



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



South Devon College

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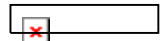
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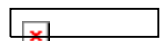
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Basic information about the college

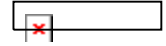


Name of college:	South Devon College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Heather Maxwell
Address of college:	Newton Road Torquay Devon TQ2 5BY
Telephone number:	01803 400700
Fax number:	01803 400701
Chair of governors:	Sandra Perry
Unique reference number:	130648
Name of reporting inspector:	Martyn Rhowbotham HMI
Dates of inspection:	28 February-4 March 2005

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



South Devon College is a medium-sized general further education (FE) college serving the district towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham, collectively known as Torbay with a population of approximately 130,000. The college also serves the mainly rural areas of South Devon, which consists of a number of small towns and many small, isolated villages. The population of this area is some 210,000. Public transport in these areas is described as poor.

The main college campus is situated in Torquay. There are also a number of 'Learning in the Community' (LinCs) centres situated in Teignmouth, Torquay and Paignton libraries, Brixham, Newton Abbot, the Foyer project adjacent to the college as well as on the college site. These centres provide drop-in information and communications technology (ICT) facilities and courses in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) mathematics and English, teacher training, first-aid and courses for students with learning difficulties. Automotive engineering provision is based at Yalberton in Paignton. The college will relocate to a new campus in Paignton in September 2005.

The college offers courses in 14 of the areas of learning and across the college from pre-entry to level 4. Higher education (HE) provision has been developed in partnership with the universities of Plymouth and Exeter. The college has recently become a work-based learning provider with 73 learners following work-based programmes in construction, motor vehicle, plumbing, engineering, hairdressing and hospitality. The college also gained responsibility in September 2004 for non-certificated adult and community learning. The college has contracts with Job Centre Plus and five European Social Fund co-finance projects.

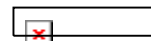
Torbay is a unitary authority with a selective secondary school system. The post-16 environment is competitive. There are three grammar schools, a Roman Catholic denominating school and two community colleges all of whom have sixth forms. There are also two 11 to 16 community colleges and special schools in the authority. The South Devon area also has some schools with sixth forms and there are also a number of independent schools in the area. In 2003, 49% of Year 11 pupils stayed on at school whilst 23% entered FE.

Torbay is characterised by extremes of wealth and poverty. There are small pockets of severe deprivation often surrounded by relative affluence. The age profile of the wards making up the authority varies widely due to the large numbers of pensioners in some wards. Torbay is the third most deprived area in the South West and seven wards are within the 20% most deprived wards in England. Over 40% of workers earn less than £250 a week and there is a high proportion of workers who are classed as part time. There is a significant net outflow of young people from the area. In 2003, the staying-on rate in full-time education was low at 72% and the 'Not in Education or Training' (NEET) figure was above the national average. In 2004, 53% of Torbay school pupils gained five or more A* to C passes at GCSE which is in line with the national average. The average points score at Key Stage 4 was very slightly above the national average.

Following the previous inspection in April 2002, at which the college was judged to be inadequate, a complete restructure and a comprehensive review of its mission and strategy was carried out in spring 2003. After consultation with staff, partners and the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) the mission was revised to:

'South Devon College: inspiring our community through learning for all'.

How effective is the college?



The inspection graded the quality of provision in nine curriculum areas. Inspectors judged teaching, learning and attainment to be good in five areas and satisfactory in four areas. At this inspection no areas were judged to be unsatisfactory. The college's main strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- good teaching

- improving trends in retention and pass rates in most areas

- support for students, especially monitoring of attendance

- approach to inclusion and equal opportunities

- provision of learning opportunities for school pupils aged 14 to 16

- use of management information

- leadership and governance

- partnerships with external agencies

- high investment in staff development

- impact of quality assurance and commitment to continuous improvement

- communication throughout the college.

What should be improved

- retention rates on level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18

- retention and pass rates on advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and some general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses for students aged 16 to 18

- low numbers in some classes

- some unsatisfactory accommodation

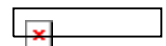
- network facilities in ICT

- monitoring of students who do not take up learning support

- breadth of provision in some areas.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

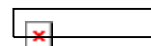


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Pass rates in GCSE mathematics and biology and for AS-level biology are high, but retention rates on GCE A-level courses are below the national average. The standard of work on the access to HE science course is good. There is good teaching and students

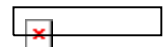
	receive effective individual support. The college offers a narrow range of courses which restricts progression routes, and recruitment to GCE A-level courses is low and in decline.
Construction	Good. Pass rates are high and the standard of teaching and learning is good. Students develop good practical skills. Leadership and management are strong, with many improvements implemented since the last inspection. Additional support is not promoted sufficiently and individual tutorials and learning plans are not well developed.
Engineering	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on most courses. Teaching, learning and curriculum management are good. Students achieve high standards of work. There is insufficient access to learning resources for independent study.
Business	Good. There are high pass rates on many courses. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve high standards. There is good support for individual learners. There are low retention rates on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate and national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 accounting courses.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on part-time and GNVQ foundation and GCE A-level courses. Retention rates are low on GNVQ intermediate and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses and there are low pass rates in AS-level computing. Students are supported well and develop good practical skills.
Hospitality, sport and travel	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on most full-time courses, but there are low retention rates on the NVQ level 3 in food preparation and cooking and the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma in sport courses. Teaching in sport is good. There is rigorous monitoring of students' progress and students are supported well. There is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) and of the realistic work environment in hospitality and tourism.
Health and social care	Good. There are high retention and pass rates on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma in child care and education. Retention rates on the CACHE certificate in child care and education are low. Teaching is good and students achieve high standards. There is good curriculum management.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good. There is good teaching and learning and the area is well managed, offering an exciting and stimulating curriculum. Students demonstrate high standards of practical work in a full range of subjects. Pass rates are high for many courses and some have large numbers of high grades. Retention rates on some AS-level and GCE A-level courses are low.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. There is good teaching for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and key skills are managed well. Attendance and retention rates on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses is low. The progress of individual students is not monitored consistently and planning of learning support in some lessons is insufficient.

How well is the college led and managed?



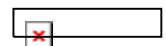
Leadership and management are good. Rapid progress has been made in tackling the serious weaknesses identified in the 2002 inspection. The overall profile of teaching and learning has shifted from one that was weak and uneven to one that is better than the national average for FE colleges. Student attendance, retention and pass rates have improved, especially at levels 1 and 2. Student enrolments have increased and the college has substantially diversified its curriculum to meet the needs of its local community. The expansion of provision, coupled with tighter controls of staffing and other costs, is enabling the college to move towards financial recovery. Robust management information is making a substantial contribution to improving accountability and evaluation at all levels of the organisation. Although the trend in students' achievements has been upwards, retention rates on level 3 qualifications for the 16 to 18 age group are still below the national average. Plans to relocate to a new campus in July 2005 are well advanced; meanwhile deficiencies in existing accommodation are inhibiting the improvement to teaching and learning in some curriculum areas. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



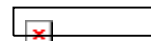
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The development of more courses at level 1 has been effective. Additional support for students in most curriculum areas is good. Teachers take account of students' individual learning needs through initial assessment and a comprehensive tutorial system for full-time students. Links with the community are strong and the college has extensive provision in community locations. Some 3% of students are from minority ethnic groups, which is almost double the proportion in the local population. Asylum seekers and overseas students receive language support where appropriate. Awareness of cultural diversity is promoted well through student exchange programmes, overseas visits, and college wide enrichment programmes such as a fair trade exhibition with associated cultural content. Provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 is extensive and enjoys high status within the college. There is also successful provision for pupils who have been excluded from school or are at risk of exclusion. Access for wheelchair users on the present site is satisfactory and has been a major consideration in the design of the new campus, which is currently under construction.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students and trainees is good. Arrangements for initial guidance and support are well developed and enrolment is well managed through student services. All students receive a thorough induction. Procedures for identifying additional learning support needs are good, but there is insufficient monitoring of what happens to students who do not take up support. Support for those who attend the learning support centre is good and monitoring of their progress is thorough. Learning support assistants provide an adequate service in most areas, but in some curriculum areas they are insufficiently involved in planning lessons and are not used to their full potential. Tutorial support for most full-time students is good and it is adequate for part-time students. Lead tutors monitor and develop the tutorial process well. Monitoring of attendance is thorough. Students have access to a good range of additional support services, although student services are not open in the evening for part-time students, except by prior arrangement. Careers information and guidance are adequate.

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

- being respected and treated as an adult

- helpful and approachable staff

- good support from tutors

- feeling safe

- intolerance of bullying and disruption to others

- the provision of a suitable range of courses.

What they feel could be improved

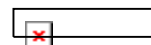
- car parking

- access to storage on computers

- sports and leisure facilities

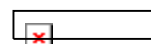
- quality and price of food in the canteen.

Other information

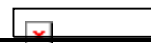


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must 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

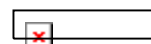


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	73	25	2
19+ and WBL*	65	33	2
Learning 16-18	73	25	2
19+ and WBL*	65	35	0

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. Pass rates at all levels and for students of all ages have improved, and are generally at, or above, the national average. Overall success rates have also improved. Retention rates have improved at levels 1 and 2, however, at level 3 they have remained below the national average for students aged 16 to 18 and at the national average for adult students.

2. The college has recently instigated a rigorous attendance monitoring scheme which has improved attendance significantly since the last inspection. In lessons observed during the inspection,

attendance was some 6% above the national average for similar colleges. Attendance was high at above 86% in engineering, visual and performing arts and ICT. In literacy and numeracy, attendance was low at 68%. Students were generally punctual.

