to enhance their learning experiences. There is insufficient use of ILT.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are outstanding. Pass rates for students at levels 1 and 2 have risen to above the national averages. Retention rates for adult students remain significantly above the national average and the quality of teaching and learning have been improved to above the national average. The college has successfully implemented three phases of a five-phase £40 million accommodation strategy. Curriculum management is very good. Communication across the college and within faculties is excellent. Governance is strong. The governors play a key role in the development of the strategic objectives. Strategic planning is excellent and strongly focused on social inclusion. Governors monitor the quality of provision effectively. Quality assurance leads to improvements. Inspectors agreed with many of the findings and grades in the self-assessment report. Staff development meets the needs of staff and the college's strategic priorities. The college promotes equal opportunities and access to education for students from under-represented groups actively. The college provides good value for money.

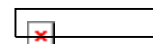
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. Some 79% of students come from widening participation postcodes. Providing learning opportunities for these students is a high strategic priority for the college. The college has substantially expanded the number of

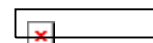
a 62% increase in students with profound disabilities in the last three years. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is over double that of the local population. Provision for literacy and numeracy and for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. Student support has been exceptionally well focused on attracting and retaining students who have not normally entered FE. The college has played a leading role in local partnerships to promote regeneration. It has responded effectively to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) legislation.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is outstanding. Staff recognise the value of good student support, which is provided sensitively and unobtrusively. The range of services available is excellent. Students receive very good pre-course advice and guidance from specialist staff. Leaflets and course details are informative and readily available. The very good tutorial arrangements include group tutorials and individual reviews which are well structured with clearly documented procedures. Induction is effective and planned well. Students' needs are assessed thoroughly and accurately. Excellent additional learning support is provided by staff with a range of specialist skills. Students with dyslexia receive good support and students with visual impairments benefit from strong partnership working with the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB). Innovative and highly effective ways of helping students develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills have been developed. The effectiveness of additional support is monitored and evaluated. Operational management of support services is outstanding with effective communication between those involved in all aspects of student support. The college has an appropriate child protection policy and procedures for dealing with suspicions or allegations of child abuse and most staff have had appropriate training. Attendance rates and punctuality are recorded and monitored effectively. Students receive very good advice and guidance on progression into employment, FE and HE.

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

- learning is fun and enjoyable

- tutors treat you with respect

- staff are friendly and approachable

- good advice and guidance

- lots of support is available if needed
- learning mentors are really helpful
- lessons are different and interesting
- teachers always encourage class discussion
- getting assessed work back quickly
- the clean refectory
- the adult and safe environment
- the library facilities
- learning together with different nationalities.

What they feel could be improved

- the numbers of available computers
- the amount of social space
- choice and high prices of food in the refectory

- the blinds in computer rooms

- the temperature of premises

- lighting in buildings

- the slow Internet access

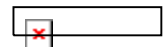
- noisy open-plan computer rooms

- the number of lockers available

- the small size of workshops

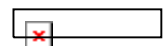
- the number of reference books in the library.

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	66	30	4
19+ and WBL*	79	20	1
Learning 16-18	64	32	4
19+ and WBL*	80	19	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. Retention rates for all age groups and levels are either stable or have improved slightly from 2002/03 to 2003/04, with the exception of adult level 3 students. The retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 are broadly in line with the national averages. For adult students, retention rates are above the national average at all levels, and at their best at level 2 and level 4, where they are 11% above at 79% and 81%, respectively. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have remained the same from 2002/03 to 2003/04, and all are above the national average. These pass rates are at their best for level 3 students which are 6% above the national average at 82%. Pass rates for adult students have all improved from 2002/03 to 2003/04, and are all above the national average. Pass rates for adult students are at their best at level 3, where they have been well above the national average for the last three years, now 9% above at 82%. Pass rates for students on level 4 courses have decreased each year for the last three years, and are now 13% below the national average at just 43%.

2. The achievement of key skills in application of number, communications and information technology (IT) is unsatisfactory. In 2003/04, of the 1,153 students who started application of number, only 27% achieved the qualification. Of the 1,542 students who started communications, and the 1,262 students who started IT, only 23% achieved the qualification. Overall, key skills achievements are at their highest at level 1, where 34% of students achieved the qualification and at their lowest at level 3, where of the 545 students who started, only 5% achieved the qualification. However, the development of full-time students' key skills at levels 1 and 2 in communication and numeracy is an important part of the college's Skills for Life strategy and key skills provision across the college is now improving and is good in many areas. Assignments are made vocationally relevant and integrated well with students' main areas of study. In business administration, for example, the pass rate on level 1 application of number has improved significantly from 43% in 2002/03 to 73% in 2003/04. Most work-based learners now receive regular key skills lessons early in their programme and are making satisfactory progress.

3. For AS-level and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) subjects, the college uses an established system for determining a minimum target grade that students should achieve. This is based on their previous achievements and used to measure their progress, or value

added. For most other students, a similar value added system is used effectively to regularly re-determine students' target minimum grades. Following initial assessment and consideration of their previous educational attainment, target grades are reviewed every half term in light of the student's attendance, attitude to study and current on-course performance. In many subject areas, students' progress, particularly when compared to their prior attainment, is good. The majority of teachers provide students with clear feedback on how they can improve their performance.

4. Poor student attendance and punctuality were identified as issues in several areas of learning at the last inspection. Attendance remains a significant issue in engineering and is also poor in business administration. The overall attendance rate during the week of inspection was unsatisfactory at 75%. It was highest in construction and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at 83% and lowest in engineering and business administration at 66%. Poor punctuality was identified as a key weakness in visual and performing arts, E2E and engineering.

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

16 to 18 year olds

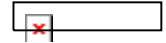
6. Construction students develop their practical skills to a high standard. Electronic engineering students develop good circuit design skills, although engineering students' portfolios of evidence vary in quality. In business administration, the standard of work at level 1 and level 2 is good, but satisfactory at level 3. Some information and communications technology (ICT) students' work is particularly creative and imaginative, and advanced-level students have a thorough understanding of the principles of systems design. Hospitality students develop maturity, confidence and improved communication skills. They understand the essential theory behind their subject and apply it in the college's realistic working environments confidently. Work-based health and social care students make slow progress towards the achievement of their apprenticeship frameworks, although many pass their technical certificates and key skills tests. Their portfolios of evidence are generally well organised and their written work is of a satisfactory standard. Media, journalism, music technology and video production students achieve excellent standards of vocational skills and qualifications. In visual arts lessons, students make imaginative personal responses to a variety of stimuli. In English and humanities, students attain well relative to their prior achievements and many achieve better than their predicted target grades. Pass rates for external qualifications are good on all literacy and numeracy programmes and students' confidence and personal skills are developed well. Achievement and progression for E2E students are satisfactory and improving. Many students progress into FE, although progression into apprenticeships and work-based learning was low in 2003/04. NVQ portfolios contain a satisfactory standard of work and are well presented. Students aged 16 to 18 on provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities courses make good progress, with 50% progressing to higher-level programmes within the specialist provision and 50% progressing to mainstream programmes. Students are motivated to learn and some students take additional courses in basic skills or vocational subjects.

Adult learners

7. In construction and engineering, most adult students are confident and develop practical skills of a high standard. In business administration, adult students gain confidence and transfer the analytical skills they have developed in lessons to their own employment situations. Most ICT students are confident with the required software programs. Hospitality students develop skills which are often above that required by their course. In visual and performing arts and media, adult students are well motivated and generally make better progress than those aged 16 to 18. Much of their work is of an excellent standard and their progression between levels in the college and to HE is very good. In most subjects, adult students on the access to HE course exceed their expected target grades. They develop very good levels of knowledge, skill and understanding throughout the course and produce work of a high standard. Students value the confidence and analytical skills they have developed during their course. Pass rates for external qualifications are satisfactory overall on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes. Students who receive language study support achieve better pass rates than those who do not. ESOL students develop a good understanding of

language structures. Many students take pride in applying their new skills in their everyday lives, both at home and at work. For example, adults frequently state that they are now able to support their children with homework.

Quality of education and training



8. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 219 lessons. Inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in 72% of lessons, satisfactory in 25% and less than satisfactory in 3%. This is a substantially better than the average for FE colleges nationally. It represents excellent progress since the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was the same as that found nationally. Effective teaching was demonstrated consistently across most curriculum areas. It was least effective in the E2E provision.

9. Teaching is significantly better in lessons for adult students. Some 80% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 67% for students aged 16 to 18. The highest proportion of good or better lessons was for level 3 courses, at 79%, and the lower proportion was for courses at entry level or level 1, at 63%. Teaching on GCE A-level courses was particularly strong, and significantly better than for AS-level courses, where a third of lessons were only satisfactory. Almost all the small amount of less than satisfactory teaching was at levels 1 and 2 in vocational areas. About half of the lessons taught by teachers employed through an agency were graded good or better compared with 79% of lessons taught by teachers directly employed by the college.

10. Most teaching is planned well. Lessons incorporate a variety of activities which often excite and motivate students. Teachers are well aware of the interests and learning needs of their students. They ensure that extra support is provided effectively where it is needed. They also have high expectations of their students and challenge them to learn. Very good links are made between the curriculum and students' own experiences. In a lesson on local history, adult students were encouraged to reflect on their own lives and relationships to understand the process of social change. In vocational subjects, students draw successfully on what they have learned in the workplace to help them understand new concepts and theories. Good links are made in many subjects between theory and practical activities. In literacy, numeracy, ESOL and programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, students' existing skills are accurately assessed. They often respond with enthusiasm to the range of realistic and challenging activities which are designed to help them make progress.

11. In most lessons, teachers check carefully what has been learned by the skilful use of questioning. The quality of work is monitored closely and thorough feedback is given. In many areas, too little use was made by teachers of ILT. Students themselves are making increasing use of the college intranet and other electronic research tools to complete assignments.

12. Of the six main centres, four are new buildings which are easily accessible to students with restricted mobility and provide a good learning environment. The remaining two have recently been refurbished and are fit for purpose, though access is difficult at the Old Swan site for students with restricted mobility. The college has made a very good response to SENDA and there is a sound accommodation strategy to improve access at the Bankfield site and sell the Old Swan site within the next year. All staff have received training in the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability and Discrimination Acts. Students with a range of diverse needs are invited to take part in accessibility audits to identify possible problems. When issues are raised, the college remedies the problem quickly. Reception areas are attractive and refectory areas are adequate on all sites. Some teaching rooms are too small for the size of classes, particularly the engineering and construction crafts workshops and some rooms in visual and performing arts. There are insufficient sports or social facilities at all sites, but arrangements are in place for sports students to access local sports clubs or leisure centres.

