



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## Cardinal Newman Sixth Form College

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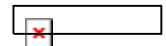
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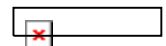
**Basic information about the college**



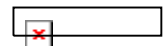
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Name of college:	Cardinal Newman
Type of college:	Sixth form college
Principal:	Stephen Pegg
Address of college:	Lark Hill Preston Lancashire PR1 4HD
Telephone number:	01772 460181
Fax number:	01772 204671
Chair of governors:	John Cowdall
Unique reference number:	130745
Name of reporting inspector:	Patrick Geraghty HMI
Dates of inspection:	7-11 February 2005

**Part A: Summary**



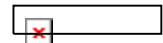
**Information about the college**



Cardinal Newman is a Catholic sixth form college in the centre of Preston. It was formed in 1978 from the amalgamation of three Roman Catholic grammar schools. It is located within the Roman Catholic diocese of Lancaster and also serves students from the diocese of Salford and the archdiocese of Liverpool. Cardinal Newman is the post-16 provider for the Newman Partnership, a working group consisting of the college and nine Catholic partnership high schools. The college is also an increasingly attractive option for full-time students of other faiths who attend high schools in Preston and the surrounding area. Year-on-year applications from these schools have increased significantly. The college draws from both deprived and affluent wards and forms a socially mixed and diversified educational community. In 2003, general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) attainment in Preston was below the Lancashire and English average. Progression to post-16 education was also below average at 66% in 2003.

In 2004, the number of 16 to 18 full-time students studying at the college increased significantly to 1,672. The number of students aged 19 and over continues to fall. Less than 300 part-time students aged 19 and over are currently on role. At the start of the academic year 2004/05, over 80% of students were aged 16 to 18 and on level 3 courses. Courses offered are advanced subsidiary level (AS level) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE); at level 2, general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate, BTEC and GCSEs and at level 1, GNVQ foundation and an essential skills course for young people with specific learning needs. In addition to the 16 to 18 provision the college offers a limited range of part-time courses for adults, especially within basic skills and information technology (IT). Adult courses are offered on the college's main site and in a number of community-based centres.

### How effective is the college?



The inspection graded the quality of provision in six curriculum areas. Inspectors judged the curriculum to be good in all areas. There was a contributory grade of outstanding for leisure and tourism. The college's main strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

#### **Key strengths**

- good and improving achievement and value added on the majority of courses
  
- much good teaching
  
- good range of subjects for students aged 16 to 18
  
- effective support for students
  
- comprehensive and effective assessment and monitoring of students' progress

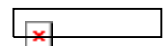
- welcoming and inclusive environment
- strong leadership by the senior management team to promote improvements
- effective governance
- good management at departmental and faculty level
- strong promotion of gospel values which informs and inspires strong student commitment to, and enthusiasm for, college life.

***What should be improved***

- the use of information and learning technology (ILT) in the classroom
- some outdated and cramped accommodation
- arrangements for the management of key skills provision
- low pass and retention rates on a minority of courses.

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

**Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas**

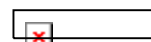


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were*

*judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5).*

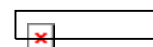
Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	<b>Good.</b> High pass rates in GCE A-level science and very good achievement in biology and environmental science. Very good teaching in science with good support for students within the area. Pass rates for AS-level physics and GCSE science are low and in mathematics lessons there is insufficient active involvement of students. Leadership and management are good.
Business and leisure and tourism	<b>Good.</b> Contributory grade for leisure and tourism is <b>outstanding</b> . High pass rates on most courses in 2004. Excellent teaching and learning on leisure and tourism courses and much good teaching on business courses. Learning materials are good. There are low retention rates on some vocational business courses. There is insufficient use of external business links on business programmes.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high for most courses. Retention rates for a minority of courses are low. There is much good teaching and standards of practical work are high. Enrichment in performing arts is good. Some accommodation in performing arts is unsuitable.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> Many pass rates are high. There is much good teaching and assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. There is insufficient use of IT in the classroom. Some accommodation is unsuitable. Management is good.
Psychology and sociology	<b>Good.</b> Pass and retention rates are high. There is much very good teaching and assessment practice. There is insufficient use of IT and underdeveloped curriculum enrichment. Leadership and management are highly effective.
English and modern foreign languages	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high for AS-level and GCE A-level English, but low in GCSE English. There is much good teaching with effective planning and rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress. The use of IT is underdeveloped in teaching and learning. Leadership and management are highly effective.

### How well is the college led and managed?



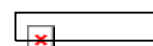
Leadership and management are good. The new principal and senior management team have rapidly given a formerly underperforming college a strong sense of direction. A vision for the college based on high expectation and raising students' achievements has been embraced by staff and governors. Rigorous and systematic quality assurance procedures have resulted in significant improvements in pass and retention rates. The Catholic mission fully informs and directs the life of the college and is actively led and supported by the leadership team. Governors and staff have undertaken a thorough review and consultation which has led to a revised mission and values statement. The life of the college demonstrates in every way a welcoming community, inclusive of all and respectful of different cultures and faiths. Management information systems are effective and provide accurate data. The continuing poor performance of a minority of courses is being addressed by detailed and practical action plans. Flexible and innovative staff development programmes have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Managers at all levels provide strong leadership. The management of both IT in the curriculum and key skills is underdeveloped. Financial management is good and governance is effective. The college provides good value for money.

### **To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?**



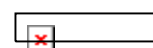
The college's response to social inclusion is good. The college attracts students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Priority is given to Catholic students, but others are welcomed and account for 48% of the student population. Some 16% of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 37% from disadvantaged areas. There are good links with local community groups and the local mosque. Basic skills teaching is provided in a variety of outreach centres. College teachers work with gifted and talented pupils in some local partner schools. The college has extended vocational provision at levels 1 and 2 and successfully developed an essential skills programme. Students from different backgrounds socialise and work well together. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and a recognition of different cultures and beliefs that demonstrates the ethos and mission of the college. The college complies with the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and is almost fully compliant with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2001 (SENDA).

### **How well are students and trainees guided and supported?**



Support for students is good. Pre-course advice and guidance are comprehensive and help to ensure that students are enrolled on suitable courses. Induction is well planned and helps students to settle into college quickly. Teachers are very supportive and subject specific support is readily available. Students receive good timely and useful information to help them in their university applications and careers guidance is also offered. Arrangements for financial assistance and for counselling are in place. There is an appropriate child protection policy. The tutorial programme includes group tutorials and regular one-to-one reviews which students find useful. The group tutorial programme omits some important aspects of health education. Additional learning support needs are identified in several ways and in-class or individual support provided. Arrangements for literacy and numeracy support are not yet systematic and some students who would benefit from extra help choose not to access it. Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of additional support are being developed. Attendance is monitored effectively.

