



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Darlington College of Technology

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The college as a whole](#)

[Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

[Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering technology and manufacturing](#)

[Information and communications technology](#)

[Hospitality and catering](#)

[Sport, leisure and tourism](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health, social care and public services](#)

[Journalism, media and arts](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

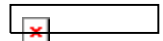
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2003/04](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

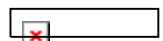
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

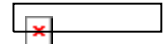


Name of college:	Darlington College of Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Sarah Farley
Address of college:	Cleveland Avenue Darlington County Durham DL3 7BB
Telephone number:	01325 503 050
Fax number:	01325 503 000
Chair of governors:	Alasdair MacConachie, OBE, DL
Unique reference number:	130656
Name of reporting inspector:	Simon Cutting
Dates of inspection:	4-8 April 2005

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



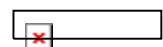
Darlington College of Technology is a large general further education (FE) college in the town of Darlington. It is situated close to the boundaries of County Durham, Tees Valley and North Yorkshire and draws its students from a population of around 150,000 people. Darlington is one of five unitary authorities in the Tees Valley. Within Darlington, in addition to the college, there is a sixth form college and a school for pupils aged 11 to 18 that provide a range of full-time academic and vocational programmes. Within the Tees Valley, there are five FE colleges, a specialist college of art and design and six sixth form colleges. In North Yorkshire, there are three schools for pupils who are aged 11 to 18 and one school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The college provides full-time, part-time and short courses and work-based learning programmes at foundation level and levels 1 to 4.

The principal is supported in managing the college by an executive of four directors. They have responsibility for finance and personnel, learning, external relations and resources. Three of the four directors have responsibility for one or more curriculum areas. A quality manager reports directly to the principal. The curriculum is taught by 10 programme areas covering construction; engineering; health and social care; hairdressing and beauty therapy; sport, leisure and tourism; hotel and catering; journalism, media and art; information and communications technology (ICT); basic and key skills; and higher education (HE). The college works in partnership with the University of Teesside to provide a range of foundation degrees, management qualifications and with a number of other local universities to offer teacher training. The college achieved full Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for digital media and design in 2003.

The college has three centres and an information shop in Darlington, a purpose-built learning centre at Catterick and operates in a network of community centres. The college has two purpose-built childcare centres, one at the Catterick Centre and the other at the main college site. Students can access learndirect programmes through college managed university for industry (Ufi) centres at the college, Catterick and for the army. The college's mission is 'Excellence in Learning'. This is supported by six strategic aims which reflect its focus on developing vocational excellence across all programme areas.

In 2002/03, there were 21,440 students enrolled on FE courses. Of these students, 84% were aged over 18 and 81% attended part time. Some 60% of students were male, and 75% of students aged 16 to 18 were male compared to 59% of adult students. The college recruited 23% of its students from Darlington, 4% from the wider Tees Valley, 52% from North Yorkshire and 10% from County Durham. Work-based learning is offered in five programme areas. Students enrolled for 41,974 qualifications. Some 35% enrolments were on programmes at level 1, 20% at level 2 and 9% at level 3; 35% were enrolled on other courses and 1% were on HE courses. There were 358 learners on work-based learning programmes. Less than 1% of students were from a minority ethnic group and 1% had a learning difficulty or disability. The college enrolled 515 school pupils aged 14 to 16 in 2003/04.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of the provision as good in construction, engineering technology and manufacturing, hospitality and catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health, social care and public services, journalism, media and arts and literacy and numeracy. The provision is satisfactory

construction and engineering. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- very good teaching and learning

- good standards of students' practical work in several areas

- effective support for students

- outstanding resources in the media design centre

- good enrichment programme

- highly effective governance

- very strong and effective leadership

- good management in most curriculum areas

- good partnerships

- good financial management.

What should be improved

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

- attendance on some courses

- level 1 provision in some curriculum areas

- some unsuitable accommodation

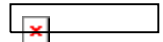
- some poor assessment and review practices in work-based learning

- leadership and management in sports leisure and tourism

- insufficient literacy, and language support in public services national vocational qualification (NVQ).