13. All teaching rooms are appropriately equipped with whiteboards and projection equipment, but some whiteboards at the Bankfield site are of poor quality. The college has invested heavily in ILT equipment, but it is not yet fully utilised by teachers. The college has a good range of specialist equipment to support its vocational courses. The electronics suite for engineering students at the Vauxhall Road site, the training restaurant and kitchen for hospitality students and the industry-standard video and sound-editing studios and television production facilities for media students are excellent. Building services students have good specialist accommodation in plumbing, gas and heating and ventilation. In ICT, the open-plan computer rooms are small and the often excessive noise pollution is distracting for students and staff. The college has a good range of specialist resources for students with visual and auditory impairments, particularly in the specialist support centres at the Bankfield site.

14. The college has good and accessible learning resource centres at each site to provide open access and an appropriate range of reference materials which are reviewed regularly. Library stock is catalogued using an online database which also identifies resources available on loan through an effective inter-library loan arrangement with local universities and the city libraries.

15. Most teachers have relevant vocational qualifications and appropriate industrial or commercial experience. There are good arrangements for continuing professional development to maintain the industrial experience of teachers. This is monitored and evaluated well. Some 94% of full-time teachers hold or are working towards a relevant teaching qualification. The college employs 92 fractional teachers, of whom 82% hold or are working towards a teaching qualification. The college also employs 390 teachers through an agency. Of these, 82% hold or are working towards a teaching qualification which exceeds the target of 62% of qualified part-time teachers by 2006. A third of lessons are taught by part-time teachers..

16. The college has adequate overall numbers of computers for staff and students, but suitability and accessibility varies between sites. The majority of computers are up to date and well maintained and there is an adequate plan for the replacement of outdated machines. There are insufficient computers at the Bankfield site where some computers are old and slow. Health and social care students have insufficient access to modern computers at the Old Swan site. The intranet is well developed and can be accessed externally. It is used effectively by most staff and students.

17. Assessment practices are thorough and fair. The college has developed a comprehensive assessment policy which includes clear criteria and thorough internal verification and moderation procedures. Moderators and verifiers from all curriculum areas meet on a regular basis to share good practice. A well-developed procedure for the quality assurance of assessment has been developed to ensure consistency across all curriculum areas.

18. The monitoring of students' progress is good. On most courses, assessment records are comprehensive and up to date. Tutors use well-developed systems to measure prior achievement and to set targets and measure individual progress. Most students have a clear understanding of their targets and their current progress. Assessment briefs and marking criteria are clear and most tutors provide students with clear verbal and written feedback. In most cases, feedback guides students on how to progress and improve. However, target setting during student progress reviews in foundation and business administration, and the setting of short-term targets in literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently detailed. Parents and guardians of full-time students aged 16 to 18 receive detailed progress reports twice a year and are regularly invited to parents' evenings. Employers also receive regular feedback on the progress of work-based learners.

19. Students receive a good induction to their programmes and information about the assessment arrangements for their courses and qualifications. They have a good understanding of the criteria for assessment and know what is required of them. Procedures for initial assessment clearly identify students' support needs and prior achievements. A range of diagnostic assessments is provided when appropriate. Individual learning plans are produced based on the information gained during students' initial assessment. These plans include appropriate targets and clearly communicate students' individual support needs to teachers and support staff.

20. The college has a very broad range of programmes available at different levels and locations

throughout its catchment area, reflecting its priority for social and educational inclusiveness. The provision enables prospective students of all abilities, including those with particularly low levels of educational attainment, to access training in any vocational area. The range of foundation courses has been substantially extended and over a third of students study at this level. Around 250 young people are on work-based learning programmes primarily in engineering, health care and E2E.

21. Progression routes within curriculum areas, up to and including HE, are good. There is good access to the whole college curriculum for those students who need additional support. Many students progress from foundation programmes to courses at higher levels and are strongly challenged to realise their full educational potential. The sport and leisure curriculum contains a very effective focus on opportunities for people with disabilities. There are many good enrichment activities on vocational courses. However, the range of sport and personal development activities for full-time students is small.

22. Through its outstanding partnership working the college is able to respond well to the needs of local communities and employers. For example, it has established a learning zone within a sheltered housing scheme for the homeless. An extensive range of drop-in study centres across the city provides good community access to learning and IT courses offered in over 50 locations. Very close links with local employers have led to successful collaborations to identify and provide for local training needs. Examples include a major construction training initiative for the city, initiatives to attract women into construction, work with the National Health Service (NHS) on their staff training needs, and work with Liverpool's tourism board. A wide range of courses with flexible attendance arrangements is also provided through the college's business training centre.

23. The college is the lead partner in an Increased Flexibility (IF) programme for young people aged 14 to 16 in Liverpool. The college and participating schools work collaboratively to provide extensive opportunities for vocational education throughout their catchment area. Currently, around 400 pupils from 25 schools access either the college's vocational or work-based learning provision. Pupils work towards nationally recognised qualifications in a wide range of curriculum areas. The college also provides programmes for excluded pupils and those choosing an alternative education.

24. Support for students is outstanding. Students receive excellent pre-course advice and guidance which is accurate, clear and impartial. A team of qualified student advisers direct students on to appropriate courses effectively. Leaflets and course details are readily available and contain concise information on courses and a range of issues including financial support benefits and transport. A wide range of welfare support is available. Staff strongly recognise the value of sensitive and unobtrusive support for students. A college nursery is available for students with childcare needs and outside childcare provision is also arranged for students when necessary. College funds are available to meet the cost of childcare, essential course equipment, course fees and transport. These services are well used by students.

25. Student induction is planned effectively and provides a comprehensive introduction to the college and course requirements. Students' support needs are identified using an appropriate range of activities, including the analysis of students' learning styles. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that students who enrol after the main induction period receive clear information and guidance. The student handbook is comprehensive and informative and effectively outlines how the available support can be accessed.

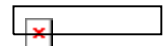
26. Support for students' individual needs is excellent. The college provides a range of effective support both centrally and within the drop-in study centres. Literacy and numeracy support is integrated effectively within curriculum areas. The college provides highly effective help for students with dyslexia, emotional and behavioural difficulties, sensory impairment and mental health issues. Students with visual impairments benefit from partnership links with the RNIB. Innovative and effective ways of helping students develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills have been developed. Additional support is monitored and evaluated effectively. Operational management of support services is outstanding, with effective communication between those involved in all aspects of student support and teachers in curriculum areas. Students have access to a very good well-developed mentoring system that provides individual support to help them identify and remove barriers to learning. Personal tutors frequently refer students who are at risk of leaving their course

early for specific individual support which may include improving their study skills and access to learning resources within college.

27. The college is meeting its responsibilities with regard to child protection. Policy and procedures have been developed to cover suspicions or allegations of child abuse. The policy and procedures are reviewed annually. A senior manager has responsibility for pupils aged 14 to 16. Most staff have received appropriate training. Links with schools and the local education authority, social services and a range of external agencies are good and used effectively to provide additional support for vulnerable young people.

28. Tutorial arrangements are highly effective. Regular group and individual tutorials are used effectively to monitor students' progress. Target setting and action planning is detailed and used as part of the individual learning plan and tutorial system. Guidance to tutors on tutorials and target setting is clear and comprehensive, This includes the content of tutorials. The group tutorial curriculum includes an appropriate core of activities such as study skills and advice on careers and progression to HE.

Leadership and management



29. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college is large and complex. It has six main sites, community-based education in 19 community-learning and drop-in study centres and around 50 other local venues. Some 79% of the college's students are from widening participation areas. Local pass rates at the age of 15 were 9% below the national average for those achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or above in 2003/04. Through strong leadership and careful management, the quality of education and training at the college has improved. Since 2001/02, pass rates for students at levels 1 and 2, for both young people and adults, have risen to above the national averages. Retention rates at all levels for students aged 16 to 18 remain at the national average and significantly above that level for adult students. During the same period, the quality of teaching and learning has improved to above that found in FE colleges nationally.

30. The senior management team provides strong leadership through their commitment to the college mission which has a strong emphasis on the provision of high-quality and inclusive education. The principal plays a prominent role in the local community, chairing, for example, the Liverpool learning partnership. He responds promptly to issues raised in his student focus group. The vice-principal for curriculum chairs the skills and training group in Granby and Toxteth, and provides an effective oversight of the curriculum areas through leadership of the curriculum managers group and as chair of the academic board.

31. The management structure is clear, open and effective. Communication across the college and within faculties is excellent. Heads of faculty attend senior management team meetings on a rota basis. Curriculum management is very good and has been very effective in ensuring high standards in, for example, literacy, numeracy, language and student support. Meetings are planned and recorded well and appropriate cross-college groups allow academic and support staff to work closely together. The excellent college intranet strengthens the flow of information. The college information service provides timely and useful reports to support strategic planning and quality assurance. Staff have access to up-to-date reports on the intranet. Information service staff attend management meetings to ensure that data reports meet current needs. Since the last inspection, the increased use of target setting by course teams has helped to improve the effectiveness of the quality assurance systems.

32. Strategic planning is excellent and strongly focused on social inclusion. Governors and managers meet early in the strategic planning cycle to consider key issues and review progress on previous targets. The final strategic plan is approved by governors in the summer and takes account of plans submitted from a range of college teams. Strategic aims are set for the curriculum, human

resources, accommodation, finance, marketing, IT and partnerships. Each aim is accompanied by specific and measurable outcomes and performance indicators which are regularly monitored by governors and managers. Major achievements include the continued redevelopment of premises, the substantial increase in level 1 provision, the 62% increase in participation by students with profound disabilities and the development of district-wide drop-in study centres. Staff have a strong sense of common purpose and a good understanding of the college's mission and strategic aims.

33. Governance is strong. The governors play a key role in the development of the strategic objectives. The governors' standards committee receives detailed reports on pass and retention rates, and ensures that action is taken to address any issues raised by internal inspection. Governors initiated the positive promotion of employment opportunities to local minority ethnic communities, which led to the appointment of a black business support trainee.

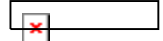
34. Quality assurance arrangements are very effective in improving the quality of the provision. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, with 73% of lessons observed graded as good or better, and some outstanding. The college's lesson observation process includes the production of action plans to address identified issues. A team of advanced lecturers provides help and support to individual teachers, and spreads good practice around the college. A system of internal inspections has also proved effective in raising the standards of teaching and learning in curriculum areas such as business studies. The college's retention and pass rate data were found to be accurate, and managers make good use of a wide range of reports which are easily available on the college's intranet. Quality managers in each faculty ensure that there is good support for teams to carry out self-assessment. All staff are involved in producing the self-assessment reports which take account of the outcomes of the observation system and the views of students. Inspectors agreed with many of the findings and most of the grades in the self-assessment report.

35. Staff development meets the needs of staff and the college's strategic priorities effectively. The development of the plan is informed by the lesson observation system, a well-managed appraisal system and the strategic objectives. The target of 82% of full-time teachers to hold a teaching qualification by 2004 was achieved. A management training programme recognises the needs of middle managers in both academic and support areas and allows participants to undertake specific research in their own departments.