### **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***

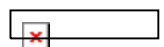
- friendly atmosphere and sense of community
  
- opportunity to study among students from different faiths

- approachable, helpful teachers
- good teaching
- good support
- wide range of courses
- good feedback on progress.

***What they feel could be improved***

- some unsuitable accommodation
- inadequate and overcrowded social areas
- key skills
- group tutorials
- access to computers.

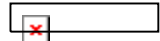
**Other information**



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

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**



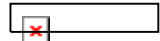
**Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors**

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	80	20	0
Learning 16-18	81	19	0

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

*\*work-based learning*

**Achievement and standards**



1. The standards of students' achievements are high. The majority of students at the college are aged 16 to 18 and enrolled on AS-level, GCE A-level and vocational certificate of education (VCE) courses. Adult numbers have declined over the last two years and now represent 300 enrolments, mostly in centres in the community for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and information and communications technology (ICT) courses.

**16 to 18 year olds**

2. In 2004, the pass rate for GCE A level was 98% and for AS level was 90%. Pass rates are significantly above national averages in, for example, AS-level biology at 95%, environmental science at 100%, GCE A-level accounting at 100%, and AVCE business at 96%. Some subjects continue to record pass rates below the national average. For example, in AS-level physics at 60%, and AS-level human biology at 64%. At level 2, pass rates are variable. For example, in 2004, the pass rate in GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism was 100% with higher grade achievement 52% above national average. However, pass rates in both GCSE science and GCSE English are below national averages. There is good progression between levels. For example, in leisure and tourism, progression from level 2 to level 3 has averaged 60% in the last three years and progression in business from foundation to intermediate in 2003 was 67%. Key skills are taught in separate or integrated courses. Portfolios completion is low.



3. The college retention rate at level 3 in 2004 was 88%. Some areas have improved their retention rates impressively. For example, GCSE mathematics at 86%, AS-level business studies at 92%, and AS-level drama, history and sociology all at 92%. However, a small minority of subjects continue to record retention rates below national averages. For example, in AVCE business double award at 56% and GNVQ art and design at 55%.

4. The college uses national indicators of value added to assess its own performance. Analysis of students' value added achievements shows that students are performing better than expected in comparison with their GCSE scores on entry. Students make good progress, regardless of their starting points. The grades students achieve in comparison with their predicted grades are particularly impressive in AS-level accounting, biology, communications studies, design and technology, environmental science, film studies, geography, German, mathematics (mechanics), physical education and textiles. At GCE A level, there is high value added performance in accounting, biology, dance, drama and theatre studies, economics, English language and literature, environmental science, ICT, psychology and textiles. Value added was outstanding in AVCE (double award) art and design and travel and tourism.

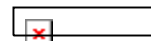
5. Inspectors judged that students' attainment was good or better in 76% of the lessons observed. Standards are particularly high in business and humanities. Students bring a sense of enjoyment and inquisitiveness to their work. When working independently, they demonstrate well-developed research skills. In science, students ask interesting and demanding questions and demonstrate good analytical skills. Vocational students on leisure and tourism programmes produce high-quality work. In humanities, students engage in intellectual debate with confidence and demonstrate an impressive grasp of analytic, evaluative and listening skills. Their written work is thorough and perceptive, and demonstrates good understanding of complex concepts. In English, students display a sensitive understanding of literary texts and apply the rules of linguistic analysis aptly.

6. Attendance during the inspection was 85% which is similar to the national average for sixth form colleges. It was highest in science, mathematics and humanities at 86% and lowest in business at 83%. Students arrive punctually to lessons.

### **Adult learners**

7. The college's cohort of adult students was reduced significantly in 2004. During the inspection, there were only a limited amount of observations of adult lessons possible within the agreed curriculum areas. The vast bulk of adult provision is taught at outreach centres and focuses on ESOL and ICT.

### **Quality of education and training**



8. There is much good and very good teaching. Teaching and learning were graded by inspectors in 84 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 80% of these and satisfactory in 20%. Teaching was very good or excellent in 42%. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Learning was good or better in 81% of lessons observed and satisfactory in 19%. There was no unsatisfactory learning. Attainment was good or better in 76% of lessons and satisfactory in 24%.

9. Lessons are characterised by thorough preparation and skilful teaching. Students learn how to acquire, organise and use new knowledge. Learning materials are prepared well. Lessons are planned to enable students of differing abilities and learning styles to develop. Teachers ask well-considered and apt questions, set appropriate extension tasks, and ensure that resources suit the learning objectives. High standards are demanded and students respond positively to the challenge. Teachers use a range of teaching methods which encourage the development of higher level skills, including analytical and evaluative skills. There is good rapport between staff and students. Students bring enthusiasm, inquisitiveness and a sense of enjoyment to learning. Group discussion work and

debate are regularly of a high standard.

10. The minority of lessons graded satisfactory are distinguished from the good and better lessons by a lack of student involvement and a slower pace of work. Group work is organised less skilfully. Students are not challenged to evaluate and develop their ideas. In many areas, ILT is not a central part of teaching and learning.

11. The college offers a welcoming, well-maintained and safe environment. The main college buildings include a Georgian mansion house and distinctive nineteenth-century chapel set in attractive grounds. The estate is well managed and the programme of planned maintenance and refurbishment is reviewed frequently in the light of the developing property strategy. The majority of college accommodation is bright, clean and most areas are accessible to students with mobility difficulties. There are vivid displays of students' work and curriculum materials in classrooms and communal areas. Curriculum areas are well laid out. The canteen and student social areas are too small for the number of students using them. Some classrooms and teaching areas are inadequate or unsuitable for the timetabled activities, particularly in dance and humanities.

12. Teachers are well qualified in their subjects and the vast majority have a teaching qualification. Many teachers have substantial teaching experience and a number are senior examiners and moderators. Arrangements for staff development are good. New teachers receive good support. Internal staff development is particularly well matched to both college and individual needs. The college's ethos and mission feature prominently in staff induction and in the college staff development programmes. The library and learning resources centre are well managed and provide good support for learning. Student borrowing is high. Links with curriculum areas are particularly good with a member of the library and learning resources staff providing tuition on research skills and electronic information retrieval. There is an appropriate range of books, magazines and journals. The current overall ratio of computers to students is satisfactory. Network and learning resources are not sufficient to meet the needs of all students.