3. Students work at, or above, the level required for their course. In only a few lessons is attainment lower than might be expected. Attainment in theory lessons is particularly high. For example, students on the access to science course and business courses show good development of personal and learning skills and many make confident contributions to class discussions. On higher-level courses, students demonstrate developing skills in independent research, reflective thinking, analysis and critical evaluation.

4. Students show a good appreciation of health and safety and perform practical work to high standards. Brickwork students were building twisted piers and axed arches to very high standards. Full-time painting and decorating students produce work to industrial standards and were developing skills beyond that required by the level of qualification that they were taking. In visual arts, there is much well-observed and enquiring drawing, often ambitious in scope and scale. In graphic design, students explore a range of media and processes such as printmaking and surface pattern, creatively integrating type and image. The practical achievement of performing arts students is very high. Performance skills are disciplined and highly imaginative. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve demanding individual learning goals and work well both on their own and in groups. For example, they work very well in high profile projects such as the recent production of a college newspaper.

5. In the following paragraphs on college achievements, the college rates are compared with all general FE/tertiary colleges in England.

16 to 18 year olds

6. The retention rates at levels 1 and 2 have improved consistently, from being below national averages in 2002 and 2003 to above the national average in 2004. However, the retention rates at level 3 have stubbornly remained below national averages.

7. Pass rates have improved, and continue to improve, at all levels. At levels 2 and 3, the rates have been close to the national averages for each of the three years from 2002 to 2004, with improvements from just below to just above the national average. At level 1, the rate has improved from well below the national average to significantly above the average in 2004.

8. Success rates, the proportion of enrolled students who achieve their qualification, were high at level 1 in 2004, having improved significantly in the three years from 2002 to 2004. For courses at level 2, the success rate has also improved from well below the national average in 2002 and 2003 to be in line with the national average in 2004. However, the success rate at level 3 has remained close to, but below, the national average for the past three years and places the college in the middle 50% of all colleges.

9. The college achieves good results on short courses. Retention rates have improved and were high in 2004. Pass rates have significantly improved and are well above the national average.

10. Retention rates on AS-level qualifications have declined in the three years between 2002 and 2004 and are well below the national average. On GCE A-level courses, they were at the average in 2002, but well below average in 2003. Pass rates on GCE A-level courses are similar to the national averages for general FE/tertiary colleges. However, pass rates on AS-level courses have declined and remain consistently below the national average. Students' performance at AS level and GCE A level is generally as predicted by their incoming levels of attainment in the GCSE. Pass rates on level 3 GNVQs and precursor qualifications have improved significantly and are now well above the national average. The college is developing a system of recording the distance travelled by students on these programmes based on a comparison with their performance at the beginning of their programme of study. It does not include prior attainment or results of initial assessment. It is too early to judge any impact of this initiative on student performance.

Adult learners

11. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 have improved markedly over the three years from 2002 to 2004. They have improved to the national average from being well below in 2002. At level 3, the retention rate declined from just above the national average in 2002 to be in line with the average in 2004. The college was in the middle 50% for this measure in 2003.

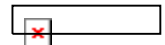
12. Pass rates at all levels have improved. At levels 2 and 3, the rates have improved over the three years from 2002 to 2004 and are now significantly above the national averages. At level 1, the pass rate has kept pace with the improvements and remained in line with the national average for the three years 2002 to 2004.

13. Success rates have improved at all levels. At levels 1 and 2, there has been a consistent and steady improvement over the three years from 2002 and 2004. These improvements have moved the college from the bottom 10% to the middle 50% for all colleges. At level 3, the improvements have kept the college in the middle 50% of colleges and at the national average.

14. Retention rates on short courses are satisfactory. They have been close to the national average in each of the three years to 2004. Pass rates on these courses have consistently improved from well below national averages in 2002 and 2003 to just above the national average in 2004.

15. The college also has a significant provision in the community, particularly for ICT programmes. Retention and pass rates in this provision have improved from below the national averages in 2002 and 2003 to be significantly above the national averages in 2004.

Quality of education and training



16. Teaching, learning and students' attainment were graded by inspectors in 145 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 70% of these lessons, satisfactory in 28% and unsatisfactory in 2%. This represents a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection where only 58% of lessons observed were good or better and 13% were unsatisfactory. The percentage of lessons judged to be good or better is 6% above the national average and the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is 4% below the national average. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in science and mathematics, construction, engineering, business, ICT or visual and performing arts and media. Over 80% of teaching was judged to be good or better in business, health and social care and visual and performing arts.

17. Teaching is better for students aged 16 to 18 than for adults. In lessons for students aged 16 to 18, 73% of teaching was good or better compared with 64% in lessons predominantly for adult students. Teaching was better on courses at levels 2 and 3 than it was on level 1 courses. However, attendance was higher on level 1 courses than on levels 2 or 3. Grades awarded by inspectors for learning were similar to those awarded for teaching. The amount of good or better teaching by full-time staff was 77% whilst the amount of good or better teaching by part-time staff was low at 44%. There is no unsatisfactory teaching by full-time staff, but nearly 10% of lessons taught by part-time staff are unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are generally better on BTEC and other general vocational courses than it is on NVQ and AS-level courses.

18. Most lessons have clear and specific learning objectives and teachers plan vocationally relevant learning activities to help students achieve the objectives of the lesson. Teachers have a profile of their class that contains information on each student's preferred learning style and their levels of literacy and numeracy. Mostly, good attention is paid to individual students' learning needs in lessons. In the best lessons, learning activities are suitably challenging and students respond well and produce work of a high and sometimes very high standard. Teachers check students'

understanding through skilful questioning and provide a useful summary at the end of the lesson to check further that students have understood the points being made. Students receive frequent and thorough feedback on how well they are doing. In business, the best lessons have an appropriate range of teaching and learning activities. Teachers conduct lessons at an appropriate pace and students are given frequent opportunities to check and demonstrate their learning. There is a strong sense of purpose in these lessons and teachers have high expectations of their students who respond well and make good progress.

19. Teachers are enthusiastic and motivate students well. Students work and behave well in most lessons. There is much mutual respect between teachers and students. They work well in groups and individually. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities work hard and enthusiastically. They make good progress in their learning and produce work of a high standard. Teachers are well qualified and many have good industrial experience which they use well to ensure vocational relevance and to develop appropriate and challenging learning activities for students. This is particularly effective on health and social care courses.

20. Students develop research and analysis skills to a high standard on care, engineering and business courses. On visual and performing arts and media courses, students are well motivated and they challenge themselves to achieve the highest standards possible throughout their course. Trips and visits form an exciting and important aspect of the curriculum for many students and are used well in sport for assessment activities.

21. ICT is used well for learning in construction, engineering and business, but opportunities to enhance learning through the use of ICT are missed in care and hospitality lessons. Teachers use a small range of teaching methods in ICT lessons. In some literacy and numeracy lessons, students spend too long copying from the whiteboard or working through worksheets with little variety of activity.

22. A high percentage (nearly 94%) of teaching staff hold appropriate teaching qualifications and the remainder are working towards them with support from the college. In addition, 42% have degrees. Staff in vocational areas have appropriate vocational experience and qualifications. Staff professional development is good. In addition to individual training plans produced as part of the annual appraisal system, the college has also conducted an ILT audit of its staff and arranged appropriate training to address the identified needs. There are seven whole staff training days a year and staff are allowed a further fourteen days for personal development. A team of eight advanced teaching practitioners effectively provide cross college support, developing teachers' professional expertise and promoting the exchange of good practice within and across curriculum areas. Teaching staff and students are well supported by technicians and by the learning support centre staff.

23. The college is following a logical policy of replacing specialist equipment on its present sites if the equipment can be transferred to the new campus and waiting until the move before replacing the rest. However, the programme is not yet complete and some specialist equipment is dated. There is currently insufficient ILT equipment in some areas. Some of the present accommodation is poor. The site of the main campus is cramped with insufficient car parking space, recreational or sports facilities. The learning environment is poor. Many classrooms have poor sound insulation and much teaching is conducted in open plan areas with subsequent distractions to learning. The motor vehicle site is isolated from the rest of the campus and although well equipped with workshops is too small to accommodate all specialist learning resources.

24. The new campus at Vantage Point is well planned and will include a number of resources missing from the present site including a theatre for performing arts and a large sports hall and adequate parking as well as combining all the mainstream provision on one site. ILT and networked computer provision is integral to the plans. Work converting the original high-specification, ex-commercial building and the new-build construction is well advanced. Occupation is planned in time for the 2005/06 academic year. It is too early to judge the impact on students.

25. Assessment is well planned and thorough. An assessment policy outlines clear procedures for assessment and feedback to students. It is adapted appropriately to meet the needs of different

student groups. In most curriculum areas, feedback to students is comprehensive and developmental. Students' progress is monitored effectively with good use made of value added scores to show improvement. Progress reports, with detailed comments from all teachers, are prepared in November and April for full-time students. Specific targets are set and reviewed frequently. Good use is made of target grades to review progress in science and mathematics. Students at risk of not completing their course are identified and given helpful additional support.

26. Internal verification procedures are detailed and applied consistently. Lead internal verifiers monitor standards carefully and meet each term to deal with issues and share good practice. A successful cross-college standardisation day enabled lead verifiers to examine practice outside their own curriculum areas. External verification reports are carefully monitored by senior managers and at course level. Any identified actions are quickly and appropriately carried out.

27. An academic board meets each term and monitors students' attendance against college targets, outcomes from external verifiers' reports, retention rates and the outcomes of assessment practices.