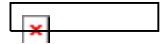
36. The college promotes equal opportunities and access to education for students from under-represented groups actively. In 2003/04, 13% of all students were from minority ethnic backgrounds, compared to 5.7% locally. The equal opportunities policy has been revised to take account of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the SENDA legislation. The college has produced an appropriate race equality policy and action plan and made satisfactory progress in its implementation. Policies clearly state who is accountable and specify appropriate monitoring arrangements. The equal opportunities plan is well managed by a cross-college team and progress is monitored through the self-assessment process. All staff are currently completing an equality awareness programme. Analysis of retention and pass rates is carried out to determine the relative performance of students from different minority ethnic groups. Inspectors identified numerous examples of the effective promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum, such as the partnership with RNIB to support students with a visual impairment. Students have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and are clear about the college's policy on bullying and harassment. The college has also involved students in measuring progress towards improved access for wheelchair users and those with restricted mobility.

37. Through careful financial management the college is in a strong financial position. There is a good system of financial delegation and managers regularly monitor the link between student numbers and financial income. Major new building projects have been completed successfully. Three phases of a five-phase £40 million accommodation strategy have already provided the college with four new main learning centres. The deployment of resources is efficient and the college offers good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- high and improving retention rates

- much good teaching

- very good specialist accommodation for building services

- effective development of key skills provision.

Weaknesses

- inadequate accommodation for building crafts.

Scope of provision

38. The college offers full-time and part-time construction courses in wood occupations, trowel trades, building services and technician studies. The provision includes programmes from entry level to level 4. At the time of inspection, 1,103 students were enrolled on construction courses, of whom 87 were enrolled at level 1, 531 at level 2 and 338 at level 3. Adult students account for 66% of all students. The college provides apprenticeship programmes for 22 students in partnership with local industry. There are opportunities for young people aged 14 to 16 to experience a range of construction skills.

39. The college was awarded interim CoVE status for construction crafts in November 2004, in partnership with two other Merseyside colleges. A CoVE manager was appointed at the end of

January 2005. Students have been recruited on to its good range of pre-vocational and vocational courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. As part of the CoVE development plan, the college will develop the accommodation to improve the resources for the craft students. It is too early to judge the CoVE's effectiveness. The college is also involved with a CoVE for building services, which is led by another regional FE college. Benefits of the partnership include the sharing of good practice, the development of the curriculum offer, and the improvement of teaching and learning through the introduction of ILT into lessons.

Achievement and standards

40. Student retention and pass rates are very good. Pass rates are consistently very high on plumbing NVQ level 2 courses. Pass rates on the part-time plastering and plumbing NVQ level 2 courses are significantly above national averages. Pass rates have improved significantly on some courses, including full-time level 1 construction and the part-time NVQ level 3 in gas installation. Retention rates are high on the electrical installation City and Guilds course, NVQ level 2 courses in plastering and plumbing and NVQ level 3 in gas services installation. In practical lessons, most students are confident and develop practical skills of a high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Foundation construction award 2003/04 *precursor award	1	No. of starts	54*	60*	36
		% retention	67*	62*	78
		% pass rate	17*	27*	71
City and Guilds 2360-06 electrical installation part 1 (theory and practical) (1 year)	1	No. of starts	21	15	**
		% retention	86	80	**
		% pass rate	67	92	**
NVQ plastering (construction) (2 year)	2	No. of starts	18	32	**
		% retention	61	53	**
		% pass rate	73	94	**
NVQ mechanical engineering (plumbing) (2 year)	2	No. of starts	22	17	34
		% retention	68	71	94
		% pass rate	93	100	100
National certificate in building studies (2 year)	3	No. of starts	30	21	**
		% retention	43	57	**
		% pass rate	92	83	**
NVQ gas services installation (1 year)	3	No. of starts	32	47	27
		% retention	100	91	93
		% pass rate	21	95	100

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

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

41. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned well and objectives are effectively shared with students. Students' workplace experiences are used effectively to set their learning in an

appropriate context. Teachers provide students with good and unobtrusive individual learning support. In a very good theory lesson, ILT was used well and the highly motivated students made enthusiastic contributions to discussions. Students display a keen interest in their subjects and produce high standards of work. They develop their understanding of theory and concepts well through practical activities and teachers' good questioning techniques. Assignments are well produced and provide clear assessment criteria. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not engage students sufficiently or check that they are learning. In one lesson, the teacher answered most of his own questions.

42. Key skills assignments are vocationally relevant and integrate well with students' NVQ work. Key skills support tutors work effectively with the vocational teachers to support all students appropriately. In some lessons, the key skills tutor takes the lead, and in some practical lessons they work alongside the vocational teacher to reinforce the relevance of the key skills being studied. Teachers monitor their students' progress closely and provide good support for them to produce their portfolios.

43. The plumbing, gas and heating and ventilation workshops are modern, spacious and very well designed. Students learn and practise new skills on a variety of industrial-standard specialist tools and equipment and have access to a wide range of components from a number of manufacturers. The brick workshop, however, is too small to accommodate the size of classes timetabled in them. The size and complexity of students' practical exercises are often limited by the need to dismantle projects at the end of each lesson. There is insufficient space in the plastering workshop, and the integral learning resource centre and classroom are excessively dirty and untidy. The main carpentry and joinery workshop is also too small for the number of students using it. Students complain about lack of storage facilities.

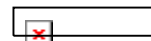
44. Monitoring of student progress is good. Personal tutors use an effective value added system that incorporates initial assessment, previous achievement, attendance, attitude to study and current on-course performance to set individual targets. Performance against these targets is reviewed with individual students each half-term. However, the quality and usefulness of the feedback on students' work is not always good, and some teachers fail to clearly identify the areas for improvement. The faculty rewards full-time students for good attendance. Internal verification is carried out thoroughly and assessment practice meets the awarding bodies' criteria.

45. The college is working actively with local employers, UK Skills and City and Guilds to develop construction skills within the region. This collaboration aims to raise students' and employees' aspirations and develop their students' practical skills beyond level 3.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are good. Managers are provided with a range of useful and reliable information and data which they use effectively to improve their courses. Regular management and staff meetings are formally recorded and actions required are monitored appropriately. The faculty has its own academic board and a well-established and thorough system of self-assessment, but not all weaknesses are identified within the self-assessment report or development plans. Formal targets for improvement are not set at either course or individual level. Staff development is good, and the annual appraisal system is used well to identify further training needs. There is good promotion of equality of opportunity and initiatives to attract students from under-represented groups. For instance, staff have provided expertise and facilities for the local technology centre for women to develop construction courses for their students. From this initiative, a number of female students have progressed to the college's construction courses and into employment within the construction industry. The risk-assessment process is not well established and not all staff are aware of its relevance or importance.

Engineering



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- particularly good resources in electronics and motor vehicle engineering

- good NVQ assessment in the workplace

- wide range of programmes and progression opportunities

- good partnerships with external agencies and employers.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of apprentice frameworks

- poor student attendance and punctuality

- lack of space in motor vehicle workshop.

Scope of provision

47. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 3. These include courses in mechanical, electrical, electronic and automotive engineering and national certificate and national diploma courses for technicians. At the time of the inspection, there were 337 full-time students, of whom 66% were aged 16 to 18. Some 63% of the 479 part-time students were aged 19 or over. There were also 114 level 2 and level 3 apprentices, of whom 56 were advanced apprentices. The college also provides opportunities for pupils aged 14 to 16 to work on motor vehicle level 1 units.

Achievement and standards

48. Pass rates on many courses are high and improving. For example, in 2003/04, the pass rate on the City and Guilds computer-aided design course was 85%, and 92% on level 2 performing engineering operations. However, pass rates on many other NVQ programmes were below national averages. Retention rates on the majority of courses are good. Achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is poor. Of the 42 apprentices who started between 1998 and 2002, only 6 have completed the framework, with a further 15 achieving the NVQ requirements. However, the apprentices currently on programme are making satisfactory progress.

49. Students work well, particularly in practical lessons, and develop their skills to a high standard. For example, electronics students design, make and test circuits for real applications. The designs are good and the standard of the practical work produced is very good. Students' portfolios of evidence vary in quality. The better portfolios contain thorough and detailed assessment plans, well-written and word-processed tasks which are accurately referenced to the performance criteria. They include a good range of diverse evidence, such as assessor observations and clear explanations to accompany the photographic evidence. Key skills provision is good, and the vocationally-relevant assignments are integrated well with students' NVQ work. Work-based students receive regular key skills lessons early in their programme and are aware of their achievements. Most students make satisfactory progress.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Repair and servicing of road vehicles	1	No. of starts	33	31	16
		% retention	73	68	100
		% pass rate	21	95	63
City and Guilds 4351-07 computer-aided design three-dimensional	2	No. of starts	59	48	56
		% retention	97	79	82
		% pass rate	84	68	85
Progression award in automotive vehicle servicing and repair	2	No. of starts	*	16	25
		% retention	*	100	88
		% pass rate	*	69	77

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

*** course did not run**

Quality of education and training

50. Most teaching is good. Lessons are planned well and the learning outcomes are shared and discussed with students. In the better lessons, teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods and make good use of specialist software packages, especially in electronics and automotive engineering. Teachers integrate theory and practice well in many lessons and ensure that they check all students' understanding regularly. Good health and safety practices are strongly promoted both in the college and in the workplace. In weaker lessons, classrooms are overcrowded and students are not provided with sufficient resources with which to learn and practise. In one lesson, students were performing practical activities using poor techniques which were not addressed by the teacher. Many students arrive late for their lessons, and overall attendance is poor, at just 67% during the week of inspection.

51. Resources are good, and some are excellent. Well-kept classrooms and theory areas are equipped with a wide range of modern equipment. The electronics suite is excellent, with high-quality digital design and evaluation equipment coupled to interactive light boards. Motor vehicle students can use the latest motor vehicle data software, including known fault data on all current

modern cars. The motor vehicle workshop is equipped with a replica MOT test station, with roller traction and emissions testing facilities. However, at times the workshop area is overcrowded. Students work in groups on each corner of a car, and often impinge on each others' progress. Library resources are good and include some of the latest motor vehicle publications. Staff development is good. Teachers have relevant vocational qualifications and have, or are working towards, assessor and verifier awards. Technician support is also good.

52. Assessment arrangements are good and students' progress is carefully monitored. Students' marked assignments are returned promptly and assessors' written feedback is detailed and helps students to improve their work. Assessment practices for work-based students are also good.

53. Employers are fully involved in assessment planning and students are able to access assessment opportunities at short notice. Current work-based learners are making good progress with their NVQ work. They receive formal progress reviews every 10 weeks which include their NVQ, key skills and technical certificate work. Employers take part in the review process and students are set appropriate targets which are monitored regularly.. Students are clear about their individual progress.

54. The provision effectively meets the needs and interests of students and employers. Students progress well from `taster', school-link and level 1 courses to level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships. Fifteen of the current work-based students have been helped by the college to gain full-time employment status while continuing with their apprenticeships. The college works particularly well with one large local motor-vehicle retail outlet to provide level 1 students with opportunities to progress to level 2 apprenticeships. Links with local schools are also good. Pupils work on NVQ level 1 units in the motor-vehicle workshop. The college works well in partnership with external agencies and employers, and its representative chairs the Liverpool Motor Vehicle Engineering Advisory group. There are also good links with other training agencies and awarding bodies.