13. Assessment is rigorous in most areas. Monitoring of students' academic progress is very good. All students are set a minimum target grade on the basis of their GCSE grades and good use is made of this by teachers and personal tutors. Lesson plans make provision for meeting the needs of the different abilities of learners. Progress reviews are carried out at regular intervals. Good use is made of an electronic system which gives personal tutors easy access to subject teachers' grades and comments. Printed copies of these reports keep parents informed about progress. Individual learning plans include individual targets. Some are appropriately specific, but others are too general or are not time constrained. Homework is set regularly and generally includes a variety of tasks. Assignments for vocational courses are relevant. Work is marked promptly. Feedback is good, with detailed and clear guidance on how students can improve their performance. Coursework deadlines are generally managed well and within departments internal deadlines are staggered to help avoid overload.

14. Examination preparation is thorough. In most areas, standardisation and internal moderation are carried out in accordance with awarding body requirements, but there are occasional examples of overgenerous marking. There is no systematic initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy levels beyond GCSE grades. Assessment practices in social sciences are particularly effective. A wide variety of in-class methods of assessment are used including quick tests, directed questions, and quizzes. Data from formal assessments are collated and analysed thoroughly. Underperforming students are given help to improve.

15. The college offers a broad range of AS levels and GCE A levels and an increasing number of vocational courses, particularly at levels 2 and 3. The timetable is designed to maximise subject choice. There is also an essential skills course and adult literacy and numeracy provision. Links with local high schools are productive. The Newman partnership, between the college and nine Catholic high schools, cements the good working relationships through regular meetings between the principal and school heads. The college provides an introduction to critical thinking course for gifted and talented pupils in some schools.

16. The college fulfils its legal obligations in relation to religious education and collective worship.

The work and contribution of the college chaplaincy to the Catholic ethos of the college are exemplary. The preparation and provision of prayer and religious services across the college are excellent. Prayer follows the pattern of the liturgical year and features strongly at times of celebration such as the leavers' Mass. Mass is offered each Wednesday and daily prayer is provided in the college chapel. The chaplaincy team provides outstanding leadership in drawing together staff and students into a range of activities. Provision for general religious education is very good and well attended. Excellent progress has been made in the development of the religious education programme. Students appreciate and value the time spent in exploring spiritual, moral and religious questions. The course meets the requirements of the national accrediting body for post-16 general religious education and almost all students complete and pass the course. Appropriate courses are offered in AS-level and GCE A-level religious studies. There are examples of excellent teaching within the religious studies programme.

17. Very good links have been formed with the local mosque and a variety of community groups including an Asian women's centre, a Hindu centre and a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. Links with industry are underdeveloped. Managers make good use of data in monitoring the college's effectiveness in meeting the needs of individual and groups of students and widening the participation of students from traditionally under-represented groups.

18. Participation in enrichment activities is voluntary and many students are keen to join the exciting and successful activities including sports, drama and music performances, visits to other countries and visiting speakers. A broad range of opportunities is offered within most faculties. The college has developed effective partnerships with local Catholic schools. There is a developing programme of shared initiatives such as the training of Eucharistic ministers. Links with parishes and the dioceses need to be strengthened.

19. Support for students is good. Support is provided through subject-specific support in study centres and from teachers, student services, the tutorial system, learning support, and the chaplaincy. Students particularly value the friendly relationships with their teachers and the encouragement and support they receive from them. Good information and advice and guidance are available to prospective students through the prospectus, open evenings and individual interviews. Considerable care is taken to ensure that students are placed on the right course. The student diary provides much useful information. Induction is well planned and incorporates a variety of activities which are effective in introducing students to the college and their courses.

20. The tutorial programme includes group tutorials and one-to-one reviews. The quality of group tutorials varies. The programme includes useful topics, but insufficient attention is given to aspects of health education such as relationships and drugs awareness. Personal tutors actively review progress during individual reviews. Individual learning plans are used in formal progress reviews, but there is no formal recording system for the informal one-to-one reviews which take place regularly. Groups of personal tutors are supported by senior tutors, who also operate a duty rota for dealing with any problems requiring immediate attention. Additional learning support needs are identified during interviews, at enrolment, through information from partner high schools and referrals from teachers. Routine initial assessment of learning styles also helps identify those with dyslexia. Learning support is arranged mainly through in-class support and one-to-one sessions. The arrangements to identify and provide literacy and numeracy support are not systematic. Some students who would benefit from additional support do not take it up. The college has not evaluated the impact of learning support in the past, but new systems are now being introduced to measure this.

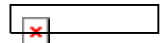
21. A recent successful project involves the appointment of a multi-lingual Asian community worker to support young Asian males. He acts as a role model, offers individual mentoring and makes effective use of his community links. Retention rates for this group have improved.

22. Advice and guidance on university applications are very good. Careers guidance is also offered and links with local Connexions advisers are well established. Student services provide information about financial help. Counselling is available through college and specialist counsellors and the chaplaincy. The recent appointments of a director of pastoral services and a learning support manager have strengthened the management of different aspects of student support. There is a lack

of overall co-ordination of student support services at senior management level, but relationships are good and much informal communication takes place which ensures that there is no disadvantage to students. There is an appropriate child protection policy in place with a designated senior member of staff responsible for child protection issues.

23. There are very effective systems for monitoring attendance, including a daily e-mail absence report and a central system for authorising absence. Online attendance records with reports at different levels enable personal tutors, subject teachers and managers to check attendance and pursue absence vigorously.

## Leadership and management



24. Leadership and management are good. The principal took up post in August 2003 and has subsequently been joined by a new senior management team. The college they took over was underachieving. The new team has been quick to address the causes of underperformance and has given the college a strong sense of direction. It has successfully established a vision for the college based on high expectations and an unswerving focus on raising achievement. At the same time, the college has stayed true to its core values as a community which cares for the needs of the individual. The college has prioritised its provision for 16 to 18 year olds and has rationalised its programme for adults. Applications to the college for September 2004 rose by 40%, enabling the college to grow by nearly 200 full-time students aged 16 to 18. In 2003/04, overall pass rates at all levels were above national averages and retention rates improved significantly. For most courses, students' grades were similar to those expected based on their prior attainment or better. There remain a few courses where achievement is significantly below national averages.