28. The college offers a wide range of courses. Courses are available in all the LSC areas of learning and there is some provision at all levels from pre-entry to HE, although in some areas of learning there is little low level provision or progression routes are narrow. Adult and community learning provision has recently been transferred to the college from the local authority, but is yet to be fully integrated.

29. Working relationships with local employers are very close and productive. The college has established very good relationships with local employers through its contacts from involvement in work-based learning, the employee training pilot and the work of its commercial services 'Tor Business'. Each department has its own employer forum. Senior management are also engaged with a variety of groups working towards the regeneration of the area. The college has been awarded a number of Jobcentre Plus contracts to assist the unemployed to re-enter the workforce.

30. The college works very well in partnership with local schools to support the 14 to 19 area strategy. There are 339 students aged 14 to 16 attending the college. This includes 191 following the part-time Increased Flexibility (IF) programme with a further 56 attending following referral by their school or the Local Education Authority. A further 24 full-time students from the Devon and Torbay Link Programme, who do not have places in school and attend English, mathematics, information technology (IT), sport, expressive arts and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) youth award scheme in addition to vocational activities leading to college certification in nine areas. This aspect of the college's work enjoys high status within the college and is highly valued by schools. Some 43% of pupils in the second year of the IF programme have already enrolled for FE courses at the college next year. The college is also a major partner in the local progression into work scheme providing work-related courses for post-16 students at schools and colleges in the area.

31. A shared website, 'Bayview', shows details of all the college and other local training providers' courses. By agreement with the other providers, courses are designed to complement rather than compete with each other.

32. Arrangements for initial guidance and support are good. Students are well informed about the range of courses at the college through prospectuses, local events, advertising and links with schools. Schools liaison has improved greatly and the IF programme has enabled pupils to gain very good information about the opportunities at the college. Enrolment is managed well through the central admissions team. The suitability of potential students is assessed carefully through an analysis of the application form, an initial interview by admissions staff to ascertain any additional support needs and a further interview by curriculum staff, where appropriate. Procedures are reviewed annually and improvements made. All students receive an induction which is effective in preparing them for their course and college life.

33. Student services are located centrally in the main foyer. Services are available for part-time students in the evening by prior arrangement. Adequate careers information and guidance are

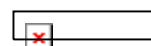
provided.

34. Procedures for identifying additional learning support needs are good. A comprehensive diagnostic assessment is carried out for those students whose levels of literacy and numeracy are assessed as being below the level of their intended qualification. In addition, all full-time students undertake an innovative diagnostic assessment to determine their starting point for the 'improving own learning and performance' key skill which is delivered through the tutorial programme. Students work on any identified weaknesses and take the test again later in the year to measure improvements. Students may refer themselves for additional support or they may be referred by their tutor. Arrangements for additional learning support for work-based learners are satisfactory. At the time of inspection, over 550 students were receiving support, either on an individual basis or in lessons with a learning support assistant. The individual support for students who attend the learning support centre is good and the tracking of their progress is thorough. Learning support assistants are sometimes not sufficiently involved in the planning of lessons. The impact of additional learning support on students' retention and pass rates is monitored carefully and shows a positive effect.

35. Students value the support they receive from teachers and their tutors. All full-time students have an entitlement of one hour of tutorial support a week. Part-time students receive tutorial support, where necessary, as part of their programme. There is a well-planned, cross-college tutorial programme and most tutorials are planned well and are useful to students. Lead tutors, appointed in September 2004 are developing the tutorial programme well. They meet monthly to monitor progress and share good practice. They also meet frequently with tutorial teams. Monitoring of students' attendance is thorough overall, but needs further development in a minority of curriculum areas.

36. Students have access to a good range of additional support services. These include a counsellor, chaplain, a college nurse and a student liaison officer. Many of the 74 places at the pre-school nursery are provided free of charge to students through the financial support fund. Clear child protection policies and procedures are in place and a member of the guidance team acts as the child protection co-ordinator. Staff recently received training on child protection responsibilities and a working group is in place to consider all aspects of child protection.

Leadership and management



37. Strong leadership and a clear sense of direction are given by the principal and senior managers. A new principal was appointed in the autumn of 2002. Since then, there have been reforms to all aspects of the organisation, including recruiting new managers and teachers to many of the posts in a restructured college. Some 80% of the senior managers and 40% of the middle managers have been recruited from outside the college. Lines of communication and accountability are clear in the new structure and teachers and support staff are enthusiastic about the change. An imaginative and substantial programme of professional development has been successful in improving the quality of management, teaching and learning, particularly of full-time staff.

38. Curriculum management is good. Heads of department work well with section heads and other staff in linking the overall strategic priorities to day-to-day operational management. There is a detailed annual calendar of meetings at section, departmental and college levels so that all staff are clear about what is expected of them and when. Throughout the organisation, there is a strong ethos of teamwork and a willingness to share good practice. Procedures for the setting and monitoring of targets are well established. Student retention, pass and success rates show a trend of consistent improvement in all areas, except for level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18. They are now substantially above the national averages for students aged 16 to 18 at level 1 and students aged over 19 at level 2.

39. Quality assurance procedures are strong and have led to significant improvements in the standard of teaching of full-time teachers. However, the quality of teaching of part-time teachers

observed is significantly weaker. Over 260 lessons were observed as part of the college's lesson observation scheme in 2003/04. All teachers, full time, fractional and part time are observed at least once each year and where teaching is judged to be satisfactory or below, support mechanisms are applied with teachers observed again during the academic year. Advanced teaching practitioners play a useful role in helping their colleagues to critically review and improve their practice. There are comprehensive guidelines for the planning of lessons. These include specific guidance for assessing the quality of learning and student attainment. Inspectors agreed with the judgements made in the self-assessment report and the overall lesson profile resulting from the inspection showed an improvement from that made by the college in 2003/04. However, in some curriculum areas, for example, health and social care and ICT, deficiencies in existing accommodation have an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

40. Through strong collaboration with local schools, employers and community organisations, the college is expanding access to vocational education and contributing to the regeneration of Torbay. Successful co-operation with local schools has led to the expansion of provision for pupils aged 14 to 16, as part of the Increased Flexibility (IF) programme, from 36 enrolments in 2002 to over 300 in 2004. The principal plays a leading role in the Torbay Development Agency and works closely with the local council and many voluntary organisations. Local employers and community groups see the college as a responsive partner that is committed to improving the skills of the local workforce.

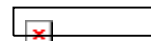
41. Governors work well with the senior management team and are making a valuable and substantial contribution to financial recovery and to the future development of the college. Following the 2002 inspection, the structure of the corporation was substantially revised and new members were appointed to widen the pool of expertise. A monitoring committee meets monthly and plays a critical role in evaluating progress against a set of pertinent performance indicators that reflect the strategic aims. Senior management has devised a comprehensive system of 'traffic lights' to enable governors to assess progress, including underperforming areas. The corporation has established a special 'project board' that is enabling governors to monitor progress with the move of the college to a new campus.

42. Detailed and comprehensive management information is supporting curriculum and resource management throughout the organisation. Routine data on student attendance, retention and pass rates are available to teachers, managers and support staff. Relationships between finance, management information systems, registry and curriculum managers are good. Much time and effort is invested in planning the curriculum offer. Curriculum and service managers critically evaluate how existing courses and subjects meet student needs, and consider in depth the resource implications of different patterns of teaching. Given the legacy of poor student retention rates in the college, procedures for monitoring student attendance are particularly tight and there has been a substantial improvement in attendance to above the national averages since 2002.

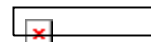
43. Equal opportunities are promoted strongly. Since the last inspection, there has been a substantial expansion of entry level, level 1 and level 2 qualifications. The equality and inclusion committee plays a critical role in monitoring the impact of the policies for equality, diversity and race equality. There has been a substantial programme of staff training, to familiarise staff with legislative requirements and to promote good practice in teaching and student guidance. For example, assignment briefs, assessment practice and internal verification have all been reviewed by a working group to increase understanding of equal opportunities and inclusion at course level. There have been several whole-college events to promote equality and diversity.

44. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Resource and financial management have improved substantially since the last inspection. LSC targets for student enrolment were met in 2003/04 and costs are more tightly controlled through comprehensive budgetary procedures. In some curriculum areas, however, average class sizes are small. Non-financial managers are clear about the financial parameters and there is tight control of staffing and other expenditure.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCSE mathematics and biology courses
- good standard of work on access to HE course
- much good teaching
- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on GCE A-level courses
- low and declining enrolments on GCE A-level courses
- narrow range of courses.

Scope of provision

45. The college provides AS-level and GCE A-level courses in mathematics and biology and evening classes are offered in AS-level and GCE A-level human biology. GCSE mathematics, biology and chemistry are also offered. GCSE mathematics classes take place on the main site in the day and evening and at the college's centre in Newton Abbot in the evening. A short eight-week revision course is available for students resitting examinations in November. At level 1, students can take a mathematics unit in making sense of data. The access to HE programme includes courses in mathematics, biology and applied science at levels 2 and 3. The college provides a narrow range of mathematics and science courses and this results in an insufficient range of progression routes. At present, there are no vocational science courses, but the college plans to introduce BTEC national

courses in forensic and medical science in 2005. Some 263 students follow courses in mathematics and science of which 89 are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

46. Achievement is good on GCSE mathematics and science courses. In mathematics, the pass rate over the last three years has been higher than the national average, reaching 20% above in 2004. Similarly, in GCSE biology, the pass rate has improved and was 72% in 2004. The retention rate for both courses is close to the national average.