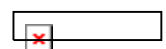
55. Students and work-based learners receive good pastoral and additional learning support. Initial assessment is carried out appropriately. Where appropriate, technical terms are rewritten using plain English. The college effectively supports students with hearing impairments. In the workplace, employers and mentors provide appropriate technical and pastoral support for apprentices.

Leadership and management

56. The leadership and management of the engineering provision are good. Policies and procedures are appropriate and up to date. Course files are comprehensive, well organised and standardised across all courses. Good practice is effectively shared across the area of learning. All staff were involved in the production of the self-assessment report and inspectors agreed with many of their findings. The development plan is detailed and has been used effectively to raise standards. The grades given by the college's observation team for engineering lessons were broadly in line with those found by inspectors.

57. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively in the college and in the workplace and equality issues are discussed during students' progress reviews. Students with restricted mobility have good access to training. The faculty is effectively increasing participation by students from under-represented groups; 10% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 4% of students are female. Work-based learning is now managed well, but there is no service level agreement in place with one large sub-contract provider.

Business administration



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on level 2 programmes for adults
- much good teaching
- good support and guidance
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor and declining pass rates on NVQ level 3 accounting and AS-level business courses
- poor teaching facilities at the Bankfield site.

Scope of provision

58. Business and business administration courses are provided at three of the college's centres, the college's business training centre and five drop-in study centres. The college currently has 250 full-time and 368 part-time students. Just over half of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and over 90% of part-time students are adults. A range of courses is offered from level 1 to level 4, including general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate business, Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma business and AS-level and GCE A2 business at the Duke Street and Clarence Street sites. At the Bankfield Road site, the college offers NVQs at levels 1 to 4 in accounting and levels 1 to 3 in administration, intermediate and advanced legal and medical secretarial qualifications, access to HE in business and business IT, BTEC national certificate in business, and an ESOL business programme. NVQs in administration, management, certificates in training practice and personnel practice are offered at the business training centre.

Achievement and standards

59. Pass rates for adults on long level 2 programmes are high. The pass rate for NVQ level 2 administration has been significantly above the national average for the last two years. The pass rates for the legal secretaries' certificate and the certificate in personnel practice have been 100% for the last two years. However, pass rates on the level 3 accounting and AS-level business courses have declined over the last three years and are now both below the national average. Retention rates are broadly satisfactory, though they have been consistently high for the certificate in personnel practice. While the retention rate for NVQ level 3 accounting is still above the low national average of 55%, it has dropped significantly by 20% to 74% in 2003/04. The retention rate for the NVQ level 1 in business administration has been consistently low and was 19% below the national average in 2003/04.

60. The standard of work for level 1 and level 2 students is good, and satisfactory for level 3 students. Full-time students on GNVQ intermediate and BTEC national diploma courses are entered for key skills at levels 1 and 2 after their initial assessment in communications, numeracy and IT. The pass rate on level 1 key skills application of number has improved significantly from 43% in 2002/03, to 73% in 2003/04. Attendance on level 3 full-time courses is poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ administration	1	No. of starts	23	28	20
		% retention	70	64	65
		% pass rate	69	94	100
Legal secretaries' certificate	2	No. of starts	29	23	28
		% retention	86	70	79
		% pass rate	64	100	100
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	**	25	65
		% retention	**	88	80
		% pass rate	**	91	92
AS-level business management / office studies	3	No. of starts	47	62	68
		% retention	81	73	84
		% pass rate	89	71	63
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	64	49	27
		% retention	86	94	100
		% pass rate	78	72	52
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	*	30	48
		% retention	*	90	94
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

****course did not run***

*****fewer than 15 students enrolled***

Quality of education and training

61. Much of the teaching and learning is good. Current business practice is promoted effectively.. The better lessons engage the students in a variety of stimulating learning activities. Group activities encourage adult students to reflect on their own work experience and to link this with the theories being studied. In one lesson, adult students transferred the analytical skills gained from a case study of a company to their own organisations. A teacher's skilful use of current affairs and popular television programmes helped Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) students to understand a complicated aspect of criminal law. Good coaching techniques were used by teachers to develop level 1 students' capacity for independent learning. In weaker lessons, teachers rely too much on textbook theory and do not check students' understanding sufficiently, often answering their own questions. Poor attendance of full-time level 3 students restricts the usefulness of some of the planned learning activities.

62. Overall, resources are satisfactory. The majority of the students study at the Bankfield site. The fabric of the building and the classrooms are poor. Some classrooms do not have enough tables, chairs and computers to accommodate all of the students on the register. The computers used by students are very slow, reducing the efficient use of time and restricting the teaching methods that can effectively be used. However, the Bankfield site is due to be refurbished January 2006. Level 3 students aged 16 to 18 are based at the Duke Street and Clarence Street centres, where the resources are good. Resources are also good at the business training centre, which is predominantly for adult students.

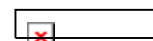
63. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Initial assessment is used well to guide students on to the most appropriate level of course. The internal verification of BTEC national diploma courses is thorough and provides teachers with good feedback on areas for improvement. Feedback to students on assignments is also good and enables them to make improvements to their work. While the number of courses offered in this area has been significantly reduced over the last year, new learning opportunities for adults have been developed in administration, business studies, and medical and legal secretarial options in five of the college's outreach centres. The range of provision is satisfactory to meet the needs of the local community and employers.

64. Guidance and support for students are good. Students develop their confidence and skills through the good oral and written feedback they receive from teachers. Initial and diagnostic assessments are used well to identify students who may need additional learning support. Students with specific additional learning needs are given extra support during lessons. In one lesson, for example, the teacher was assisted by two support workers who provided additional support for a student with hearing impairment and a student with low literacy skills. Both students contributed fully to the learning activities. Many level 1 students pass external basic skills qualifications. Adult students who have returned to education make good progress on their programmes and many progress to HE or employment. One student who started the NVQ level 2 business administration in September 2004 with the intention of gaining employment in a primary school has been given a work placement in a local school office. Adult students feel particularly well supported by the teaching staff.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are good. Recent changes within the faculty have been managed sensitively. Teachers are supported well by their curriculum managers. The annual appraisal system is used effectively to help staff identify strategies to improve their skills and update their vocational knowledge. The college internal lesson observation system is helping to improve the standard of teaching and learning. All staff take part in the thorough self-assessment process which is used effectively to improve the quality of the provision. Improvement targets are set for all courses and good practice is shared where appropriate. Students' attendance and punctuality are monitored carefully, although attendance rates for students aged 16 to 18 are currently below the college target. Equality of opportunity is promoted positively in the business faculty.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on level 2 courses

- much good teaching motivating students
- good assessment practices
- extensive range of courses relevant to the needs of the community
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching areas at Clarence Street campus
- insufficient use of ILT
- few opportunities for students to experience current industrial practice.

Scope of provision

66. The college offers a range of full-time ICT courses from level 1 to level 3. Office ICT courses, such as computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and the European computer driving licence (ECDL), are also available for full-time students. Part-time courses are offered in a number of community venues during the day, in the evening and at weekends. These include CLAIT, ECDL, a range of technician and network support courses, and AS-level and GCE A-level courses. At the time of the inspection, there were 584 full-time students, of whom 61% were aged 16 to 18, and 2,401 part-time students, 95% of whom were adults. Most of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18, and most of the part-time students are adults.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass rates on many courses are good. There are particularly high pass rates on full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18. The pass rates for courses at level 2 are significantly above the national average. The retention rates for GCSE IT and AS-level courses are low. Students make good progress compared with their previous levels of attainment. The quality of most students' work is good and they are interested in their studies. Some students' assignment work is particularly creative and imaginative. Most students are confident with the required software programs and advanced-level students have a thorough understanding of the principles of systems design.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	1,265	756	1,169
		% retention	75	70	79
		% pass rate	62	69	68
GNVQ foundation in ICT	1	No. of starts	38	34	41
		% retention	82	85	90
		% pass rate	81	62	72
City and Guilds of London Institute diploma for IT users	2	No. of starts	*	57	80
		% retention	*	88	82
		% pass rate	*	62	82
City and Guilds of London Institute diploma for IT practitioners	2	No. of starts	*	67	55
		% retention	*	84	85
		% pass rate	*	79	94
City and Guilds of London Institute advanced diploma for IT practitioners	3	No. of starts	*	37	27
		% retention	*	86	93
		% pass rate	*	85	72
AS-level ICT	3	No. of starts	57	57	69
		% retention	74	51	65
		% pass rate	50	90	73

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

*** course did not run**

Quality of education and training

68. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and most teaching and learning is good. Much of the teaching is planned well with clear schemes of work and lesson plans. Students undertake a wide variety of learning activities and are given well-designed assignments.. They respond well in lessons and make good progress. Teachers check students' understanding carefully using oral questioning, multiple choice question papers and gapped handouts. Teachers provide clear guidance notes and make good use of quizzes and technical handouts. Some tutors have designed learning materials which extend students' skills beyond the course specifications. In a very good lesson, students worked individually using well structured e-learning materials. They were all appropriately challenged by the work and the tutor worked skilfully with individual students to broaden their understanding of the subject. In a weaker lesson, some students were not sufficiently motivated, and their lack of involvement in the lesson was not addressed by the teacher. Students who arrive late for lessons are appropriately challenged.

69. Staff and students make good use of the college intranet, which contains course notes and exercises. Some teaching areas at the Clarence Street campus are unsatisfactory. The excessive noise in the open-plan computer rooms distracts students and teachers from their work. Teaching areas are frequently very hot or very cold. The temperature in these areas can only be reduced by opening windows which increases the noise pollution still further. The effectiveness of some lessons is reduced by the insufficient use of ILT. Some teachers spend too much time describing rather than demonstrating complex software programmes. Very few computer rooms are equipped with fixed data projectors.

70. Assessment practices are good and meet all of the awarding bodies' requirements. Assignment

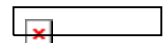
completion dates are appropriately spaced and assignments are frequently divided into smaller stages to help students plan their workload and keep up to date. Students' work is marked and returned promptly with constructive comments on how it could be improved. Assignment briefs are carefully checked for their suitability, and a selection of marked coursework is moderated to ensure consistency across the department. Key skills lessons use vocationally-relevant subject material and many of the students' key skills portfolios are developed through vocational assignment work. Students are encouraged to monitor their own achievements and staff use tutorials effectively to ensure that students know how well they are progressing. Part-time students have individual learning action plans which are updated every week by the student and the teacher. Students progress well and at a rate which is most appropriate to their previous experience and personal circumstances. Group tutorials are used effectively to help students develop their life skills. One group of students is creating a website on sexual health with help from an advisor.