25. The management team have raised the aspirations of teachers and students in the college. Staff have responded positively to the strong sense of purpose which the senior management team has brought to all aspects of the college's work. The principal has been personally active in improving relationships with partner schools. Head teachers feel the college is now responding to their needs. Communication in the college is good. The principal publishes a weekly newsletter which keeps staff informed of developments and also reinforces the direction and ambition of the college. There is a weekly 10 minute staff briefing and a full staff meeting every month. Senior managers are open and consultative, and staff value their approachability and visibility around college. Senior managers have weekly one-to-one meetings with the staff they line manage as well as a weekly team meeting. This pattern is repeated by middle managers and their teams. The senior management team meets frequently and holds a monthly meeting where performance indicators are monitored. These arrangements speed up communication both upwards and downwards and problems are identified and responded to promptly.

26. Commitment to the Catholic ethos is outstanding and celebrated within a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. The Catholic mission fully informs and directs the life of the college and is actively led and supported by the leadership team. The principal ensures that the college's mission and values statement is shared across the college. He meets weekly with the chaplaincy co-ordinator. Governors and staff have undertaken a thorough review and consultation which has led to a revised mission and values statement. The vision is for the college to be a centre of educational excellence built on faith, respect and trust, where diversity is celebrated and individual talent nurtured. The life of the college demonstrates in every way a welcoming community, inclusive of all and respectful of different cultures and faiths.

27. Quality assurance is comprehensive and thorough. All staff are involved closely throughout the process. Underperformance is always challenged and addressed by detailed, practical and often radical action plans which are monitored and supported by senior management. Self-assessment reviews at course and faculty level are analytical, self-critical and supported by a good range of evidence. The grades in the college self-assessment report reflect closely the judgements of

inspectors. Courses are reviewed three times a year by the head of faculty, deputy principal and principal. Current data are analysed rigorously and action plans are monitored and refocused. For courses which are underperforming, these reviews are conducted monthly. The lesson observation system is thorough. A range of support is provided to individuals or departments where the standard of teaching is no better than satisfactory. Strategies such as mentoring, sharing of lesson plans and peer observation are employed effectively. There are currently no formal annual reviews of support services and staff are not surveyed as users of college services. All members of staff have an annual performance management review. The reviews focus on setting objectives and identifying development needs, but there is no recorded evaluative summary of an individual's progress and development over the year.

28. Staff development is linked firmly to college strategic priorities and the outcomes of individual performance management reviews. There is an extensive programme of in-house staff development activities throughout the year. A weekly after college slot called 'bite-size training' is flexible and responsive to training needs as and when they are identified. Its focus is on teaching and learning and it is a very effective mechanism for sharing good practice. The director of teaching and learning works closely with individuals and departments, and tailors training to meet individual needs. One initiative encourages all staff to spend two days each year observing best practice in other institutions. A programme of whole-day training events is well co-ordinated and often involves specialist external speakers. Staff are encouraged to attend appropriate external training. A rigorous interview process has led to some very effective external appointments while at the same time the college has promoted and successfully developed existing staff into key roles.

29. Curriculum management is very strong across the college. Heads of faculty and heads of department provide very effective management to their teams. The arrangements for the management of key skills are ineffective.

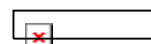
30. The college has a strong commitment to equal opportunities which are well managed. Appropriate policies are in place and are monitored regularly. Equality and diversity targets are a central part of the self-assessment review process and the cycle of course reviews. The college is committed to implementing the findings of the disability access report that it commissioned in order to become fully compliant with the SENDA. Recruitment, retention and pass rates are analysed by ethnicity and gender at college and course level, and inform self-assessment reports.

31. The college's management information systems have improved significantly in the last 18 months. Returns are now timely and accurate. Regular, reliable data reports underpin quality assurance procedures and allow frequent close monitoring of key performance indicators. The management of IT in the curriculum is underdeveloped which is holding back the integration of ILT in teaching and learning. ILT champions are only just being established. All of these issues are addressed in the current development plan.

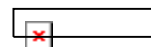
32. Operationally, the college gives good value for money. A course costing model is applied to proposed new courses. Invoices are monitored closely and checked for best value. There is an efficient and effective system for the deployment of teachers and classrooms. Average class size and attendance rates are high and the college is now achieving high retention and pass rates. The college remains in category B for financial health.

33. Governors support strongly the current strategic priorities. There is an effective committee structure and there is good communication between the committees and the full governing body. Links are good between governors and senior managers and the curriculum quality and standards committee receives regular presentations on curriculum areas by the relevant middle managers.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



## Science and mathematics



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates at GCE A level in science subjects
  
- very good achievement in biology and environmental science
  
- much very good teaching in science subjects
  
- good support for students
  
- good leadership and management.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates in AS-level physics and GCSE science
  
- insufficiently active involvement of students in mathematics lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

34. AS-level and GCE A-level courses are offered in physics, chemistry, biology, environmental science, mathematics and further mathematics. GCSE mathematics and science are also offered as is City and Guilds adult numeracy. Currently, there are 1,123 student enrolments on full-time mathematics and science courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

35. Most pass and retention rates are high on GCE A-level courses. Pass rates are also high in AS-level biology. There is very good achievement in biology and environmental science. For example, in 2004, the pass rates and percentage of high grades in AS-level and GCE A-level biology and environmental science were significantly above national averages. Both subjects were in the top

quartile for the advanced level performance systems. On the majority of courses, students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE. The percentage of students achieving A\* to C grades in GCSE mathematics is above national averages for students repeating this course of study. Achievement in AS-level physics is poor. Pass rates have been below national averages consistently for the past 3 years. Pass rates in GCSE science are very low and have continued to decline. Strategies to improve retention rates have proved effective.

36. The standard of student's work is high. In the sciences, students ask interesting and demanding questions and demonstrate good analytical skills. The number of students progressing from AS-level to GCE A-level courses has been smaller than would be expected, but has increased in 2004.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	217	192	180
		% retention	81	79	86
		% pass rate	50	44	54
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	96	102	116
		% retention	84	79	89
		% pass rate	86	77	87
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	135	120	146
		% retention	92	84	90
		% pass rate	75	84	78
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	58	44	69
		% retention	93	75	87
		% pass rate	69	73	60
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	101	88	58
		% retention	94	97	98
		% pass rate	95	99	100
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	56	50	43
		% retention	96	98	98
		% pass rate	94	94	100
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	78	76	66
		% retention	99	97	95
		% pass rate	96	100	89

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

***Quality of education and training***

37. Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons. All lessons are very well planned and there are high-quality worksheets. There is much very good teaching in science. Lessons are lively and use a variety of activities to stimulate students' interest. In one particularly effective environmental science lesson, students were given 17 short questions to answer as they watched a 7 minute long video about the extraction of iron ore. In another effective lesson on redox titrations, students used ionic equations to calculate molar quantities with skill and confidence. Mathematics lessons lack variety of activity. Questioning of students is weak in some lessons and teachers do not initiate

sufficient discussion to better involve students. ILT is used in some science lessons, but it is not established firmly in teaching across the area. Efforts are made to enrich students' learning experience with visits to universities and local industries.