47. The pass rate for AS-level mathematics was very low at 14% and 21% in 2002 and 2003, but improved to 67% in 2004. Retention rates for the AS-level human biology course are below the national average. Retention rates on many GCE A-level courses are low. The pass rate for adult students on AS-level courses was good in 2002 and 2003, but for students aged 16 to 18 retention and pass rates were low. Students on the access to HE course achieve well and progression on to health-related university courses is good

48. Recruitment to full-time AS-level courses has declined over the last three years and only small numbers of students progress to GCE A level. The GCE A-level pass rate is low in mathematics and close to the national average in biology. Value added analysis shows that most GCE A-level mathematics and science students achieve results that would be expected based on their GCSE qualifications. The standard of work on most courses, especially that produced by adult students, is good. Students work well in lessons and are confident when doing practical work. Students on the access to HE course produce coursework of a high standard. Attendance during the inspection was 79% which was slightly below the college average.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2001 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics (A to C grades)	2	No. of starts	281	215	160
		% retention	71	70	63
		% pass rate	47	48	63
GCSE biology (A to C grades)	2	No. of starts	37	37	23
		% retention	73	65	78
		% pass rate	59	63	72
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	33	24	16
		% retention	67	58	75
		% pass rate	14	21	67
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	44	38	15
		% retention	70	63	60
		% pass rate	84	75	78
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	17	15	*
		% retention	100	80	*
		% pass rate	82	67	*
Access to HE (science)	3	No. of starts	44	35	42
		% retention	68	71	71
		% pass rate	77	64	100

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

**fewer than 15 students enrolled*

Quality of education and training

49. Most teaching was good or better. Most lessons are planned well and students are provided with a simplified scheme of work for each term. Experienced teachers have good subject knowledge and relate well to students, giving individual support and time to those who need it in and out of lessons. Extra lessons are sometimes offered at weekends and in holidays. Students work confidently in the laboratory and good attention is paid to health and safety. In an access to HE lesson on DNA and bacterial transformation, students used well-produced instruction sheets and worked quickly and enthusiastically to produce work of a high standard. The small number of students in some classes limits the range of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

50. All staff are well qualified and update their subject knowledge and skills frequently. Equipment is generally of a satisfactory standard and mathematics and science rooms are well furnished and clean. The main mathematics room contains a desktop projector and interactive whiteboard. Teachers refer students to useful websites and CD ROMs, but make little direct use of computers in lessons. Students are not provided with textbooks by the college. Rooms and laboratories have posters and examples of students' work displayed on walls. Some mathematics lessons take place in a noisy open plan area.

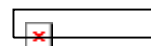
51. Students on all courses are assessed frequently and teachers maintain accurate records of their progress including value added data. There is a homework policy and homework is set regularly. Some teachers display charts of students' progress which has helped to motivate students. Students find some GCSE and access to HE biology assignments difficult to understand. Early diagnostic testing highlights additional learning needs for GCSE mathematics students. Take-up of additional learning support is good.

52. Comprehensive pre-entry information and advice are provided through open days, the college prospectus, and guidance interviews. Students benefit from a range of science-related visits and the college is forming useful industrial links.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Departmental managers give a clear sense of purpose and direction. Communications are good. Data are accurate and up to date. Staff are appraised annually and the grades awarded for lesson observations are realistic. Great emphasis has been placed upon improving the quality of teaching and learning. Accurate monitoring and recording systems are in place and course teams undertake rigorous course reviews. The outcomes of these reviews form the basis for the production of the annual self-assessment report that focuses upon students' achievements. However, the report is not sufficiently self-critical. Strategies to address the low retention rates and the declining number of students on some science and mathematics courses have not yet been effective. Equality of opportunity is good, with teachers aware of individual students' needs.

Construction



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- very good development of practical skills

- much good teaching

- strong leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor implementation of additional learning support

- lack of well-established tutorial systems.

Scope of provision

54. There are 489 students following construction courses, of which 210 are full time. Some 230 are aged 16 to 18 and 183 are adults. In addition, there are 76 work-based learning apprentices. Courses currently available include brickwork, carpentry and joinery, plastering, plumbing and painting and decorating. A member of staff has been employed to teach electrical installation from September 2005. Students are able to progress on to HE courses in conjunction with a nearby university. The majority of the provision is at level 1 and 2, with 31 learners on level 3 programmes. Three recently appointed assessors visit apprentices in the workplace for both the college apprentices and work-based learners from other training providers. Nearly 80 pupils aged 14 to 16 from 13 local schools attend construction courses at the college as part of their Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Achievement and standards

55. Retention rates on most courses are high and in many cases significantly above the national averages. For example, the retention rate on the NVQ level 2 wood occupations course has been 30% above the national average for the last three years. Pass rates are also mainly high. Pass rates on the foundation craft award, the level 1 plumbing certificate and NVQ level 3 in wood occupations are consistently above national averages. Significant improvement has been made in NVQ level 2 in plumbing and NVQ level 2 in wood occupations and pass rates are now above national averages. Pass rates remain high on the City and Guilds 6081 basic skills bricklaying programme. Students make good progress and the standard of work produced in practical workshops is high. Bricklaying students constructed full-sized twisted piers and axed arches to a very high standard. Painting and decorating students produce work to industrial standards and are developing skills beyond that required by the level of qualification they are taking. Plumbing students display high skill levels in copper bending, lead-work and soldering skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
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Foundation craft award	1	No. of starts	30	44	52
		% retention	80	61	79
		% pass rate	50	85	83
Plumbing certificate	1	No. of starts	*	35	94
		% retention	*	80	74
		% pass rate	*	86	80
City and Guilds 6081 basic skills bricklaying	1	No. of starts	26	40	35
		% retention	73	50	80
		% pass rate	79	85	89
NVQ wood occupations 2 year	2	No. of starts	45	17	44
		% retention	82	71	77
		% pass rate	46	25	82
NVQ plumbing 2 year	2	No. of starts	30	42	20
		% retention	30	62	85
		% pass rate	67	69	82
NVQ wood occupations	3	No. of starts	29	19	**
		% retention	90	95	**
		% pass rate	46	94	**

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

*course did not run

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

56. There is much good teaching. Lessons are well planned and there are detailed schemes of work in place. Lesson plans are referenced to different learning styles. The objectives of the lessons are shared with students and used to check learning at the end of lessons. The quality of handouts is good and theory and practical input is integrated effectively. Students are enthusiastic and are highly motivated to achieve. In a carpentry and joinery lesson, the teacher promoted learning constantly by the use of praise and encouragement. Lessons are well managed with appropriate changes in activity to maintain students' interest. There is good use of visual aids and ILT is used effectively. Rooms are well laid out and maintained. The walls contain relevant posters and other curriculum and industry related information that students use well in lessons. Students' learning is checked systematically. In the weaker lessons teachers make excessive use of open questioning and fail to differentiate between the faster and slower learners. Assessment is fair and rigorous and there is good feedback to students that identifies areas for improvement.

57. Workshop accommodation is adequate with good access to hand tools and materials although a lack of specialist equipment is having a negative effect on learning in a minority of instances. Classroom furniture is flexible and its arrangement is managed well by teachers to help facilitate good teaching. Some teaching areas have excessive background noise. Students have difficulty in accessing refectory services during break times and there are few refectory facilities available in the evening. Staff are well qualified and many have recent industrial experience. There is a good access to staff development.

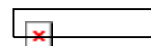
58. Support for students in lessons is good. Individual tutorial support is not well established.

Tutorials focus too much on activities such as completing coursework. They do not meet adequately students' pastoral needs and students do not have regular individual tutorials with their tutor. Individual learning plans are not shared with students and do not contain detailed monitoring documentation or any meaningful targets to aid students' progress. Additional learning support needs are identified, but support is not always implemented in a timely manner and some students who have been identified as requiring support at enrolment had yet to receive it. The take up of additional learning support is low. Much support is currently based upon the use of generic packages that have little vocational relevance. There is poor liaison between vocational and additional support staff. This is recognised by the department and plans to increase the numbers of students receiving additional learning support are at an advanced stage.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are strong and many improvements have been implemented since the last inspection to raise standards. The department receives good support from the senior management team. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the department's self-assessment report, but considered that it did not include all significant weaknesses or strengths. Communication is effective and staff work closely together to share best practice. There are brief meetings at the start of each working day where any issues related to the work of the college are discussed. Staff new to teaching are supported effectively and are allocated a mentor to help them develop good teaching skills. All teachers have their teaching observed and there are good opportunities for staff development. Managers are visible and accessible and staff feel able to raise any issues that arise. Staff have easy access to accurate student and performance information and data. Course leaders set targets related to recruitment, attendance, retention and pass rates for their courses. Termly reviews of progress against these targets are carried out with the head of department.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses

- good teaching and learning

- strong leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor access to resources to help students

- poor student accommodation and facilities.

Scope of provision

60. The college provides courses from level 1 to level 3 in motor vehicle maintenance, servicing, and body repair for 59 full-time students and 71 part-time students. Additionally, a qualification in light vehicle technology has been taken up by 10 local schools with 62 pupils aged 14 to 16 attending. The college provides a small range of provision in mechanical engineering, providing 1 course with 18 full-time students studying NVQ level 2 performing engineering operations. The majority of the students are aged 16 to 18. The provision is approximately six miles away from the main site and includes four workshops and three classrooms. The provision will move in July 2005 to a purpose-built workshop as part of the new campus. With effect from March 2004, the college became a provider of work-based learning and has 25 young people following apprenticeships in motor vehicle engineering. Opportunities are offered to students to gain additional qualifications. For example, students on vehicle body and paint courses can obtain qualification in basic oxy-acetylene welding.