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

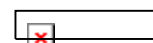


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Pass rates on most courses are high, but the achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is low. Students' practical work is good and has frequently resulted in successes in competitions. The quality of teaching is good, but teachers and students make insufficient use of ILT. Links with employers are strong.
Engineering technology and manufacturing	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Much of the teaching in both theory and practical lessons is good, and apprentices benefit from supportive employers and work placements. Retention and pass rates on a minority of courses are low. Monitoring and reviews of college-based students' progress are good, but are unsatisfactory for work-based learners. Access to level 1 provision is inadequate.
Information and	Satisfactory. Teaching is good and teachers make effective use of a

communications technology	virtual learning environment. More able students are insufficiently challenged to achieve higher grades. The pass rates for the one-year computer literacy course and the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) information technology (IT) in 2004 are low. Academic and pastoral support for students are good.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Curriculum management is good and students on many courses achieve high retention and pass rates. Pass rates on the level 2 part-time food preparation course and achievements of apprenticeship frameworks are low. Teaching is good and very effective community links benefit students. Students receive good and effective academic and pastoral support.
Sport, leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on many programmes are high. Teaching and learning are good, with highly effective support for students. Leadership and management of the curriculum are poor. The range of provision is narrow and accommodation is inadequate.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Retention and pass rates on most courses are high. Teaching and learning are very good, punctuality and attendance are well managed and students demonstrate good professional standards. Support for students including those with specific requirements is good. Room utilisation is inappropriate and in work-based learning assessment and review practices are poor.
Health, social care and public services	Good. Retention and pass rates are high. Much of the teaching in care and early years is good and staff are well qualified. Resources in care and early years are good, but in public services they are satisfactory. Leadership and management are good, but students on NVQ in public services have insufficient access to literacy and language support during their period of basic training.
Journalism, media and arts	Good. The standard of students' work is high and they have access to a very good enrichment programme. Teaching is good and students make good progress in most lessons. The media design centre facilities are outstanding. Curriculum management is good but attendance on some courses is poor and retention rates on several courses are low.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. For many students, achievement is high and teaching and learning are very good with good support for students. The college provides high-quality short courses for army personnel. The management of the area is very effective. However, achievement of key skills is low and some teaching accommodation is unsuitable.

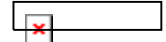
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Pass rates are at least satisfactory and many are high. Retention rates are around the national average, except at level 3 where the retention rates on courses for students aged 16 to 18 are consistently low. Curriculum management is good in most areas. There is very strong and effective leadership and communication with staff is good. Partnership working is very good. Governance is strong. Governors pay close attention to monitoring academic performance and effectively oversee the strategic direction of the college. Management information system reports on recruitment, retention and pass rates are reliable and timely but the range of summary reports is narrow. Quality assurance and self-assessment are effective and inspectors agreed with most of the judgements

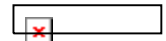
diversity. Financial management is effective and the college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



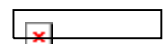
The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. The college provides a welcoming and supportive environment. The range of programmes and courses in most curriculum areas is wide. Access to level 1 provision is insufficient in some curriculum areas. Strategic commitment to widening participation in education and training is strong. Students receive very good teaching in basic skills. The college is involved in a number of effective local and regional strategic partnerships that seek to widen participation and promote social inclusion. Links with local schools are particularly good and are used to promote participation and to encourage students to progress to FE. Learning in the community is promoted through a range of learning venues. Links with the army are excellent. The proportion of students of minority ethnic heritage is similar to that in the local community. The college has made satisfactory responses to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Most areas of the college have satisfactory access for students with restricted mobility, although there are parts of the college where access is limited.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are good. Student services and curriculum teams work collaboratively to ensure that support for students is coherent. Arrangements for learning, literacy and numeracy support have contributed well to improved retention rates for students receiving the support. Information, advice and guidance are good for students before they join, on programme and for progression to HE. Extensive links with other agencies and partnerships enhance the support services provided by the college. Careers information and guidance are provided extensively throughout students' learning programmes. Literacy, language and numeracy support are provided effectively mainly in vocational classes, but also in cross-college workshops. Specialist support for students with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good. Students receive good support from personal tutors, learning mentors, and subject teachers. Managers make insufficient use of management data to measure the effectiveness of learning support across the college and to plan for improvement. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. The college has a named child protection officer and a clearly written policy and procedures. Staff and governors have appropriate information on child protection issues, but many have yet to receive more detailed training.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

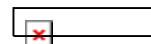
- helpful, supportive and knowledgeable staff

- the friendly welcome and atmosphere
- a safe place to be
- learning and developing skills and confidence
- networking and meeting friends
- flexible provision for adult learners with childcare responsibilities
- good food and restaurant facilities
- the 'buddy' system
- the enrichment activities.

What they feel could be improved

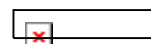
- some boring lessons
- timetabling arrangements for some lessons
- car parking
- student toilets.