38. Resources are good. Teachers are specialists and science lessons are supported by capable technicians. There is an extensive programme of in-service training designed to strengthen staff expertise. Mathematics rooms are spacious and laboratories are relatively modern and well equipped. A number of laboratories have fixed data projectors and portable projectors are available. Paper-based resources are excellent in science and good in mathematics. Learning materials on the college intranet are easily accessible by students in the college and at home.

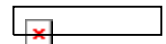
39. Assessment of students' work is thorough. Work is set regularly. Students' written work is marked comprehensively and teachers give helpful feedback on how they can improve their performance. Student's progress is monitored carefully against targets through regular course reviews.

40. Subject support is good. The induction in science and mathematics is designed to identify additional learning needs as well as introduce students to the essentials of the subject. There is a specialist learning support centre in the mathematics and science area. All staff are very responsive to requests for help from students. Students value the support they receive.

### ***Leadership and management***

41. Leadership and management are good. The area is managed by a new head of faculty with individual subject heads of department. Clear targets are set for improvement and there is celebration of real success where it occurs. The self-assessment report for the area is thorough. Student achievement is analysed in detail, including by gender and ethnicity. The rigour of quality assurance has improved significantly in the last year and is leading to increased consistency across the area. Feedback to teachers from internal lesson observation is of high quality with practical suggestions for improvement. The monitoring of action plans is good.

### **Business and leisure and tourism**



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

Contributory grade for leisure and tourism is **outstanding (grade 1)**

#### ***Strengths***

- very high pass rates on most courses in 2004
  
- excellent teaching and learning on leisure and tourism courses
  
- much good teaching on business courses



- good learning materials on all courses
- good range of vocational programmes.

**Weaknesses**

- low retention rates on some vocational business courses
- insufficient use of external business links on business programmes.

**Scope of provision**

42. AS-level and GCE A-level courses are offered in accounting, business studies and economics. In addition, there are vocational courses in business at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Provision in leisure, travel and tourism comprises the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism and AVCE in travel and tourism. Students taking the advanced vocational route in both business and travel and tourism can study for either the single or double award. There are currently 432 students studying business programmes and 88 following leisure, travel and tourism programmes.

**Achievement and standards**

43. There were very high pass rates on most courses in 2004. In all leisure and tourism programmes and GCE A-level accounting, business studies and economics, the pass rate was 100% in 2003 and 2004. All AS-level and vocational business pass rates were above the national average in 2004. Passes at high grades were 40% above the national average in AVCE travel and tourism and 52% above the national average in the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism in 2004. Retention rates have been significantly above the national average in leisure and tourism courses in the last two years, but retention rates on some vocational business programmes were significantly below the national average in 2004.

44. The standard of work produced by students is high and most students attain their learning goals. Business and economics students are developing the ability to analyse data and show good understanding of business concepts and terminology. Vocational students on leisure and tourism programmes produce high-quality work and often reach significantly high levels of attainment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	29	19	22
		% retention	83	74	77
		% pass rate	63	93	88
GCE A-level accounting	3	No. of starts	20	23	15
		% retention	90	96	87

		% pass rate	72	100	100
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	58	58	56
		% retention	97	90	96
		% pass rate	96	100	100
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	138	137	139
		% retention	91	80	92
		% pass rate	81	85	90
AS-level economics	3	No. of starts	35	31	30
		% retention	83	81	93
		% pass rate	76	72	89
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	17	33
		% retention	*	100	88
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

### **Quality of education and training**

45. There is excellent teaching and learning in leisure and tourism lessons and much good teaching and learning in business lessons. All lessons in leisure and tourism were very good or better. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of activities including verbal exposition, questioning, role plays and group activities which engage and stimulate students effectively. Some teaching in leisure and tourism is inspirational with outstanding levels of student involvement and attainment. In one customer services lesson, students identified the needs of different types of customer and were skilled in applying knowledge gained from their own part-time work experience to create strategies to meet those needs. Visits to tourist attractions and contributions by guest speakers from the industry are integrated skilfully into the curriculum to enhance assignment work. Good use of ILT in business lessons enriches and extends students' learning. In some business lessons, students are passive and the pace of work is too slow. There is insufficient use of external business links on business programmes and contacts with local businesses are not sufficiently developed. There is no work experience programme or enterprise activity and students do not benefit from this opportunity to experience current business practice and awareness of the commercial world.

46. Teachers are well qualified and many have recent industrial experience. There are relevant and imaginative wall displays in base rooms and corridors. Some business accommodation is too small for larger classes. Library resources are satisfactory. Teachers produce high-quality, relevant and topical learning materials which effectively extend learning. Powerpoint presentations are used to good effect. Open access ILT resources are good and students make good use of these for independent research.

47. Assessment is well planned. Homework is set regularly, marked promptly and returned with clear and constructive comments which are valued by students. In leisure and tourism lessons, teachers make good links between lesson objectives and unit assessment criteria. The links between business studies and the development of key skills are inadequate. Key skills are not integrated with the assignments of vocational business units nor used to develop students' literacy and numeracy. Internal verification and moderation procedures are satisfactory.

48. There is a good range of vocational programmes. Progression is good. From the 2003 cohort in business, 67% progressed from foundation to intermediate level and 61% from intermediate to the AVCE programme. In leisure and tourism, progression from level 2 to level 3 has averaged 60% in

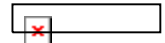
the last three years and all level 3 students have progressed either to higher education (HE) or relevant employment.

49. There is strong subject support for students. Teachers make particular efforts to give individual support to students, both in and out of lessons. Targets for improvement are set and reviewed regularly. There is a high level of additional support for students. The student support officer provides effective support for students from the Asian community, many of whom are following business programmes.