Achievement and standards

61. Retention and pass rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now higher than national averages on many courses. The retention and pass rate on the NVQ level 2 motor vehicle maintenance and repair course have been well above the national average for the last three years. The pass rate on the NVQ level 3 vehicle maintenance and repair course has been 100% for the last three years. Students produce a high standard of work in both theory and practical lessons. Students demonstrate high levels of practical skills in motor vehicle maintenance and body repair. Students were able to remove complex components such as cylinder heads and inspect related parts. They repaired and replaced gaskets, valves and timing mechanisms competently. This practical work was later related to the use of interactive diagnostic boards where students were set engine faults to solve. Attendance during the inspection was 89%, against a national average of 78%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds progression award in vehicle servicing	1	No. of starts	*	16	29
		% retention	*	63	79
		% pass rate	*	90	100
NVQ vehicle maintenance and repair	2	No. of starts	57	38	46
		% retention	42	63	50
		% pass rate	96	79	91
City and Guilds progression award (motor vehicle)	2	No. of starts	*	25	21
		% retention	*	64	76
		% pass rate	*	100	100
BTEC national certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	**	22	15
		% retention	**	68	73
		% pass rate	**	87	91
NVQ vehicle	3	No. of starts	20	**	21

2 year		% pass rate	100	**	100
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Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

*course did not run

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

62. Most teaching is good or better. In theory lessons, teachers motivate students by using an appropriate mix of group and individual work. For example, in one lesson, an activity based on dominoes was effective in enabling students to work out the correct sequencing of a range of engineering tasks. Students responded enthusiastically and learned well in the lesson.

63. The teaching of key skills is particularly effective. Key skills are integrated well with the motor vehicle curriculum and all assessments have a motor-industry theme. For example, the teaching of ratios was done by the mixing of paint and through the design of a gearbox. Practical lessons in workshops are well planned and supported by high- quality written material. Students work well on individual practical assignments. In a few lessons, teachers do not follow lesson plans and leave students unclear of the objectives of the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers monitor learning and progress frequently. They use praise well to congratulate individual and group success. Examples of students' work are displayed prominently for visitors and employers.

64. Teaching staff are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience. Resources and equipment for motor vehicle studies are good but at the Yalberton site classrooms are too small. In one room, some students can not see the whiteboard. The light vehicle workshops include a spray painting booth and an appropriate fleet of light vehicles. All students have appropriate safety boots and protective clothing whilst working in the workshop. There are few student facilities at the Yalberton site. There is no common room for recreation during break and lunch times. Library facilities and ICT workshops are very small and there is insufficient access to appropriate resources for effective independent study, particularly outside of lessons. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Internal verification is rigorous and records are maintained well. The department has productive links with local employers, some of whom provide work experience for full-time students. There are detailed plans in place to provide apprenticeship training for a prominent national manufacturer from September 2005. There are strong links with schools and the department plays a significant role in the college's successful work-related learning provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools.

65. There is an appropriate range of programmes in motor vehicle engineering and related subjects. However, there is a small range of courses and restricted progression opportunities in engineering programmes in Torbay. Level 3 courses in engineering are provided currently by Exeter College.

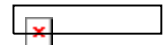
66. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. All students prepare an individual action plan aimed to give them personal responsibility for their own learning. A value added system is in place to monitor overall student performance. A subjective assessment is carried out during the first three weeks of the course to establish a 'performance score' based on communications and attitude, quality of work, punctuality and attendance. These scores are reviewed each term when students are set and agree further targets. While the system is very subjective, it is effective in supporting students' motivation. All full-time and substantive part-time students also take an initial assessment to determine any additional learning needs. The take-up of additional learning support following this assessment is low and the results are not used for the performance score used in the value added system.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are good. Communications, both formal and

informal are good. There are regular course team meetings including daily morning briefings to inform staff of student and operational matters. Access to the college intranet and to student data is good. These data are reviewed regularly at monthly course team meetings and also by course managers with the head of department on a monthly basis. Staff have used this information effectively to promote improvements in students' performance. Staff have high expectations of their students. There are good assessment and internal verification practices in place. Managers have been effective in promoting good practices and have engendered a good team spirit within the department.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- good teaching and learning

- strong curriculum management

- very good support for individual learners.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on GNVQ intermediate and NVQ accounting level 2 courses

- low attendance on AVCE and AS-level courses

- insufficient range of level 1 courses to meet the needs of the community.

Scope of provision

68. The college offers a range of business, administration and professional qualifications from level 1 to level 5 including a foundation degree. There are full-time and part-time courses in business studies, business administration and accounting and a range of professional courses such as

personnel and marketing programmes. Full-time business studies courses include GNVQ at intermediate level, GCSE, AVCE, AS level and GCE A level. At the time of the inspection, there were 39 students aged 16 to 18 and 27 students aged 19 and over on full-time business courses, with over 350 students enrolled on part-time specialist qualifications. There are good opportunities for progression with a significant number of students progressing from level 3 to level 4 courses and very good progression from AVCE year 1 to AVCE year 2.

Achievement and standards

69. There have been significant improvements in both retention and pass rates since the last inspection. There are now high pass rates on many courses including the GNVQ intermediate, NVQ accounting level 2, AS-level business studies and the certificate in text processing. Retention and pass rates on the certificate in personnel practice have been consistently high over the last three years. There are still some courses with retention rates below the national average. For example, the retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate and the NVQ accounting level 2 courses are below national averages.

70. Many students work well both independently and with others. Attendance and punctuality are generally satisfactory, but there is low attendance on AVCE and AS-level courses. There are signs of improvement following the revised procedure for monitoring and following-up absenteeism of full-time students. Tutors contact absent students systematically by telephone and letter. Students support the rigour of the system and are aware of how lateness and absenteeism affect their performance profiles both on the value added system and for the key improving own learning and performance.

71. The development of occupational, personal and learning skills is good, particularly on professional and management courses. During lessons, particularly effective use is made of part-time students' experience at work. Students also make confident contributions to class discussions. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory and appropriate to the stage and level of their programme. Young people are developing good employability skills in business administration including word and text processing and social and personal skills. Many students progress from level 2 courses to levels 3 and 4. For example, 87% of students on the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) intermediate course progressed to the technician course in 2004 and 79% of students from the AVCE course progressed to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	15	14	20
		% retention	60	71	65
		% pass rate	22	80	92
NVQ accounting (AAT)	2	No. of starts	27	*	20
		% retention	41	*	70
		% pass rate	82	*	93
AS-level business/management/office studies	3	No. of starts	*	21	22
		% retention	*	86	82
		% pass rate	*	39	100
AVCE in business	3	No. of starts	*	17	18
		% retention	*	65	83
		% pass rate	*	100	87
NVQ accounting (AAT)	3	No. of starts	38	53	29

		% retention	82	68	66
		% pass rate	29	53	69
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	19	15	32
		% retention	95	86	88
		% pass rate	100	96	96

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

72. Most teaching is good or very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Most lessons are well planned and teachers ensure students understand what is expected of them at the start of the lesson. In most lessons, learning and attainment are good. For example, tasks were progressively challenging in a computerised accounting lesson enabling students to work independently and evaluate their progress. Teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods to promote student learning and the development of employment skills. Students are highly motivated and they interact and participate well in many lessons. Group work in lessons is well managed. There are good learning materials. Teachers make effective use of teaching aids and ILT to motivate students and involve them in discussions. Teachers frequently use up-to-date examples of business and commercial practice to enliven their lessons. In the best lessons, teachers carefully summarise the topic being covered at the end of the lesson and check that students have made the progress expected of them. In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to manage the pace of work well or group work effectively and allow students to spend too long off task.

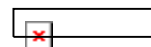
73. Most full-time staff are well qualified and have good vocational experience. Most staff are trained to use digital whiteboards and use them effectively to enhance learning in many lessons. There are good wall displays relating to the business world and there are displays in classrooms promoting and celebrating students' progression and success. The resource centre in the Richardson building is well stocked with up-to-date business and management textbooks as well as current journals, videos and CD ROMs.

74. The assessment of students' work is good. Teachers' feedback to students on assignments is constructive and work is returned promptly. There is very good support for individual students. Support staff and learning support assistants work well together and teachers provide good additional support to students. A former GNVQ intermediate student with visual impairment was in the top 10 candidates in the country to score the highest grades in 2004. The college offers a broad range of management and professional courses. The range of courses offered at level 1 is insufficient to meet the needs of the community. There are no courses available for young people to qualify them for employment at entry level. The department has very good links with employers and the community particularly for management and professional courses. Students from a wide area of Devon attend the full-time courses. All students benefit from work experience.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are strong. Since the previous inspection, effective action has been taken to raise standards. Appropriate staff development programmes have been developed to raise the quality of teaching. There is a rigorous self-assessment process with challenging targets for improvement. Staff work collaboratively to initiate improvements and to share good practice in teaching and in the writing of material for courses. There are regular standardisation activities for assessments and verification. There are regular departmental and course meetings. Lesson observations and appraisals are systematic and identify staff development needs. Learning environments are adequate and there is good use of available resources.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on GNVQ foundation and part-time courses

- good development of practical skills

- rigorous assessment and verification

- good levels of individual support on foundation and intermediate courses.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on GNVQ intermediate and AVCE full award in 2004

- very low pass rates on AS-level computing

- narrow range of teaching methods

- accommodation which constrains learning on many full-time courses.