71. The college provides a wide range of courses which meet the needs of the local community. Courses range from entry level to HE and students progress well between the levels. With ICT provision in many outreach locations, students who would otherwise find it difficult to travel to the college main sites have the opportunity to improve their education and skills. Students can gain an additional qualification such as a networking or technician's certificate. There are insufficient opportunities, however, for students to extend the breadth of their experience, link their studies to current working practice and inform their career aspirations. No work-experience opportunities are available for vocational computing students. The initial advice and guidance students receive is good and ensures that they enrol on to the most appropriate programme of study. Numeracy and literacy support needs are identified during induction and, where appropriate, additional support is provided. Students with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by learning support assistants.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are good. Managers have adopted a systematic approach to improving the provision and retention and pass rates have improved in most areas. All staff are involved in the self-assessment process. Action plans have specific targets which are reviewed regularly to monitor progress. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Regular, well-managed meetings for full-time and part-time staff ensure that communication is good and that staff share good practice. New staff are mentored effectively and receive a thorough induction. Appraisals are held annually and used well to identify individual staff development needs. Staff have good opportunities to develop their professional and technical skills. The college's equal opportunity policy is applied rigorously.

Hospitality



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

Strengths

- good achievement of vocational skills and qualifications

- good individual coaching in practical lessons

- very good resources

- excellent partnerships

- good academic and pastoral support for students

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates on many NVQ courses.

Scope of provision

73. The college's hospitality courses range from entry level to level 3, and most can be studied either full time or part time. The college also offers short professional development courses in food safety, health and safety and licensed trade subjects and a small number of apprenticeships. At the time of the inspection, 400 students were enrolled on hospitality courses, of whom 282 were full time and 188 were part time. Just over 70% of students were adults. Opportunities are provided for 91 pupils aged 14 to 16 to study at the college through the school-links programme.

74. The college was given full CoVE status for tourism and hospitality in 2001, for which another local FE college is the lead partner. The partnership is progressing well with its development targets and has developed strong links with local employers and the tourism board. A new range of courses are being developed with the tourism board to help prepare the city for when it becomes the capital of culture in 2008.

Achievement and standards

75. Achievement of vocational skills and qualifications is good. Pass rates on many programmes are at, or above, the national average. Many students have developed skills above that which is required by their course. They develop maturity, confidence and improved communications skills. All students have a good understanding of the essential theory behind their subject and are confident in applying these in the college's realistic work environments. Retention rates are low and have declined on many NVQ courses, including NVQ level 1 in bakery and food preparation, and NVQ level 1 cooking, which is significantly below the national average. The retention rate is also very low on the NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking, two-year programme, at only 40%. However, courses where retention and pass rates have been poor have been reviewed and, where appropriate, replaced with newly developed courses from entry level to level 3. The current data for these programmes shows that retention and pass rates have improved significantly.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ prepare and serve food	1	No. of starts	27	21	21
		% retention	81	95	72

		% pass rate	86	100	96
NVQ bakery	1	No. of starts	*	76	28
		% retention	*	87	75
		% pass rate	*	98	100
NVQ food preparation and cooking	1	No. of starts	27	32	27
		% retention	85	69	60
		% pass rate	87	82	88
NVQ food preparation and cooking (1 year)	2	No. of starts	23	19	21
		% retention	91	84	95
		% pass rate	100	81	70
NVQ food preparation and cooking (2 year)	2	No. of starts	28	**	15
		% retention	36	**	40
		% pass rate	90	**	100
Awarding Body Consortium (ABC) certificate for pastry cooks and patissiers	2	No. of starts	28	25	**
		% retention	100	96	**
		% pass rate	71	88	**

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

***course did not run**

****fewer than 15 students enrolled**

Quality of education and training

76. Teachers use good coaching skills in practical lessons to check and reinforce students' understanding. Students' confidence and skills improve as they are skilfully questioned about their work, preparing them well for assessment. They make frequent contributions in all lessons draw on their experience to evaluating their own performance. In many lessons, the good variety of teaching methods used by teachers ensures that students at all levels of ability are appropriately challenged. ILT resources are used effectively for research and presentation work, although in some lessons visual aids are poorly prepared. Good use is made of digital cameras and video to record evidence of students' work. The experience of students who work part time is used well in lessons to broaden the understanding of the hospitality industry of all the students. Opportunities for students to develop their key skills have been identified in all practical activities and lesson plans. However, they are not always sufficiently re-inforced during the lessons to enable students to see the vocational relevance of key skills.

77. Resources are very good. The realistic working environments are modern and well equipped, and provide students with facilities comparable with those found in industry. The training restaurant and kitchen, food court, bakery and training and demonstration kitchens are all of a very high standard. The resources are used well to give students many opportunities to develop different skills and to work towards additional qualifications. Staff are well qualified. Most teachers have appropriate teaching, occupational, assessor and verifier qualifications, CLAIT or ECDL and Skills for Life qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Staff are motivated, supportive of each other and work effectively as a team, seeking continuous professional development opportunities across the department.

78. Assessment is satisfactory. Students are aware of when assessment will take place and what they need to do to complete their qualification. They continually gather evidence and are helped by

staff to reference evidence in their logbooks. Tutors keep adequate monitoring information on students' progress. Students' individual learning plans clearly identify their short-term and long-term targets.

79. Excellent partnerships with the industry and other training providers ensure that programmes and courses meet the needs of the students and the local community. Progression into employment is good. Through the development of the CoVE and work with local and national employers, training programmes have been improved and new programmes developed to meet local business needs. Links with local schools through the IF programme are very good. Opportunities for students to enrich their studies are good, with students taking full responsibility for the organisation of activity programmes, themed evenings and competitions, all of which are well attended and celebrated by the local community. Students also have unique opportunities to broaden their experience when the college invites guest celebrity chefs to run the restaurant kitchen. Each year, the hospitality department rents a hotel in the Lake District for a weekend. Many students gain valuable additional industrial experience from this event as they transfer the knowledge they have gained in the college environment to a real industry setting.

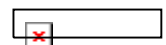
80. Academic and pastoral support for students are good. A good caring, stable environment is provided for students who are lacking in confidence and have personal and/or financial difficulties. Support can easily be accessed through either students' personal tutors or student services. This has helped students who are at risk of leaving their course early to remain in the college, complete their studies and gain their qualification. Attendance is carefully monitored and unauthorised absences are acted on quickly. Students with additional learning needs receive particularly sensitive and discreet help in lessons. All students receive financial support to purchase their knives, uniforms and for travel to events.

Leadership and management

81. The curriculum area is managed well. A recent restructure of staffing has defined clear roles and responsibilities for the teams. Good use is made of the Common Inspection Framework to review the effectiveness of each course. All staff are involved in the self-assessment process and the action plan and improvement strategies are used well to improve the provision. Staff are highly motivated and work well as a team. Formal and informal communication within the department is good. Internal verification activity is clearly planned and carried out systematically. Assessors are routinely observed and there are regular meetings between assessors and verifiers to discuss actions required and to standardise practice. The college's lesson observation system has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

82. Equal opportunities are promoted well within the curriculum. ESOL students contribute to lessons with examples of their own cuisines, and guest chefs from minority ethnic backgrounds are invited to run the kitchen. Students understand the relationship between diet, food, different cultures and religion. They also have a good understanding of equal opportunities and how it relates to themselves and each other.

Health and childcare



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates in NVQ care, foundation award in caring for children, and technical

certificates for care practices

- high retention rates on level 3 care and certificate in counselling skills courses

- good progression

- effective teaching for individual students' needs

- good personal and learning support

- good development of key skills provision.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on AVCE health and social care courses in 2003/04

- slow progress towards achieving apprenticeship frameworks.

Scope of provision

83. The college has 492 full-time and 1,786 part-time health and social care students, of whom 89% are adults. Courses include level 2 and level 3 care, NVQ level 3 caring for children and young people, GNVQ intermediate and AVCE health and social care and the certificate in counselling skills. Early years courses include the certificate and diploma in childcare and education, the foundation award in caring for children and NVQs in early years care and education. Most courses are run at the Old Swan site, but some are also available in community outreach venues.

84. The college also has 48 apprentices enrolled on a health and social care cadet programme. Cadets work towards the NVQ level 2 in care, the level 2 technical certificate in care practice, and key skills in communication and application of number at level 1. Following an initial 12-week period in college, they undertake work placements in hospitals for two days each week.

Achievement and standards

85. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ care course are very high, and have increased significantly since 2001/02. Over 90% of students have been retained over the last two years and all those who were retained obtained the qualification. Retention rates for students on the NVQ level 3 in care and the certificate in counselling skills is good. However, the retention rate on AVCE health

and social care courses fell significantly in 2003/04 to well below the national average.

86. Students progress well to other FE courses within the college and also to HE and employment. In 2003/04, 65% of AVCE double award students in health and social care went into HE, nine level 3 care NVQ students were offered places in nurse training and 40% of GNVQ intermediate students progressed to the AVCE programme.

87. Work-based health and social care students make slow progress towards the achievement of their apprenticeship frameworks. There has been poor co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training and the assessment requirements have not been met. None of the students who started since September 2003 have completed the framework. However, there are now sufficient assessors and verifiers and current students are making good progress towards completing the full awards. Of the 43 students who started in September 2003, 32 have achieved the level 2 technical certificates in care practices, and 30 have passed their key skills tests at levels 1 and 2 in application of number and communications. Portfolios of evidence are generally well organised and written work is of a satisfactory standard. Students write detailed accounts of their work on the wards, with clear explanations of the reasons for procedures. Since 2002/03, when the course started, all students have achieved the foundation certificate in childcare.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	26	32	25
		% retention	81	75	76
		% pass rate	81	96	89
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	24	49	39
		% retention	63	73	77
		% pass rate	87	72	83
Certificate in counselling skills	2	No. of starts	20	20	16
		% retention	100	70	94
		% pass rate	90	79	87
NVQ early years care and education (2 year)	3	No. of starts	19	16	28
		% retention	74	88	86
		% pass rate	93	71	67
AVCE health and social care (double award)	3	No. of starts	20	23	18
		% retention	90	96	78
		% pass rate	72	91	71
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	60	56	58
		% retention	73	61	62
		% pass rate	95	82	92
AVCE health and social care (1 year)	3	No. of starts	44	39	46
		% retention	79	87	65
		% pass rate	74	88	97
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	17	12	17
		% retention	52	92	94
		% pass rate	56	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

88. Much of the teaching is good. Lessons are carefully planned with well-designed handouts and task sheets. The individual learning needs of students and their learning styles are systematically addressed and recorded. In the best lessons, teachers question students well to extend their understanding and check learning. In a communication lesson, all students were given an individual learning plan outlining their targets for the lesson and their progress against these targets was carefully monitored. In weaker lessons, the teaching is not sufficiently stimulating and too many students are allowed to remain passive throughout. Effective additional support is provided in many lessons and on an individual basis for students with learning, language or sensory needs. Opportunities for apprentices in the workplace are good. Apprentices change work settings to extend their experience, and mentors work closely with them to demonstrate tasks and procedures.