### ***Leadership and management***

50. Leadership and management are good in business and outstanding in leisure and tourism. Teamwork in leisure and tourism is extremely effective. Teachers share ideas and work collaboratively. Communication in both business and leisure and tourism is good. Regular course and departmental meetings lead to the production of action plans which are monitored. Course reviews are both detailed and evaluative. A large proportion of students are of minority ethnic origin, and teachers and students work harmoniously and respectfully together. Self-assessment reports are both comprehensive and realistic.

### **Visual and performing arts and media**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates in the majority of courses
- achievement above predicted grades in most subjects
- much good teaching and development of independent learning skills
- good enrichment for performing arts students
- high standards of practical work.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- some low retention rates in a minority of courses

- limited level 2 provision
  
- some unsuitable accommodation for performing arts.

**Scope of provision**

51. AS levels and GCE A levels are offered in fine art, textiles, graphics, dance, drama and theatre studies, music and music technology. Digital photography at AS level was offered for the first time in 2004. Vocational courses include an AVCE (single and double award) in art and design, AVCEs (single and double) in performing arts and intermediate GNVQ in performing arts. There is also an AVCE conversion course. Currently, there are 770 students enrolled.

**Achievement and standards**

52. Pass rates on the majority of courses are above, or close to, national averages. GCE A-level art, dance, drama and music, together with the intermediate GNVQ in performing arts and AVCE in art and design, achieved 100% pass rates. Retention rates are low in a minority of subjects including intermediate GNVQ in art and design and AS-level music. In GCE A-level subjects, students achieve above the grades predicted by their GCSE performance.

53. The standard of students' work in the classroom is high and most students are making appropriate progress. Standards of practical work are high in dance, drama and textiles. For example, in drama, the solo performance of a devised piece on the life of Grace Darling revealed physical theatre skills of an exceptional maturity and talent.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level dance	3	No. of starts	21	31	35
		% retention	76	84	89
		% pass rate	100	88	97
AS-level art	3	No. of starts	114	111	85
		% retention	81	73	93
		% pass rate	97	95	92
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	37	30	53
		% retention	81	80	92
		% pass rate	97	100	98
AS-level music	3	No. of starts	19	18	38
		% retention	84	83	84
		% pass rate	100	100	84
AVCE (double award) performing arts	3	No. of starts	23	25	20
		% retention	61	56	55
		% pass rate	100	86	100

GCE A-level art	3	No. of starts	56	55	32
		% retention	95	93	97
		% pass rate	96	100	100

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

### **Quality of education and training**

54. The majority of teaching is good or better. Lessons are well planned and provide for students with differing abilities and learning styles. In the most successful lessons, teachers plan activities to allow step-by-step skills development in a carefully structured way. In a drama lesson, students studying Howard Barker's play *The Master* were encouraged, as they walked around, to focus on different parts of the body starting with feet and progressing to facial expression. They then used knowledge gained from this experience for work on characterisation. Independent learning skills are encouraged through peer assessment, integrated research and through the use of personal experience. For example, in a textiles lesson, one student provided a very personal response to epilepsy by designing and making a dress that includes medication sewn on to the fabric. Good use is made of ICT in many art and design lessons. In the weaker lessons, teachers fail to challenge the learning of students sufficiently. For example, in a music lesson, some students remained passive throughout the first part of the lesson.

55. Staff are well qualified and experienced, many being practising artists and musicians. The newly refurbished St James's Art Centre provides a high-quality integrated environment for art and design studies. Studios are light with attractive wall displays. Music rooms are well equipped with a significant investment in additional computers and associated software, and a fully equipped recording studio. In performing arts, a range of rooms is used including a flexible theatre space equipped with a basic lighting rig. Temporary accommodation hired for dance is unsatisfactory.

56. Assessment is thorough, providing regular checks on students' progress. Homework is set regularly and returned promptly. Written feedback is extensive and highlights areas for improvement. There is some overgenerous marking in music. In art and design, the external moderator similarly refers to marking that is overgenerous. Deadlines are tight and provide a very good challenge for students. There is little evidence of the internal verification of assessments.

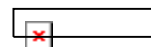
57. There has been a significant increase in enrolments to level 3 courses, but provision at level 2 is limited. There is very good enrichment for performing arts students with excellent and numerous opportunities for performance. Regular visits to art galleries and concerts are also a feature for art and design and music students. Textile students have worked recently with year 11 pupils from a local high school in designing and producing t-shirts for a Children in Need fashion show. Progression to HE is good. Ethnic groups are under-represented in art and design and the gender imbalance in dance restricts the range of performance opportunities.

58. Support for students is good. There are weekly tutorials which provide one-to-one support and provide the opportunity to explore a range of moral and ethical topics. Creative arts students also enjoy additional support from a designated learning support assistant and two student assistants. Action plans are formed following these reviews and checked periodically. Target grades are reviewed and revised as necessary.

### **Leadership and management**

59. Leadership and management are good. Targets for both retention and pass rates are set and monitored regularly. The lesson observation scheme and peer observation are helping to raise the standard of teaching and learning. Where weaknesses have been identified, action has been taken. In music, for instance, there is a new course leader and additional learning support has been introduced to help improve retention and pass rates. Communication with staff is good. The self-assessment report fails to acknowledge a weakness of low retention rates on a number of courses.

## Humanities



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

### **Strengths**

- very high pass rates on many courses
  
- much good and some inspirational teaching
  
- thorough assessment and monitoring of students' progress
  
- wide range of extension opportunities and community links
  
- highly effective curriculum management.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates in AS-level religious studies
  
- insufficient use of ICT
  
- some unsuitable accommodation.

### **Scope of provision**

60. GCE A-level and AS-level courses are offered in geography, government and politics, history, law, philosophy and religious studies. There are currently 655 enrolments. Numbers are high in history, law and geography with 209, 165 and 111 enrolments respectively. Enrolment to AS-level philosophy, government and politics and religious studies is good.

### **Achievement and standards**

61. Pass rates are very high in many humanities subjects. Pass rates have been consistently high over the past 3 years in government and politics at both levels and in ancient history, history and philosophy at GCE A level. Retention rates improved considerably in 2004 though were well below the national average in AS-level religious studies. Students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE in AS-level geography; however, they perform less well in history at AS level and in government and politics and religious studies at GCE A level. High grade passes are very good in AS-level geography and law.