Scope of provision

76. The college offers a range of courses in ILT. Full-time courses include the GNVQ at foundation and intermediate levels, AVCE single and double awards, AS-level and GCE A-level computing, BTEC national award and BTEC first diploma in information technology (IT) systems support and BTEC PC engineering. There are HE courses including a foundation degree in computing. Part-time courses at entry level and levels 1 and 2 include computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), eDigital competence certificate (EDCC), digital photography, the European computer driving licence (ECDL) for IT users and short 'taster' courses covering keyboarding and use of a

computer mouse. These are offered at the main site and in five community locations. At the time of inspection, there were 104 full-time students, the majority aged 16 to 18, and 1,522 part-time students who are mainly adults.

Achievement and standards

77. Retention and pass rates on GNVQ foundation have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. In 2004, the retention rate was 100% compared with a national average of 78% and the pass rate was 91% compared with a national average of 81%. Retention and pass rates are high on part-time courses. For example, in 2004, the retention rate on ECDL was 76%, compared with a national average of 66% and the pass rate was 28% above national average which was 69%. For the BTEC first diploma in IT support systems course, the pass rate was 100% in 2004. While retention rates have generally improved, the retention rates on GNVQ intermediate and the AVCE full award are low. In 2004, the retention rate on GNVQ intermediate was only 55%, which is significantly below the national average. For the AVCE full award the retention rate was 70% compared with a national average of 92%. The pass rate on AS-level computing has been consistently poor.

78. Students' work demonstrates particularly good practical skills. Students quickly become confident in their use of IT and can apply IT skills in a wide variety of situations. For example, mature students develop practical skills useful in their hobbies and in helping their families. Full-time students use the Internet confidently and accurately for research purposes to support their coursework. Students become adept in the use of graphics and colour to enhance assignment work. For example, in one GNVQ intermediate lesson, students planned and designed the layout for a new bedroom using imported clipart and colour to produce an effective plan. All students become proficient in the use of e-mail, a skill particularly valued by many mature students as a mechanism for staying in touch with relatives and friends. Attendance during the inspection was good at 86%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Using ICT (Short)	1	No. of starts	63	455	412
		% retention	87	88	88
		% pass rate	80	86	86
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	*	239	203
		% retention	*	77	80
		% pass rate	*	73	84
ECDL (one year)	2	No. of starts	100	56	89
		% retention	83	75	76
		% pass rate	88	83	97
GNVQ IT intermediate	2	No. of starts	26	16	22
		% retention	65	88	55
		% pass rate	65	79	67
AVCE (single award)	3	No. of starts	42	28	22
		% retention	79	82	77
		% pass rate	97	70	82
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	17	*	16
		% retention	82	*	81

		% pass rate	21	*	31
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Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Courses are well planned and good use is made of practical work to reinforce the learning of theory. Most lesson plans are well designed and most contain detailed learning outcomes. Teachers have a good knowledge of students' personal and learning needs. Students do better in lessons that include a significant amount of practical work. In most lessons, teachers monitor the progress of students and provide good verbal feedback. In a few lessons, teachers fail to take account of students' prior knowledge and set tasks which do not reflect students' level of experience. Insufficient use is made of ILT for teaching and learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers talk too much and miss opportunities to gain information from the students. Adult students show considerable enthusiasm for their subjects and, in many lessons, give mutual support to each other. Most courses for adults are in community sites based in local libraries or other community-based premises. Learning resource materials are well written and allow students to work at their own pace. One-to-one help is given to students at community venues quickly and in a patient and understanding way.

80. Experienced tutors have good subject knowledge and relate well to students, giving support to those who need it both in and out of lessons. In the better lessons, tutors use more varied techniques such as use of interactive whiteboards, discussion topics and quizzes. The less effective lessons employ a narrow range of teaching and learning activities. For full-time students, there is little use of different learning materials and activities to meet individual needs. Often students who are more able are not provided with sufficiently challenging work. Insufficient use is made of ILT for teaching and learning; few lesson plans include a profile of the students in the lesson to show how tutors match the style of teaching to the needs of the individual.

81. Resources to support learning are satisfactory. Students have access to up-to-date computers and software. The number of interactive whiteboards and data projectors has improved, but they are not yet utilised fully. Most accommodation on and off the main site is satisfactory. However, the Kinder Learning Centre which is used for the teaching of many lessons for full-time students is very noisy and can become too hot. The noise from other centre users distracts students and interrupts their learning in many lessons. Tutors have appropriate qualifications and there is good access to staff development for both full-time and part-time staff.

82. Assessment and verification are rigorous. All assignment briefs are verified by a separate tutor before being issued to students. All assessments are internally verified after completion by a system of double marking. Feedback on assignments is constructive and identifies areas where the individual student could improve their performance as well as praising those areas where the student has performed competently. Assessment results are used to track individual student progress.

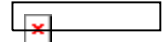
83. Students value the support of their teachers. Many students on GNVQ courses have low literacy, numeracy and communication skills which affects their interpretation of assignments briefs. The support needs of students are considered when planning teaching and teachers have undertaken basic skills training. Additional learning support is available to students diagnosed with a specific need. However, most lesson plans do not make clear how learning support assistants will provide the appropriate support in lessons. Specialised resources, such as adjustable desks, laptops for wheelchair users, tracker balls, large screen computers and specialist software for partially sighted students are available.

Leadership and management

84. The management team has made substantial progress since the last inspection and weaknesses

in pass rates on part-time courses have been addressed. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process and the setting of departmental targets. Pass rate data are carefully analysed. A programme of lesson observations has been established. All staff are appraised on an annual basis. A focus on the development of effective teamwork, the sharing of best practice, focused staff development activities and retention rate strategies have helped to raise standards. The LinCs community programme for adults is well co-ordinated.

Hospitality, sport and travel



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many full-time courses

- good teaching in sport

- rigorous monitoring of students' progress

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on NVQ level 3 food preparation and cookery and BTEC first diploma in sport

- insufficient use of ILT in hospitality teaching

- inadequate use of realistic work environments

- insufficient co-ordination of programmes at level 1 and below in sport and travel.

Scope of provision

85. In hospitality and catering, the college offers NVQs in food preparation and cooking at levels 1, 2 and 3, food and beverage service at levels 1 and 2, and the BTEC national diploma in hospitality supervision. An NVQ level 1 in kitchen portering, with progression to other NVQs, is offered for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a range of short courses is provided for the local catering industry.

86. Courses are available at levels 2 and 3 in sport, outdoor pursuits and sport and fitness therapies. There are two sports academies, men's football and tennis. In travel, there are courses at levels 2 and 3 including a diploma in travel operations, certificate in air cabin crew, an AVCE plus a number of vocationally specialist courses. There are 265 students. Of these, 53 are full time in catering and hospitality, 55 in sport and 39 in travel. There are 45 part-time students in hospitality and catering, 31 in sport and 9 in travel. There are 33 pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

87. Retention rates on NVQ level 3 food preparation and cookery and the BTEC first diploma in sport are significantly below the national averages. The college has recognised this and has implemented strategies to improve retention rates which are having a positive impact. Pass rates are good on most full-time courses including, the diploma in tourism, BTEC first diploma in sport and NVQ level 1 food and drink service. Students' attendance and punctuality on full-time courses are satisfactory.

88. The standard of students' work is satisfactory or better. Most written work is well presented and of a high standard. Students are able to work well both independently and collaboratively and there is good development of technical and practical skills. In hospitality, students display good levels of culinary skills and achieve high standards in food production and food service. Sports students achieve high standards on both the national pool life guard and mountain rescue exercises, particularly in first-aid. Students' work is prominently displayed in classrooms and success is celebrated.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ food and drink services	1	No. of starts	*	16	19
		% retention	*	81	84
		% pass rate	*	92	94
NVQ food preparation and cookery (one year)	2	No. of starts	59	55	63
		% retention	69	80	87
		% pass rate	71	70	85
National diploma in applied science/ sport	3	No. of starts	*	16	23
		% retention	*	56	87
		% pass rate	*	89	95
NVQ food preparation and cookery	3	No. of starts	15	17	17
		% retention	80	65	76
		% pass rate	58	64	69

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

89. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. Teaching in sport is particularly good in both theory and practical lessons. Lesson planning is detailed and teachers encourage reflective practice. In a sports leadership lesson, the development of leadership skills was well facilitated through practical work with children and the effective use of video recordings to evaluate students' performance. Teachers use a range of different teaching methods to keep students well motivated and actively engaged in their learning.

90. In travel and hospitality, teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and have high expectations of their students. Teachers use a broad range of enrichment activities to enhance learning. The air cabin crew students' visit to Heathrow airport enabled them to use the cabin simulator for a compulsory element of assessment. In hospitality, teaching of key skills is dull and unimaginative. In one lesson, students copied from the whiteboard for too long and the lesson was not put in a vocational context.

91. There is insufficient use of ILT in theory and practical teaching in hospitality. It is not used to help students develop their learning. There are no computers in the kitchen for the continuous display of preparation and cooking techniques to which students can then refer. Realistic work environments are not used effectively to challenge students. In hospitality, the number of customers is often too low. In one lesson where students were working in the kitchen and serving the restaurant, there was insufficient work for students to engage in. In travel, the area used to simulate travel agency practice does not provide students with the opportunity to develop realistic operational travel service skills. One of the sports therapy clinics is located in crowded classroom space with little privacy.

92. Most classrooms and practical areas are comfortably furnished and suitably equipped. The sports hall and changing facilities are dated and there are no on-site playing fields. In leisure and tourism, considerable investment has been made in an open plan learning resource area with computer access, but there is insufficient specialist software for sports students. All teachers are suitably qualified.