89. Resources are satisfactory. The majority of staff have appropriate qualifications and experience and 87% either have, or are working towards, a teaching qualification. However, students on a number of specialist courses, such as the NVQ in caring for children and young people, have not had sufficient access to assessors. The library has a good selection of textbooks and appropriate journals. Some students do not have sufficient access to suitable computer equipment and ILT is not sufficiently used in lessons.

90. Assessment practices are satisfactory. For all full-time students, a minimum acceptable grade target is calculated at the start of their programme, based on their entry qualifications and initial assessment. Progress against these targets is monitored in tutorials and several students have achieved above their predicted grades. Assessment is planned appropriately and, generally, constructive feedback is given. Internal verification meets the awarding body's requirements. While assessment practice for work-based learners is satisfactory, some assessment records are very brief and lack sufficient detail of assessment methods used and the evidence collected. Not all records are signed and dated and evidence is not clearly referenced to the standards. Assessors grade written work accurately and give detailed guidance on how work can be improved. However, they do not always recognise the positive aspects of students' effort and achievements. Some cadets do not have a sufficient understanding of the assessment process and are not involved enough in planning their assessments. Sometimes they remain passive or are easily distracted by others in review sessions.

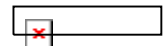
91. The college provides a good range of courses to meet the aspirations of students and the needs of the local community. These courses are provided at all appropriate levels and include the introduction to childcare practice, a 10-week course for students in the community. Courses are run in a wide range of community locations across the city and at suitable times for those who have responsibilities for young families. The college works well with external partners to widen access to training, such as the Sure Start initiative. However, students can only start the cadet programme in September. The key skills provision has been improved since the last inspection and communication, application of number and IT are linked to their studies on the care of children and the elderly. Students in an IT class learned how to use spreadsheets for entering and analysing data from tally charts and questionnaires about children's skills.

92. Students receive good personal and learning support. Following a thorough initial assessment, students identified with additional learning needs receive support from a variety of appropriate approaches, including in-class or individual support. The well-established tutorial system allows tutors to use their knowledge of individual students to meet their personal, social, emotional and academic support needs. The monitoring and support for apprentices are also good. Workplace co-ordinators take care to match the suitability of apprentices for different workplaces to their maturity and previous experience. Work-place supervisors are given a well-designed booklet of information with records to be completed during training. Hospital staff act as mentors to cadets and contribute well to their training and development. Professional qualities such as punctuality and attendance are carefully monitored and assessed. Apprentices' progress is regularly reviewed, but some targets for development are not recorded in sufficient detail.

Leadership and management

93. Leadership and management are good. Informal and formal communications are good. Staff understand their students' individual support needs and progress. Managers monitor the timing of assignments, assessment and test dates and students' achievements. Students have a good understanding of equal opportunities. Access to the college's premises for students with restricted mobility is satisfactory. The training and assessment of NVQs for work-based students has not been well co-ordinated. Quality assurance is satisfactory and a thorough internal verification system is now in place. However, action for improving lack of apprenticeship framework achievements was inappropriate.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- excellent achievement of vocational skills and qualifications

- very good or excellent teaching

- excellent specialist equipment in media, music technology, journalism and technical theatre

- wide range of programmes and progression opportunities

- particularly strong industry and community links in media and journalism

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- lack of punctuality disrupting too many lessons

- unsatisfactory accommodation in some sound, photography and painting studios.

Scope of provision

94. The arts faculty is one of the largest faculties in the college, providing education and training within a purpose-built arts centre and at community centres throughout Liverpool. Courses range from entry level to level 4. The faculty has 76 full-time and 98 part-time staff, and is organised into four major curriculum areas: visual arts and fashion, media and creative communications, performing arts, and vocational media and music. Courses include art, media, graphic design, dance, drama, technical theatre, journalism, music, music technology and fashion. The faculty has a CoVE in media and journalism and plays a major role in an event and technical production CoVE, for which another local FE college is the lead partner. At the time of inspection, there were 1,195 full-time students, of whom just over half were aged 16 to 18, and 1,051 part-time students, of whom 87% were adults.

Achievement and standards

95. Pass rates are high and have improved on many courses over the last three years. Adult students are well motivated and generally make better progress than those aged 16 to 18. Students' achievement of vocational skills and qualifications, particularly in media, journalism, music technology and video production, is excellent for both age groups. Progression between levels within the college and into HE is good, and very good for adult students. Students attain well in all areas and respond well to the set tasks, which promote independent learning. Students make imaginative personal responses to a variety of stimuli in visual arts lessons, and in a music technology lesson, students worked particularly well with external performers, demonstrating good communication and negotiation skills. In some lessons, punctuality is unsatisfactory, and learning is disrupted by late arrivals. For example, a performing arts class was unable to rehearse as planned due to the late arrival of one member of the cast. Retention rates are low on AS-level media and art.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
First diploma in music	2	No. of starts	*	43	37
		% retention	*	70	76
		% pass rate	*	87	89
National diploma design	3	No. of starts	82	74	66
		% retention	57	72	61
		% pass rate	91	96	88
Diploma in foundation studies (art and design)	3	No. of starts	130	131	124
		% retention	76	88	80
		% pass rate	83	85	95
Pre-entry certificate newspaper journalism	4	No. of starts	36	51	42
		% retention	97	98	98
		% pass rate	74	85	73

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

96. Teaching is very good, and in some cases, excellent. In the best lessons, the teaching inspires

students and promotes excellent guided and independent learning. Teachers know their students well and are sensitive to their needs. In one lesson, students responded particularly well to tutors who dressed in bizarre clothes and behaved in unconventional ways while they discussed the concept of surrealism with the class. In a foundation level performing arts lesson, the tutor used a picture quiz and session cards to check and reinforce learning from the previous lesson. The students enjoyed the lesson and helped each other to remember what they had learned. In a media production lesson including students with a range of additional learning needs, the teacher and support staff used technical, interpersonal, and team teaching skills to ensure that all participants gained knowledge and confidence from the lesson. In the less successful lessons, teaching is dull and fails to meet the varying ability levels of the students. Teachers use questions to encourage learning, but these are all too often vague and undirected. Students who are disengaged are insufficiently encouraged to participate.

97. Media, music technology, journalism and technical theatre areas have excellent specialist equipment. The college has made significant investment in industrial-standard design computers, and there are superb television production and editing facilities at the college's Toxteth television centre; an outreach centre developed in partnership with local production companies and the community. In music technology, there are two very well-equipped digital recording studios, two computer-music suites and a multimedia suite. The college's Chilli Discs record label provides students with a good opportunity to experience the whole cycle of music production. The journalism department has particularly good facilities, with a specifically designed news room, five well-equipped computer suites, and a radio station. The performing arts area is well equipped with two dance studios, each with sprung floors, and two good performance spaces. Accommodation in art and design is satisfactory. Some rooms have good and effective displays of work, but others are too small, poorly lit and have little visual stimulation for students. There is also poor housekeeping in some rooms and studios. Cluttered spaces, and insufficient storage restricts the scale of work which can be created. In some open plan studios, the level of ambient noise inhibits learning, and there is sound spill from some sound studios. Teachers, have a wealth of industrial experience and most are very well qualified in their specialist areas. Students benefit from being taught by part-time teachers who work industry.. However, at the time of the inspection, less than half of the teaching staff held appropriate teaching qualifications.

98. Assessment and feedback are satisfactory. The faculty's procedures meet college and awarding body guidelines. Assessment is appropriate, with good use of group critiques providing feedback from the tutor and other students. In one art lesson, students received well-considered feedback structured against a list of key project requirements. They welcomed the opportunity to give and receive constructive criticism. Written feedback is generally timely and informative. Students are made aware of how they can improve, and are encouraged to critically review their own work. Internal verification is effective. Assignments are reviewed before being used, and assessed work is appropriately sampled. Assessment is fair and consistent. Reports from external verifiers are thoroughly reviewed at course and faculty level.

99. The faculty's wide range of courses and progression opportunities meet the needs of students and the local community well. Choices of individual programmes of study and attendance patterns are sensitive to the needs of students with diverse backgrounds and requirements, such as childcare or work commitments.

100. The college works hard to help disadvantaged and/or disaffected students participate in education and training. Its involvement in urban regeneration through education and training is widespread and productive. Toxteth television, for example, provides disadvantaged media students on level 2 programmes with high-quality training and support. Links with industry are excellent, partly as a result of the CoVE development, but also through the college's longstanding collaboration with local media and production companies.

101. Students are supported well. Their learning support needs are identified through initial assessment and they benefit from a range of appropriate support, including individual in-class support, or support outside of the formal lessons. Support is provided sensitively, with good liaison between subject tutors and learning support staff. In a foundation class lesson, for example, additional support tutors worked closely with three of the six students and the tutor. In a performing

arts lesson, a signer helped a hearing impaired student play a full role in all of the activities undertaken. Students have good relationships with their tutors and appreciate the efforts made on their behalf. However, not all of them access the assistance available, and the full assessment of individual needs is not always timely. In one class, students were still waiting for dyslexia testing over a term after they were diagnosed as having a potential need.

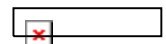
Leadership and management

102. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are good. Managers provide strong, supportive, leadership to curriculum teams who work well together. The faculty has demonstrated energy and responsiveness in addressing the learning needs of local industries and communities. Communication, both formal and informal, is good. Team meetings are held regularly with agendas which promote improvement and development of the curriculum. The involvement of part-time staff in decision making at a local level is generally effective. Collaboration between curriculum teams is regular and productive, both in widening learning opportunities for students, and in developing the curriculum. The promotion of equality of opportunity, and widening participation, is good. The faculty provides a particularly supportive environment for students from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds and is successful in engaging with community partners to develop learning opportunities for some of the most deprived areas of Liverpool.

103. Standards of teaching and learning across the faculty are generally high, but there is insufficient sharing of good teaching and learning practice to promote improvement in all lessons. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

104. The media and journalism CoVE, launched in May 2002, is managed well. Particularly strong industry and community links in media and journalism have guided its establishment, and early development. Targets for the first years of operation have been met, and appropriate new learning programmes have been introduced for students and the local media industry. Facilities at Mediastation, the CoVE's dedicated video post-production facility, are excellent and other areas within the faculty have benefited from significant investment. Staff who work in the CoVE have relevant professional expertise and experience. The challenging, but realistic targets for the CoVE are monitored well. The faculty is also a key partner in a performance and technology CoVE introduced in November 2003 and led by another local FE college. The faculty has a well-equipped performance area which hosts technical training by external suppliers, in addition to its own courses. Students have access to industrial-standard systems, and the expertise of staff who have high levels of professional experience.

English and humanities



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

Strengths

- very good progress by students in relation to their previous achievement

- much excellent or very good teaching

- good use of the intranet for independent study

- highly effective assessment practices

- wide range of courses to meet the needs of students

- very good student support

- very good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on level 3 courses for adults.

Scope of provision

105. The college has over 2,300 enrolments on humanities and English courses. Of these, around 500 are students aged 16 to 18, many of whom are studying full-time GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Adult students study full-time or part-time access to HE and pre-access courses or part-time AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Many subjects are offered both during the day and in the evening. Almost all GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level courses are provided at the Clarence Street site which opened in 2001. GCSE English is also offered at two of the college's other main centres and two outreach centres. The access to HE and pre-access courses are based at the Old Swan site and two outreach centres. In addition, a range of subjects are offered at level 1 at main college sites and outreach centres.