62. The standard of students' work is very high. Written work is thorough and perceptive, demonstrating good understanding of complex concepts by many students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	61	51	60
		% retention	90	84	88
		% pass rate	96	72	92
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	108	117	96
		% retention	82	83	93
		% pass rate	90	86	88
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	82	110	105
		% retention	85	84	93
		% pass rate	89	86	84
AS-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	32	35	44
		% retention	66	80	86
		% pass rate	86	89	87
AS-level religious studies	3	No. of starts	50	39	32
		% retention	74	82	75
		% pass rate	89	75	96
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	29	45	35
		% retention	100	96	100
		% pass rate	100	98	100
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	35	36	61
		% retention	94	92	97
		% pass rate	97	94	93

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

***Quality of education and training***

63. Teaching and learning are very good. Many lessons are well structured providing opportunities for students to explore a range of issues and develop a keen sense of judgement. In the best lessons, students are presented with challenging and stimulating activities that promote skills of analysis and selection. Active learning methods are integral to some lessons and the teaching is, on occasion, inspirational. In a religious studies lesson, students were encouraged to explore aspects of conscience through discussion and the use of contemporary examples. The ensuing discussions and debate reflected very good student learning. Teachers' use of a range of teaching methods

encourages the development of higher level skills. For example, a politics lesson developed observational and deductive powers to explain the transition of old to new labour. The work assisted students in developing political insight, an understanding of Blairism and the ability to select pertinent contributory factors. In early modern history, students were presented with opportunities to investigate and develop awareness of the different factors that contributed to the success of the Catholic reformation in Spain and Italy during the sixteenth century. This involved work in pairs and groups where students had to prioritise and assess the significance of key points.

64. Well-qualified staff are deployed effectively. There is insufficient use of ILT to enhance learning opportunities in humanities. Some rooms are unsuitable for large groups which mitigates against the further development of active learning techniques. Curriculum resource materials are good, thorough and clearly structured to assist students with their learning.

65. Monitoring of students' academic progress is good. Target setting is linked effectively with the reporting process and the cycle of reviews is rigorous and is undertaken on a termly basis. Assessment of students' work is thorough and is returned promptly with detailed and clear guidance on areas of strengths and weaknesses. Some feedback and presentational work by students is of a very high standard.

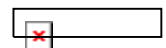
66. The range of available subjects in humanities is good although they are all offered at level 3. The area provides good enrichment opportunities to enhance learning including a specialist speaker programme, a range of visits and attendance at conferences. Good community links have been developed with local feeder schools including innovative co-operative ventures for gifted students within the secondary school sector. Opportunities for students to acquire key skills qualifications are available at level 3, but few students take advantage of this.

67. Support for students is good. The individual support given for academic and personal issues is very good and students are fulsome in their praise for the staff who give of their time to assist students.

### ***Leadership and management***

68. Leadership and management in humanities are good. There are good communications and self-assessment is comprehensive and realistic. Monitoring of students' attendance and individual academic progress is regular and rigorous. Links between heads of faculty and the curriculum heads are very good as co-operation, accountability and pursuit of excellence are prevalent. The sharing of good practice takes place on in-service education and training (INSET) days and within the faculties with initiatives such as peer monitoring beginning to make an impact.

### **Psychology and sociology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass and retention rates
  
- very high grades in GCE A-level psychology and AS-level sociology



- much very good teaching
- very good assessment practices
- very good leadership and highly effective management.

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning
- curriculum enrichment programme.

**Scope of provision**

69. Some 658 students are enrolled on GCE A-level psychology and sociology courses. Of these, 272 are enrolled on the AS-level psychology course and 144 on the GCE A-level psychology course. There are 157 students on the AS-level sociology course and 85 on the GCE A-level sociology course.

**Achievement and standards**

70. Retention and pass rates have improved consistently and have been above the national average for three years. The number of students achieving high grades is above the national average. In 2004, 59% of GCE A-level psychology students and 49% of AS-level students in sociology achieved high grades. In psychology and sociology, students make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE.

71. The standard of students' work is very high, and assignments are well researched and carefully structured. In most lessons, the standard of discussion and debate is very high; students use concepts, perspectives and theories accurately and develop good evidence-based arguments. In many GCE A-level lessons, the standard of discussion, debate, analysis and evaluation is exceptionally high.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in psychology and sociology, 2002 to 2004**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	208	213	236
		% retention	78	85	91
		% pass rate	86	89	90
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	108	124	136
		% retention	81	81	92

		% pass rate	90	89	90
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	109	92	99
		% retention	94	96	99
		% pass rate	99	99	99
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	55	51	62
		% retention	96	96	98
		% pass rate	100	96	98

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

### **Quality of education and training**

72. Most teaching is good or better. Teachers have very high expectations of students. They plan lessons very effectively to include a wide range of activities that help students to develop good subject knowledge and understanding. Students present their opinions and arguments with confidence and develop skills of analysis and evaluation. In one lesson about the value of unstructured interviews as research methods, the teacher had devised a role play to motivate and sustain interest in the subject. The various roles were undertaken with confidence and enthusiasm. The discussion that followed was lively, enthusiastic and demonstrated that the students had developed an excellent understanding and ability to evaluate the research method in terms of its validity, reliability and objectivity. There is good rapport between staff and students. Students show a positive attitude to their work and enjoy learning.

73. Very good assessment practices inform students about their progress and how they might improve and develop their learning and aspire to higher grades. Assessment information is analysed carefully to identify the performance of different groups of students and is used to plan ways in which the courses could be improved. Assessment is rigorous and fair, marking is meticulous and feedback is thorough and identifies ways in which work can be improved. Excellent monitoring and analysis of results helps to identify students who need support. There are good methods of informally assessing students' progress in lessons and strategies to help students to improve their learning.

74. Staff are very well qualified and knowledgeable. They continually develop their knowledge and skills to improve their effectiveness. Teachers produce good learning resources that are used very effectively to develop stimulating classroom activities or assignment work and revision. The library has a good stock of appropriate texts and journals for students to use to develop research skills. Classrooms are well maintained, although some are too small for the size of classes and this can inhibit the range of group work activities that can be used. Teachers strongly encourage students to use the Internet for research. There is an insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning.

75. AS-level psychology and AS-level sociology attract students who wish to broaden and enrich their core programme of study. Staff wish to retain this policy. A curriculum enrichment programme which could broaden and enhance teaching and learning is not well established.

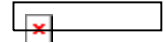
76. Good academic support is based on teachers effectively using attendance and punctuality data and progress reports to plan and monitor support programmes for students who are underachieving or who wish to aspire to higher grades. There is effective communication between specialist support services, teaching staff and tutors to ensure that all students have the support they need to complete their course successfully.