93. Monitoring of students' progress is thorough. Documentation showing progress is completed in detail. It is used in the individual review process with students and as a basis for their termly reports. The assessment of students' work is fair and accurate and meets national standards. Feedback on students' written work and practical tasks includes clear and positive comments that highlight specific areas for improvement. Internal verification is good.

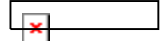
94. Little is currently planned to widen participation and improve progression opportunities. There is no provision for young people aged 14 to 16 in sport and travel. In travel and tourism, some courses do not attract sufficient recruitment. An employer forum has recently been established. Present links with schools in this area are insufficiently developed to promote and widen participation.

95. Support for students is good both in lessons and through the well-structured tutorial system. Induction is very thorough and additional learning support needs are clearly identified. Additional support is provided for those who need it and it is used very effectively to help students achieve their learning goals. Teachers make good use of individual 'pen portraits' of students showing their prior attainment, preferred learning styles and expected achievements.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management structure has improved and there is now clear strategic leadership and improved operational management. Course teams work effectively. Equality of opportunity is promoted positively within the department and staff have undergone appropriate training. Good examples of students' work on anti-racism are displayed in classrooms. Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but considered that it did not take sufficient account of weaknesses in retention, pass rates and teaching.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on the CACHE diploma

- much good teaching

- good curriculum management

- good standard of students' work.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on the CACHE certificate in child care and education

- inappropriate open plan accommodation for care and early years students.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 4 in early years, level 2 to level 4 in counselling and levels 1 to 4 in care. Courses include the CACHE foundation award in caring for young children at level 1, the CACHE certificate of childcare and education at level 2 and the CACHE diploma in childcare and education at level 3. A foundation degree in early years care and education provides progression to level 4. Part-time provision includes NVQ levels 2 and 3 in early years care and education NVQ levels 2 and 3 in care. The registered managers' award enables progression to level 4. Provision in care includes the BTEC introductory diploma in health and social care at level 1, BTEC first diploma in caring at level 2 and the BTEC national diploma in health studies at level 3. A range of short courses are provided to meet local needs, for example, first-aid at work and the national certificate for door supervisors. At the time of the inspection, there were 105 students aged 16 to 18 and 12 adults on full-time courses. There were 29 pupils aged 14 to 16 following courses in early years and some 150 adults taking part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

98. Retention rates have shown a steady improvement on most courses over the last two years and are now close to, or above, national averages. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 2 in care

are above the national average. However, retention rates are poor on the CACHE certificate in child care and education. Pass rates are good across all levels of provision. Pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate in health and social care and the CACHE diploma in child care and education have been consistently above the national average. The achievement of high grades on these courses is good. The college accepts many students with minimum entrance requirements. Course teams have implemented successfully a recovery strategy to improve retention rates. Students' attendance and punctuality are monitored rigorously by teachers and absences are followed-up swiftly. Much coursework at all levels is well structured and presented. Practical skills are well developed particularly on work experience. Full-time and part-time students develop the skills necessary to work effectively on their own and apply themselves conscientiously to tasks. Advanced-level students are confident in forming judgements and gathering evidence to support their views.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
First aid at work	1	No. of starts	118	166	146
		% retention	99	99	100
		% pass rate	91	75	98
NVQ care 2 year	2	No. of starts	19	36	24
		% retention	68	67	58
		% pass rate	77	58	79
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	20	20	20
		% retention	60	70	50
		% pass rate	100	57	100
NVQ early years	3	No. of starts	15	32	43
		% retention	80	81	56
		% pass rate	50	54	78
Certificate in counselling	3	No. of starts	28	50	49
		% retention	82	94	84
		% pass rate	87	66	78
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	18	15	*
		% retention	67	60	*
		% pass rate	83	90	*

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

**fewer than 15 students enrolled*

Quality of education and training

99. Teaching and learning are good. In the majority of lessons, students are well motivated and are encouraged to participate fully and achieve. Classroom management is good. Lesson plans indicate the individual needs of the group, and preferred individual learning styles and many show detailed evaluation which is used to plan the following lesson. Good use is made of relevant cultural, workplace or life experiences in many lessons. In a level 1 child care revision lesson, the teacher guided students skilfully, using visual prompts and baby care equipment. As part of their preparation for employment, level 3 students drew on life and work experience to complete a personal curriculum vitae. Anti-discriminatory practice is integrated and promoted within all areas. Students

assessed in work placements were able to relate theory well to the practical activities they were carrying out. Key skills are a central part of lessons and pass rates are improving. Action planning through individual learning plans is satisfactory overall. Some have clear targets, agreed with students, are updated frequently and used well in individual tutorials. Some contain vague targets and are not kept up to date. In many lessons, students are responsive, enthusiastic and collaborate well in group work. In a minority of lessons, teachers' use of open questions to the class fail to check adequately the learning of individual students.

100. Resources for learning are good. Teachers have appropriate vocational qualifications and keep up to date. All have, or are working towards, a teaching qualification or appropriate assessor awards. A wide range of equipment for practical activities is located in dedicated practical rooms for care and early years. Some of the equipment is dated. The learning resource centre has a wide range of texts and professional journals and a learning resource assistant is available to help students in research and use of ILT. There was little use of ICT in many vocational lessons.

101. Assessment is good. Assignments are well structured and relevant and key skill opportunities are identified routinely. Exchange visits are used well for assessment: students visit a school in Denmark and carry out a collaborative assignment with Danish students. Most written comments on assessed work are detailed and indicate clearly where improvements could be made. The less effective feedback is merely descriptive. Internal verification is generally robust, but there is some inconsistency in the follow-up of feedback to assessors.

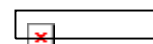
102. Initial guidance is thorough. All applicants have an initial interview followed by an invitation to a 'bridging' day that includes initial assessment. Teachers use the information from initial assessment to produce student profiles which are used for lesson planning.

103. Students in vocational placements are well supported by visits from the placement co-ordinators promoting good liaison with placement and work place providers. There is a well-established programme for pupils aged 14 to 16. This enjoys high status within the department and there are very good links with schools.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management are good. Many changes have been introduced over the past two years with newly established course teams. Communications across the department are effective. Regular course team meetings analyse and evaluate all aspects of course provision. Meetings are minuted with clear action points. Good access to performance data keeps course teams fully informed of student information and targets to be achieved. Course teams place the students' experience at the centre of their planning. The self-assessment report was not sufficiently self-critical in some areas and lacked data to support some judgements. Recent curriculum development has been effective and there is a strong ethos of sharing good practice. Course teams are supported well by middle and senior management.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high standard of practical work

- good teaching and learning

- well-managed and exciting curriculum

- high pass rates on many vocational courses.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most GCE A-level courses and the BTEC national diploma in performing arts.

Scope of provision

105. The college offers a range of courses in art, design, media and performing arts. Most of the courses are full-time and include BTEC first diplomas in art and design, media and performing arts. There are BTEC national diplomas in art and design, graphic design, photography, media and performing arts. The college also offers GCSE art and AS levels and GCE A levels in art, media studies and photography. In addition, there is a full-time and part-time diploma in foundation studies in art and design. There are 187 students studying full time and 104 part time. The majority of these students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

106. Retention rates are mainly high. In GCSE art, the retention rates have been above the national average for two of the last three years and the rates for the BTEC first diploma in performing arts are consistently high. However, retention rates are low on many AS-level and GCE A-level courses and the BTEC national diploma in performing arts. The pass rates for most courses are at, or above, national averages. The proportion of high grades achieved on some courses is significant. For GCSE art, the pass rates have been above the national average for two of the last three years and significantly above for AS-level art. The pass rate for AVCE in art and design has been 100% consistently.

107. Many students produce good work demonstrating high standards of technical skills. In visual arts, there is much well-observed and enquiring drawing, often ambitious in its scope and scale. In graphic design, students explore a range of media and processes such as printmaking and surface pattern, creatively integrating type and image. Media students use good production techniques to make films with a strong sense of narrative. For example, in one project, media students made atmospheric and tense films, successfully exploring the genre of horror and suspense. The practical skills of performing arts students are very high. In rehearsal, they were focused and disciplined. In performance, they were able to translate the heady madness of falling in love into an exuberant, apparently spontaneous dance with wild dashes across the performance area, which were in fact carefully choreographed and controlled.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
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BTEC first diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	21	18	*
		% retention	76	83	*
		% pass rate	100	73	*
AS-level art	3	No. of starts	81	46	51
		% retention	68	76	63
		% pass rate	93	97	88
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	17	20	*
		% retention	88	85	*
		% pass rate	100	94	*
AVCE in art and design	3	No. of starts	27	26	15
		% retention	93	85	80
		% pass rate	100	100	100
BTEC national diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	20	*	20
		% retention	55	*	50
		% pass rate	100	*	100
Diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	25	28	12
		% retention	88	93	92
		% pass rate	100	100	82

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

108. There is good teaching in all areas and some is very good. The best lessons are engaging and productive, with students working industriously and well. In a GCSE dance lesson, students identified moves from the opening scene of *Coppelia*, building them into a new dance sequence, which they then performed to the original music. Teaching is supportive and motivating. There are many well-planned lessons and schemes of work. There is much collaboration between teachers in sharing expertise to enhance and encourage students to resolve creative problems. For example, in visual arts, students successfully link printmaking with graphic design and photography with computing. Performing arts and media teachers enabled students to collaborate over a production of *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* by Bertolt Brecht. Shots of the rehearsals were edited by the media students to produce 30-second film clips, to be interspersed between live scenes.