Achievement and standards

106. Pass rates on most courses are good and have improved over the last three years. For example, in GCSE psychology, the pass rate was 77% in 2004 compared to 54% in 2002 and in AS-level law, the pass rate has improved by 20% to well above the national average. Students attain well relative to their prior achievements, and many achieve better than their predicted target grades. Data are collected and analysed using a nationally recognised value added system. Access courses have learning targets set from the initial assessment interview. In most subjects, students exceed their target grades. They develop very good levels of knowledge, skill and understanding throughout the course and produce work of a high standard. Adult access students value the confidence and analytical skills they develop during their course. Progress is carefully documented and analysed to ensure that students receive the maximum support and encouragement to continue their studies. Retention and pass rates of students with additional support needs are high.

107. There are low retention rates on some level 3 courses for adults who attend in the evening. For example, in AS-level law and GCE A-level English language, the retention rate has been below the national average for the last three years. The college has recognised this and taken steps to bring about improvements. There are indications of some improvement in the current year.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	245	290	195
		% retention	73	58	70
		% pass rate	75	70	63
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	67	50	44
		% retention	55	58	68
		% pass rate	54	72	77
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	85	66	73
		% retention	67	52	62
		% pass rate	61	76	82
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	66	117	109
		% retention	88	62	72
		% pass rate	93	90	89
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	33	83	75
		% retention	88	80	87
		% pass rate	100	88	92
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	121	110	147
		% retention	73	78	78
		% pass rate	89	91	96

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

Quality of education and training

108. Much teaching is excellent or very good and none is less than satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teaching is planned well and includes a good variety of activities. Many teachers make good use of ILT which is readily available in classrooms. Teachers have high expectations of students and set challenging tasks and assignments. They actively engage students' interest. In many lessons, teachers use the extensive experience of students skilfully to enhance and promote learning. In a lesson on local history, older students were able to explore the network of relationships in their own lives to understand the process of social change. In a small number of less effective lessons, teachers talk too much and do not sufficiently engage the interest of all their students.

109. Resources are used well to support students' learning. An intranet site has been developed with a good range of learning materials and links which students use frequently both as part of class work and for independent study. Many students make good use of this resource to complete their assignments. Teachers are well qualified with good subject knowledge. They are provided with a wide range of development opportunities on both general and subject-specific issues. Most classrooms are stimulating places in which to learn and many subjects have their own rooms to display students' work and other related materials.

110. Assessment practices are highly effective and thorough across all courses. The assessment process involves both teachers and students in the setting of targets. Students have a clear understanding of their assignment schedules and the examination requirements. Written work in students' portfolios is marked with clear indicators given for improvement. There are sound procedures for the standardisation of coursework across all programmes.

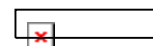
111. The wide range of courses meets the needs of students well. The college offers 17 subjects at GCSE and 29 subjects at advanced level. The access to HE provision runs at outreach centres and is offered both during the day and in the evening. An AS-level philosophy course has been developed in response to student requests. Some students who attend the daytime provision also study further subjects in the evening. Progression through levels and to HE is good. Of the 238 GCE A-level and access students who completed their courses in in 2004, 96% progressed into HE. The access to HE course reflects the students' career goals well, and includes options for health care and teacher training. GCSE and GCE A-level timetables are distributed to local secondary schools to enable school pupils to join college classes.

112. Support for students is very good. All students receive a comprehensive initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills on entry. Additional support needs are identified quickly and support strategies put in place promptly. Childcare is provided either at college sites or is arranged by the college. Students have good access to counselling and other pastoral support. Learning mentors are available to offer individual support to pupils aged 14 to 16 and other students who are at risk of leaving their courses early.

Leadership and management

113. Curriculum management is very good. Roles are clearly defined and staff feel positively supported. Communication with managers and between staff is clear and effective. Monthly team meetings are held to ensure that good practice is shared effectively, to promote staff development and to discuss students' progress. Equal opportunities are promoted actively in schemes of work. The strategies for raising staff and students' awareness of issues around gender, race and disability are effective. Self-assessment reports are analytical, and inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses they identified.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- very good retention and progression rates

- good development of literacy, numeracy and language skills

- strong improvement in students' confidence and personal skills

- very good teaching

- well-qualified staff

- outstanding partnership working

- very good literacy, numeracy and language support for students across the college

- excellent leadership and curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

114. The Fresh Start faculty manages all aspects of literacy and numeracy, including courses for adults, learning support for students on other courses, workplace provision and support integrated within vocational courses. There are currently 1,082 students on literacy, numeracy and GCSE mathematics courses and 970 students on other courses receiving literacy or numeracy support. There is a rolling programme of full-time, part-time and evening courses in literacy and numeracy ranging from 2 hours to 16 hours, and from entry level to level 2. The provision is offered in 19 college and community locations.

115. The foundation studies faculty provides a wide range of part-time, full-time, and evening ESOL programmes on which students can enrol throughout the year as well as short intensive courses. The provision is primarily based at one main college site and in six outreach centres. Language support is available at all six main college centres. College accreditation is offered at entry level 1 to all students on outreach programmes and at other entry levels to students on short vocational taster courses. External accreditation is available at the higher levels. In 2003/04, there were 971 students on ESOL programmes, and 193 received language support. Approximately 70% of the students are asylum seekers or recently settled refugees.

Achievement and standards

116. Retention rates are high on all programmes, at over 75% for literacy and numeracy, and at 90% for ESOL. Students attend regularly and are punctual. Achievements are recognised and celebrated regularly. Pass rates for external qualifications are good on all literacy and numeracy programmes and satisfactory overall on ESOL programmes. Students in receipt of language study support achieve better pass rates than those without support.

117. Students' confidence and personal skills are developed well. They are motivated and take pride in their work. Students achieve well on most programmes. They make good progress in acquiring new literacy, numeracy and language skills. ESOL students develop a good understanding of language structures. Many students take pride in applying their new skills in their everyday lives, both at home and at work. For example, adults frequently state that they are now able to support their children with homework. Students work well together.

118. Retention rates and student progression on literacy, numeracy and language programmes are very good. The college has a well-established system to monitor progression. Around 45% of literacy

and numeracy students either progress to the next level or to vocational courses. ESOL students also progress very well with half continuing on to the next level of ESOL learning and a further 38% entering vocational courses such as IT, science and mathematics, food and catering, leisure, and arts.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic numeracy	entry	No. of starts	*	168	102
		% retention	*	84	88
		% pass rate	*	75	76
Basic literacy	entry	No. of starts	*	184	209
		% retention	*	73	78
		% pass rate	*	52	95
Certificate in adult numeracy	1	No. of starts	*	568	953
		% retention	*	67	80
		% pass rate	*	78	84
Certificate in adult literacy	1	No. of starts	*	538	861
		% retention	*	62	83
		% pass rate	*	75	88
Certificate in adult literacy	2	No. of starts	*	77	182
		% retention	*	79	92
		% pass rate	*	53	72

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

*** course not offered or did not run**

Quality of education and training

119. Most teaching is good and some is excellent. On literacy and numeracy programmes, teachers plan lessons well to develop students' existing skills. The best lessons are lively and fun, and students respond well to challenging tasks. For example, in one literacy lesson where students were analysing text from a novel, good teamwork led to the effective development of communication skills through a lively debate. Students are motivated and support each other well. Teaching on ESOL programmes includes a good range of activities and the thorough practise of language skills. Some teachers are particularly skilled in adjusting schemes of work and lesson plans to suit students' needs. In lessons, teachers monitor progress constantly and give constructive and timely feedback to students. In ESOL lessons, ILT is not used sufficiently. In a minority of lessons, the learning needs of individual students are not fully incorporated in the planning.

120. Staff are very well qualified to implement the Skills for Life agenda. Good progress has been made in acquiring new specialist qualifications. These include 125 staff qualified in initial assessment, and 80 in the Basic Skills Agency vocational core curriculum. ESOL staff are also very well qualified and experienced. Most are actively developing their IT skills. Accommodation is satisfactory with most sites accessible for students with restricted mobility. The drop-in study centres and outreach centres provide good access for adults within the community.

121. Assessment processes identify specific learning needs in literacy and numeracy courses and

vocational programmes effectively. ESOL teachers have developed their own assessment tools to supplement those available nationally. Overall, individual learning plans for literacy and numeracy students are satisfactory. Some are comprehensive. Others do not contain enough detail to enable teachers and students to set and record realistic short-term targets. The reviews of student progress evaluate the development of language and study skills effectively, with students involved closely in the individual action planning which follows.

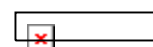
122. There is outstanding partnership work on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. The college engages well with numerous partners to identify and respond to evolving local needs. These include the local council, employers, libraries, museums, Job Employment and Sure Start Training groups, and community organisations such as refugees support networks. There is a good range of provision offered in community venues. The college is well represented on a range of high profile Skills for Life groups across Liverpool to develop local practice and avoid duplication. It has also led on several regional Pathfinder and local initiatives. Language support provided through a range of Step Into programmes helps students to develop their vocational and language skills.

123. The literacy, numeracy and language support for students across the college is very good. Their initial assessment is comprehensive and effective in identifying needs. Since September 2004, of the 1,479 students identified as needing support 970 students have taken up the support. Some 633 attend study support and are working towards a basic skills qualification and 337 are receiving additional learning support. The students who did not take up formal support receive assistance through tutorials, key skills or informal support within the drop-in study centres. Language support is currently being provided to 193 students.

Leadership and management

124. The leadership and curriculum management of the area is excellent. The very clear vision for the Skills for Life agenda is clearly understood by all staff. The literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes are well developed and co-ordinated. The area has strong links with other faculties to embed the development of skills. There is very effective teamwork with a strong emphasis on a sharing culture. The morale of staff is very high and all demonstrate a strong commitment to developing the provision further. Staff development programmes are planned carefully to meet the needs identified by the annual appraisal system and the observation of teaching and learning. Managers use management information systems well to analyse academic performance and to review programmes and inform planning.

Entry-to-employment



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

Strengths

- successful development of personal and practical skills

- good use of specialist resources

- innovative enrichment activities

- strong individual support for students
- good support for E2E training partners by the college.

Weaknesses

- lack of challenge in some lessons
- insufficient work placements
- inadequate reviewing of students' progress
- insufficient quality improvement by one subcontractor.

Scope of provision

125. At the time of the inspection, there were 56 students aged 16 to 18 on the E2E programme, all with a range of personal and social learning needs. Around 50 students were on a new Preparing for Progression (PfP) programme designed for those who require more extensive support to prepare them for vocational training courses. Students can join the training programmes at any time. Students' programmes of study include personal and social development, literacy and numeracy and vocational training. The vocational training is provided in a wide range of occupational areas, including business administration, construction, art, motor vehicle maintenance, hair and beauty and childcare. Students work towards formal qualifications, including literacy, numeracy, and NVQs at level 1. Some students attend work placements. The college sub-contracts the majority of the E2E programme to local training providers, with whom it works in partnership as the lead provider. The programmes are co-ordinated by the Fresh Start faculty.