### **Leadership and management**

77. Leadership and management are very good and have contributed to building strong teams who share good practice effectively. Students' opinions are valued. All staff are skilled in making effective

use of performance data and other forms of information. They are involved fully in contributing to the development of clear values and targets, actions for improvement and systematic monitoring to progress improvements. There is strong commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory behaviour. Staff choose topics from the syllabus which raise awareness of gender, cultural and political differences and expect students to respect the diversity of human behaviour.

## English and modern foreign languages



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level English and communication courses
- much good teaching
- effective lesson planning which meets the needs of students
- rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress
- highly effective leadership and management.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates in GCSE English
- insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning.

### **Scope of provision**

78. The college offers a good range of courses at GCSE, AS level and GCE A level in English, communication and modern foreign languages. The fast track GCSEs in Spanish and Italian provide opportunities to reach GCE A level in two years. There are currently 574 enrolments on English programmes, 52 on GCE communication and 199 on modern foreign languages programmes in French, German, Spanish and Italian. A small group of adults study GCSE English on a part-time

basis in the evening.

### **Achievement and standards**

79. Pass rates are high on AS-level and GCE A-level English courses and on AS-level and GCE A-level communication courses. In 2004, pass rates improved on AS-level courses in French, German and Spanish to above the national average. Students generally achieve results in line with expectations based on their achievements at GCSE. In GCE A-level English literature, the percentage of students achieving high grades has been consistently above average, and improved to above average in 2004 for AS-level French and German. In GCSE English language, however, pass rates have been consistently below the national average. While there has been some fluctuation in retention rates, these are generally satisfactory.

80. Standards of students' oral and written work are high. In AS-level and GCE A-level English, students can express themselves clearly and confidently in speech and writing. They can demonstrate sensitive understanding of literary texts and can apply the rules of linguistic analysis. Advanced level students in modern foreign languages can understand and discuss a wide range of complex topics in the languages they are learning.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	171	156	136
		% retention	81	75	79
		% pass rate	50	36	44
AS-level communication	3	No. of starts	38	41	37
		% retention	82	88	84
		% pass rate	94	100	94
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	101	97	130
		% retention	80	91	92
		% pass rate	93	97	96
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	39	42	49
		% retention	95	90	94
		% pass rate	100	97	100
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	23	20	13
		% retention	83	95	92
		% pass rate	100	100	83
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	40	39	53
		% retention	95	97	96
		% pass rate	100	97	96

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

\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

### **Quality of education and training**

81. Most teaching is good or very good. Lessons are well planned and teachers are enthusiastic

about their specialist subjects. Teachers have high expectations and set high standards for their students. In the best lessons, students are challenged academically and linguistically, and the learning process is enjoyable. In an advanced level English language lesson, students acquired good understanding of how children learn to spell through linguistic analysis of their descriptive writing. Advanced level communication students critically evaluated video extracts of popular culture in the 1960s and 1970s and demonstrated how social values and censorship have changed. In modern foreign languages, lessons are conducted mainly in the language being taught, enabling students to acquire good comprehension and speaking skills. In an advanced level French lesson, students used appropriate technical terminology to debate the advantages and disadvantages of building a nuclear power station in a populated area. Students are making good progress in acquiring the appropriate skills and can apply the rules and conventions of literary criticism with increasing competence. In a small number of lessons, however, there is insufficient variety to embrace the full range of students' learning styles and some students are not engaged fully in the learning. In some instances, there is insufficient checking of written work in the lesson. The use of ILT is not embedded in teaching and learning.

82. Resources are good. Staff are well qualified. In modern foreign languages, native speaking teachers add authenticity to language learning and help students develop good accents and pronunciation. The new digital language laboratory is a valuable resource and enables students to acquire good listening and speaking skills. The English department has a specialist study centre and modern foreign languages has a private study area and access to an independent learning area. Some accommodation in English is small and limits movement in the room. High-quality study packs and independent learning materials are used to support teaching and learning in English and modern foreign languages.

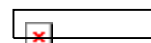
83. Assessment is rigorous. Students' work is marked frequently and thoroughly. Written comments and discussion help students improve the standard of their work. Students are clear about their target grades. In English, students' performance is monitored against a checklist of essential reading, writing, thinking and study skills. In modern foreign languages, students' progress in reading, writing, listening and speaking is assessed regularly through homework, class work and formal assessment.

84. Support and guidance are effective. There is good pre-enrolment advice and guidance to ensure that students make appropriate choices. Strong links with partner schools ease the transition from high school to college. Subject teachers and tutors work closely together to ensure that the needs of students are met. They give freely of their time to help students with personal and academic matters. The value systems of the college are embedded in the day-to-day routines and create a positive learning community.

### ***Leadership and management***

85. Leadership and management are good. Procedures and practices to monitor teaching and learning are effective. Strategies are put in place to address weaknesses and are monitored effectively. There is a concern to ensure continuous improvement which is implemented in comprehensive systems of quality assurance. Standards of teaching and learning are improving. Staff meet regularly to discuss curriculum development and students' progress. Enrolments in modern foreign languages have increased significantly with the launch of the new languages academy.

## **Part D: College data**



**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	2	53
2	18	9
3	63	8
4/5	0	0
Other	17	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2004

\* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,137	21	12
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	44	1	0
Business administration, management and professional	424	7	4
Information and communication technology	456	233	7
Retailing, customer service and transportation	4	15	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	350	17	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	5	15	0
Health, social care and public services	107	1	1
Visual and performing arts and media	1,008	6	10
Humanities	4,484	28	47
English, languages and communication	958	11	10
Foundation programmes	61	138	2
Unknown area of learning	1	126	2

<b>Total</b>	<b>9,039</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100</b>
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Source: provided by the college in 2004

\* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
		<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	894	200	164	199
	Retention rate %	73	69	79	66	60	55
	National average %	75	83	*	72	73	*
	Pass rate %	68	61	57	64	68	70
	National average %	75	72	*	73	75	*
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	741	616	1,195	164	224	80
	Retention rate %	79	74	88	74	32	73
	National average %	82	81	*	70	69	*
	Pass rate %	89	87	93	50	55	59
	National average %	84	86	*	70	74	*
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	4,181	4,256	4,370	123	59	74
	Retention rate %	84	85	88	72	83	72
	National average %	89	90	*	72	73	*
	Pass rate %	91	85	91	67	82	83
	National average %	87	88	*	73	77	*

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 2000/01 to 2002/03: College ISR

\* 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)	80	20	0	71
Level 2 (intermediate)	75	25	0	12
Level 1 (foundation)	100	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>84</b>

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