109. Most accommodation is shabby and sometimes too small for the size of classes. There are good displays of work in studios and open spaces. Many visual arts studios have lively and provocative displays of current and recent exemplar work. In the graphic design room, there is a dynamic and stimulating display of the names of typographic families and their classification with an array of related images and contextual links. There is a good range of resources such as printmaking tools, wood, metal and plastics which students use effectively in their work. The performing arts block has both a dance and performance studio. Seating is flexible giving the opportunity for a variety of staging styles. There is ample storage space, a flexible lighting and sound system and a costume store, although changing facilities are poor. Equipment in media is good and has recently been expanded, but currently the computer rooms are not fully networked and the server has insufficient capacity for file storage. Teachers in the section are practitioners or performers, some with extensive professional experience. Several are examiners and verifiers and all staff use their specialist skills well in planning, teaching and assessment.

110. Assessment practice is good. Assignments are exciting and carefully planned. In visual arts, many briefs include helpful contextual guidance, some with visual references to assist students. There is a good balance of assessment methods. For example, performance-based assignments often require supporting theoretical research and an actor's log. In an assessment of BTEC first diploma students' solo performances, each student was initially appraised by their fellow students. The next day, they received detailed written feedback from the teacher with clear targets for further improvement. Grading is accurate and decisions are verified and recorded by a panel and lead verifiers.

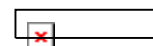
111. There is an ambitious range of educational visits including recent residential visits to China, New York and London. Informative and enticing displays of photographs record these events and the subsequent work. Enrichment activities for performing arts students enhance production work. The visit to Poland enabled students to see the work of one of the world's greatest experimental theatre companies, Gardzienice. The college-wide project on fairtrade was enriched by performing arts students who provided an atmospheric background of traditional Zimbabwean songs following work with a Zimbabwean artist in residence

112. Students are supported well. The individual learning styles and additional support that students may need are identified early in their course. There is a comprehensive programme of tutorials to monitor students' progress and to help with any pastoral concerns. In the best tutorials, target setting is used to measure and improve students' achievement. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their progress through self-evaluation and action plans. However, some AS-level and GCE A-level students misjudge the pace and scope of study their course requires. Students feel very secure, are confident and enjoy their time at college.

Leadership and management

113. Leadership and management are good. Communication and decision making is direct and informed by frequent and accurate information from senior management. Course tutors feel able to take their own decisions and be responsible for their work. The meetings and forums for organising and planning the curriculum are regular and productive. There is wide spread understanding of the value of targets for recruitment, retention and pass rates and of the need to monitor them efficiently. Strategies to improve retention rates have proved effective for some vocational courses. There have been a number of changes to the curriculum and it is now coherent and exciting. Preparations for the move to the new campus are advanced and ambitious. Management in the area is self-critical, reflective and committed to the professional development of staff. Inspectors agreed with most of the area's self-assessment report.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good teaching for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- productive external partnerships to widen participation

- good support for students who receive additional learning support

- well-managed key skills provision.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and retention rates on English as a second or other language courses

- some inappropriate accommodation

- insufficient monitoring of individual students' progress

- insufficient planning of learning support in lessons.

Scope of provision

114. At the time of the inspection, 513 part-time adult students were enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses from pre-entry to level 2. Courses take place in college and at external centres. Approximately 40 students were enrolled on ESOL courses and 191 students were following courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. At the time of the inspection, 550 students were receiving additional learning support. A total of 1,979 students were following key skills courses in communication and application of number either at level 1 or level 2.

Achievement and standards

115. Retention rates on part-time literacy and numeracy courses have improved and are now at the national average. Pass rates on many literacy and numeracy courses have also improved and are now high. Retention and pass rates on key skills programmes have improved and are now close, or above, to the national average. Early achievements in key skills tests in 2004/05 suggest further improvement, with success rates of over 60% at the time of the inspection. Retention rates on ESOL courses are unsatisfactory. They improved on short courses in 2004, but remained below the national average. Pass rates on ESOL courses have improved and are now satisfactory overall. Attendance in ESOL lessons is low and was 56% in the lessons observed during the inspection. Most students make good progress in literacy and numeracy lessons. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve work of a very high standard.

A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy and numeracy, 2001 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic literacy course 1	entry	No. of starts	*	119	83

year		% retention	*	71	86
		% pass rate	*	68	92
ESOL qualification 1 year	1	No. of starts	*	29	37
		% retention		38	30
		% pass rate		36	73
Adult basic education return to learn	1	No. of starts	19	27	16
		% retention	84	89	81
		% pass rate	50	71	100
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	408	304	381
		% retention	76	77	80
		% pass rate	20	14	46
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	431	412	553
		% retention	78	80	78
		% pass rate	18	12	43

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

116. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. The best lessons are planned well. Students enjoy learning and achieve high standards. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities produced a newspaper of a professional standard which included interviews with the mayor and with a local footballer. Students attending a course at a local probation service centre made good progress in their learning and gained important skills. For example, a student now reads his mail confidently and looks forward to receiving letters. The best key skills lessons are vocationally relevant and many courses make key skills a central part of vocational teaching with well-designed assignments. In weaker lessons, teaching is slow and dull. Some key skills lessons lack vocational relevance. Many lessons are planned for the whole group leaving the most able students unchallenged, whilst others are unable to undertake the planned tasks for the group. Some lesson plans are detailed, but others are merely notes of what teachers intend to do during the lesson. This limits the effectiveness of planning and evaluation. In the least successful lessons, students copy large quantities of notes from the board, or complete worksheets with little change of activity.

117. Teaching staff and learning support assistants hold appropriate qualifications and have good skills. Most teachers and learning support assistants across the college have undertaken recent training in basic skills. Most accommodation is satisfactory, but in open-plan rooms, learning is impaired by noise from other lessons. In the best lessons, teachers make imaginative use of learning resources. In a level 1 key skills lesson, brickwork students used a computer and projector confidently to manipulate images and text related to scaffolding safety. Some access software for blind students is not fully compatible with the college network, does not provide Internet access, and often crashes.

118. Three forms of individual learning plan are currently used which incorporate between three and five targets for each student. In 4 of the 11 lessons where these were sampled, all were up to date, but in 7 lessons some or all had not been updated and some had not been started. Most lessons incorporate no detailed planning of the learning of individual students. Support staff maintain detailed records of their work, but this information is not systematically shared. For example, some students are supported by several staff who individually report on their work, but do not regularly meet to co-

ordinate the support offered.

119. The college collaborates actively with external organisations including the health service, probation service and local employers. It has established successful provision which is valued by learners and other organisations.

120. A good range of support is provided by teachers, learning support assistants, other students and carers. Specialist adaptive equipment ranges from the simple such as coloured overlays to more sophisticated equipment such as software for symbol enhanced writing or screen reading software. Skilled and trained support staff are available in class and through additional individual support sessions.

121. In most lessons, planning does not include the work of learning support staff. Learning support assistants are sometimes underused and sometimes work ineffectively by, for example, completing tasks for the student. In only a minority of lessons are learning support assistants briefed by the teacher and involved in the feedback on students' learning and performance.

Leadership and management

122. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers set a clear direction, morale is good and staff and students appreciate that the college is improving. The management of key skills is good. Pass rates for key skills have improved in the past two years and are now above national averages. Regular and purposeful staff appraisals focus on targets and training needs. Quality assurance is well managed, but the college's programme of lesson observations did not identify some weaknesses in teaching. The impact of development work on improving teaching and learning is not consistent. Course reviews and internal and external verification lead to actions to improve. The college does not monitor the impact of learning support effectively. The retention rate of students with disabilities is lower than those with no disability, but their achievements are slightly higher. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory.

Part D: College data

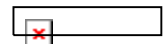
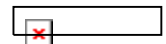


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2004/05

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	33	25
2	30	31
3	15	16
4/5	0	0
Other	22	28
Total	100	100



Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

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

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,136	613	11
Land-based provision	52	40	1
Construction	358	363	5
Engineering, technology and manufacture	401	260	4
Business administration, management and professional	145	1,075	8
Information and communication technology	1,163	1,213	15
Retailing, customer service and transportation	21	142	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	598	783	9
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	191	293	3
Health, social care and public services	404	918	8
Visual and performing arts and media	333	190	3
Humanities	145	200	2
English, languages and communication	1,234	529	11
Foundation programmes	175	215	2
Unknown AOL	1,511	1,233	17
Total	7,867	8,067	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
1	Starters excluding transfers	551	497	994	2,483	1,596	1,413
	Retention rate %	73	66	80	52	60	69

	National average %	76	76	76	71	71	71
	Pass rate %	61	78	84	72	78	80
	National average %	69	73	73	70	77	77
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,078	1,103	933	1,905	1,707	1,326
	Retention rate %	63	67	71	59	64	67
	National average %	71	71	71	68	67	67
	Pass rate %	69	70	77	72	73	80
	National average %	77	80	80	71	74	74
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,028	892	663	1,564	1,345	1,190
	Retention rate %	73	72	73	74	72	69
	National average %	77	77	77	70	69	69
	Pass rate %	76	80	80	64	70	80
	National average %	77	80	80	71	74	74
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	17	*	*	146	83	100
	Retention rate %	94	*	*	75	66	76
	National average %	71	**	**	68	69	69
	Pass rate %	56	*	*	53	69	79
	National average %	57	**	**	54	58	58

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 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.

**fewer than 15 students enrolled*

***data unavailable*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory	

	%		%	
Level 3 (advanced)	72	26	2	54
Level 2 (intermediate)	73	27	0	40
Level 1 (foundation)	65	30	5	37
Other sessions	71	29	0	14
Totals	70	28	2	145

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