Achievement and standards

126. Achievement and progression are satisfactory and improving. Of the 317 students who started the programme in 2003/04, 41% achieved their personal learning goals, many progressing to FE. Of the 224 students who started in 2004/05, 38% have already completed their personal learning goals. Although progression to apprenticeships and work-based learning was low in 2003/04, there has been some improvement in 2004/05. Many young people make good progress and many students achieve appropriate literacy and numeracy qualifications. In 2003/04, 52 students achieved a literacy qualification, 40 at entry level and 12 at level 1, and 57 students achieved a numeracy qualification, 46 at entry level and 11 at level 1.

127. Achievement of level 1 NVQs is particularly good in hairdressing. Students also achieve units towards NVQs in construction, administration, early years and motor vehicle maintenance. NVQ

portfolios contain a satisfactory standard of work and are well presented. Students are not punctual to many lessons, particularly the first lesson of the day.

Quality of education and training

128. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory, but few lessons were good or better. The best lessons are planned well, and teachers use a variety of activities which engage and motivate students and cater for individual needs. Teaching of basic skills is imaginative and placed in the context of different occupational areas. Most students develop good personal and practical skills through the wide range of activities. They develop self-confidence, timekeeping, organisation, communication and teambuilding skills. Many students also develop good occupational skills. Construction students develop their bricklaying skills quickly and often choose to stay after class for over three hours to finish their building projects. Many of the poorer lessons are not sufficiently planned and do not challenge students effectively. There is insufficient use of ILT in lessons, although computers are readily available. Some jobsearch activities are unplanned and unimaginative.

129. Good use is made of specialist resources in administration, art, construction, motor vehicle maintenance and early years. The specialist accommodation at the hair and beauty training provider is particularly good, with up-to-date salons creating a real working environment. There are good learning resources for personal and social education across all training providers. The E2E base room at the college is spacious and well equipped, but training rooms at some of the providers' premises are cramped. Learning resources for basic skills are excellent, and adapted to the individual needs of students. There are insufficient work placements available, particularly in construction and motor vehicle maintenance. Most staff have teaching, training and assessor qualifications, and appropriate occupational experience. Most training providers have specialist basic skills staff.

130. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Work is marked regularly and students receive constructive feedback on how to improve their work. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements. NVQ portfolios contain a range of appropriate evidence. There are wide variations in the way progress reviews are carried out across the partnership. Some are thorough, regular and well structured. However, in one training provider, there are no reviews which consider all aspects of each student's progress. Some individual learning plans provide realistic specific targets to be achieved, while others are vague and unhelpful. Monitoring systems are used effectively to measure students' progress towards qualifications.

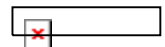
131. The individual programmes are well designed. The college and its E2E partners work well with community organisations to widen access to students who would not normally enter formal education. The PFP course enables additional support to be given to students with severe personal, social and learning needs. Through links with external organisations such as Weston Spirit and Everton Football Club, the partnership is able to include some innovative enrichment activities, to develop self-confidence. Links with construction and media organisations provide opportunities for work 'tasters'. One E2E partner does not provide literacy and numeracy support. This disadvantages students who do not attend the support offered by the college at drop-in study centres.

132. Guidance and support are good. Students are well prepared for the programme. Induction is satisfactory across the partnership. Initial assessment is comprehensive, and the results are used well to allocate support. Students across the partnership have access to all of the college's student support services, as well as a wide number of external agencies specialising in issues such as substance abuse, homelessness, debt and mental health. Staff have frequent contact with the probation service, the police, reparation workers and Connexions advisers. Connexions personal advisers provide strong support, giving students an independent source of advice and guidance throughout their training. Teachers and assessors send work to students in prison to enable offenders to continue their studies. Some habitual young offenders have continued with their E2E programme as an alternative to custody and have gone on to take higher level qualifications, or enter employment, without re-offending.

Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management are good. The E2E programme is well managed by the college. The college has adopted a consultative approach to standardise procedures for E2E. There is effective sharing of good practice at regular meetings which are well attended by the training providers. The college provides the training providers with excellent support and staff development in aspects such as dealing with challenging behaviour, target-setting, observation of training, progress reviews, health and safety and the college value added system. However, there is still too much inconsistency in implementing procedures across all providers. Quality improvement is poor at one provider where there are weak procedures for jobsearch, reviewing students' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and students feel protected against bullying and harassment. The self-assessment process is established and self-critical. The college identified, and is in the process of addressing, most of the weaknesses found by inspectors.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning plans
- very good teaching and learning to meet individual needs
- excellent use of initial assessment
- outstanding partnerships with external agencies which extend the curriculum
- highly effective student support
- very good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ILT.

Scope of provision

134. The college provides a pre-entry level programme for students with learning difficulties, an entry-level programme for students experiencing, or recovering from, enduring mental-health issues and a level 1 programme for students with visual impairment. The aims of the programme are to encourage students to become more independent, to relate to others effectively and to participate in a range of activities and experiences that promote learning. Students aim to achieve realistic priorities identified in their individual learning plans. At the time of the inspection, there were 162 full-time and 216 part-time students, 91% of whom were adults.

Achievement and standards

135. Achievement of the challenging and meaningful personal targets identified in students' individual learning plans is good. Students develop their personal and social skills to increase their confidence and respect for others. The pass rate of students entered for external qualifications is good, with 89% of students passing the essential skills award and 85% passing the English Speaking Board award. The retention rate for 2003/04 was 83%.

136. Progression is good, with 82% of students on the specialist course for visual impairment progressing to mainstream programmes. Students aged 16 to 18 make good progress, with 50% progressing to higher level programmes within the specialist provision and 50% progressing to mainstream programmes. Students are motivated to learn and some students take additional courses in basic skills or vocational subjects, including horticulture. Punctuality and behaviour are good and attendance during the week of inspection was 82%.

Quality of education and training

137. Most teaching is very good and none is less than satisfactory. Teachers are highly committed to the development of students who have broad and complex needs. They demonstrate a wide range of teaching and learning strategies that motivate students and enable them to complete challenging and realistic tasks successfully. The majority of lessons are planned well. All lesson plans are based on individual student targets which are developed following a thorough initial assessment of the students' abilities. Most lessons are activity based and engage students fully. Learning materials are produced at a level suitable to each student's ability. In one outstanding communication lesson, the lecturer used several effective teaching methods, including ILT, to ensure that a wide variety of different learning needs were met. Based on real life situations, one very good group tutorial dealt successfully with the issues of peer pressure and bullying. The students were able to adopt strategies which effectively asserted their disagreement with the proposals of others in the group. The Skills for Life Agenda is a central part of the curriculum. Appropriate individual targets, including those for literacy and numeracy, are set for students in all lessons and progress towards them is recorded after each activity. There is little use of ILT in lessons.

138. Teachers and support staff are well qualified. All full-time teachers have a certification in education and all part-time teachers have, or are working towards a level 3 teaching qualification. The college has implemented a policy to support staff in gaining level 2 in English and mathematics. The introduction of a sensory room has had a strong impact on the development of students with profound learning difficulties. Teachers use an effective training package designed to promote and initiate communications for students with autism and other communication deficits. The specialist IT room for students with visual impairments has an extensive range of resources, including speech and magnification software.

139. Initial assessment is excellent. The comprehensive initial assessment process covers information from the student's previous placement, predictive assessment used to identify students who have the potential to make progress in reading, writing and numeracy skills and an initial assessment linked to the essential skills award. Once the initial assessment has been completed, a baseline assessment profile for each student is produced by teachers and support staff. From this, an individual learning plan is produced for each student to inform all lesson planning.

140. Outstanding partnerships with external agencies extend the curriculum opportunities for students. In addition to strong links with local schools, the college is actively involved in a number of

projects including the RNIB national pilot to enhance provision for students with a visual impairment. The college has been chosen to develop a 'hub centre' for the region. One curriculum manager is seconded as the area manager in the North of England for the pathfinder project, Learning for Living - Developing Access to Skills for Life for Adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

Leadership and management

141. Leadership and management are very good. The two curriculum-group managers provide a clear vision and leadership for staff. Managers work closely together in the planning process and the monitoring of targets. All staff are aware of the targets for their area. Staff teams are fully involved in the production of a frank and accurate self-assessment report. Communication is good. Staff meetings are held regularly and clear actions are recorded and monitored. Part-time staff are encouraged to attend meetings and their contribution is valued. Good staff development opportunities help staff to respond to the demands of a changing curriculum. The observation of teaching is well organised and results in the sharing of good practice. There is an excellent team spirit. Equality and diversity are promoted throughout the programme area and some of the management team are active within other parts of the college developing equality of opportunity.

Part D: College data

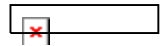
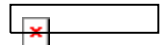


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	28	53
2	33	23
3	38	19
4/5	0	2
Other	1	3
Total	100	100



Source: provided by the college in 2005

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,537	844	8
Land-based provision	9	51	0
Construction	179	334	2



Engineering, technology and manufacture	232	441	2
Business administration, management and professional	463	2,176	9
Information and communication technology	1,676	3,973	21
Retailing, customer service and transportation	23	58	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	469	989	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	108	283	1
Health, social care and public services	261	2,017	8
Visual and performing arts and media	1,344	1,882	11
Humanities	849	1,964	10
English, languages and communication	1,697	641	8
Foundation programmes	1,277	2,194	12
Unknown AOL	183	602	3
Total	10,307	18,449	100

Source: provided by the college in 2005

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
1	Starters excluding transfers	1,885	1,640	1,970	7,976	8,960	9,407
	Retention rate %	80	74	74	80	76	78
	National average %	74	75	75	74	71	71
	Pass rate %	71	76	76	70	78	83
	National average %	65	73	73	68	76	76
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,190	2,125	1,854	5,105	3,479	3,360
	Retention rate %	73	68	73	81	77	79
	National average %	70	70	70	69	68	68
	Pass rate %	72	78	78	74	74	76
	National average %	68	73	73	69	73	73

3	Starters excluding transfers	2,408	2,647	2,610	3,358	2,889	2,839
	Retention rate %	75	72	73	79	75	73
	National average %	75	75	75	69	67	67
	Pass rate %	76	82	82	75	80	82
	National average %	73	76	76	69	73	73
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	218	231	265
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	85	74	81
	National average %	**	**	**	67	70	70
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	58	50	43
	National average %	**	**	**	48	56	56

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges with a high widening participation factor.

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 2000/2001 to 2002/03: College ISR

**fewer than 15 students enrolled*

***data unavailable*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	79	21	0	76
Level 2 (intermediate)	73	24	3	55
Level 1 (foundation)	61	31	8	39
Other sessions	71	27	2	49
Totals	72	25	3	219

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