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 Learning and Skills Council (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



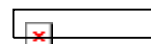
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & 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	75	23	2
19+ and WBL*	84	15	1
Learning 16-18	72	25	3
19+ and WBL*	82	15	3

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



16 to 18 year olds

1. For the academic year 2003/04, enrolments for students aged 16 to 18 on long level 1, 2 and 3 courses were 618, 797 and 544, respectively. There were 2,328 students enrolled on short courses. Overall retention rates for long courses at level 1 improved between 2001 and 2004, when they were significantly above the national average. At level 2, retention rates are broadly in line with national averages and in 2004 were similar to 2001 figures. Retention rates for long level 3 courses were well below national averages between 2002 and 2004, and have not shown improvement. Retention rates for short courses fell by 12% between 2001 and 2004 but remained in line with national

averages. Pass rates at level 1 were consistently high between 2001 and 2004, when they were 13% above national average. Pass rates improved by 9% over this period and in 2003 the college was in the top 25% of colleges for this measure. Pass rates at level 2 were satisfactory between 2001 and 2004, and improved by 5% over this period. At level 3, pass rates rose by 12% between 2001 and 2004, improving from low figures in 2001 and 2002. In 2003, the college was in the top 25% of colleges for level 3 pass rates, but in 2004 this fell slightly. Short course pass rates are consistently high, placing the college in the top 25% of colleges in 2002 and 2003. The achievement of key skills qualifications is poor. Progression is generally good, with many students either progressing to higher-level courses or to relevant employment. Overall attendance during the inspection was similar to that found nationally, at 78%. Work-based learners make slow progress and many do not complete their full apprenticeship framework within the expected time.

2. Students develop good vocational skills. The college has had a number of student successes in competitions, particularly in joinery. The standard of students' practical work in construction is high and they develop a good range of hand skills. For example, wood occupations students produce high-quality working rods and effectively use portable power tools to construct an H-frame. Technician students' written assignments incorporate good diagrams and drawings. However, entry-to-employment (E2E) students in bricklaying are slow to develop vocational skills. In engineering, the standard of practical work in fabrication and welding and motor vehicle is good. For example, level 2 students devise their own weld test procedure and competently carry out tests on their own work. In motor vehicle, students regularly carry out tests and repairs on modern vehicles. The standard of assignment work in ICT is good and students make effective use of the Internet for research and project work. In catering, students develop good practical and social skills through their work in the restaurant and other activities. They learn a good range of skills in the preparation of meat, fish and poultry as well as in the production of pates and terrines. Many students achieve success in competitions. In outdoor education, students develop very good skills in water-based activities. Many students from the Football Development Project reach trials with professional football clubs. Armed forces students show good development of technical and professional skills on their public services course. They also develop confidence, communication skills, time management, self-esteem and discipline. On media and arts courses, students' standards of work are high. Students have produced the college video which is used for a wide range of promotional purposes. Multimedia students have worked with a well-known car manufacturer to produce imaginative designs for a concept car. Design students have produced ambitious paintings of aspects of the college architecture utilising imaginative depictions of perspective. In literacy and numeracy, there are examples of good practical skills development relating to vocational studies. For example, catering students learn about weighing and measuring using both imperial and metric units.

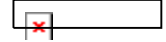
Adult learners

3. For the academic year 2003/04, enrolments for adult students on long level 1, 2 and 3 courses were 680, 1,333, and 779, respectively. There were 5,553 students enrolled on short courses. For long level 1 courses, retention rates are consistently high and in 2004 were 10% above the national average. At level 2, retention rates are broadly in line with national averages and were high in 2003. For level 3 courses, retention rates fell overall by 3% between 2001 and 2004 but were in line with national average or better during the whole four year period. Short course retention rates are satisfactory. Pass rates for most long courses have improved overall. For example, at level 1 pass rates improved by 13% between 2001 and 2004 and are in line with national average. For level 2 courses, where pass rates are also in line with the national average, there was an increase of 6% over the same period. Pass rates for long level 3 courses were low in 2001, but by 2004 had improved by 18% to the national average. Short course pass rates are satisfactory. Overall success rates at level 1 and level 3 were high in 2004.

4. As well as acquiring vocational skills, many adult students develop good transferable skills. For example, students following NVQs in care and early years show good development of personal learning skills. In journalism, although not all students achieve the required shorthand speeds initially, the majority enter relevant employment. ICT students demonstrate sound IT skills and make appropriate use of the virtual learning environment which they can access from home. Adult literacy and numeracy students also show good achievement of personal and learning skills and develop their ability to learn independently. Their confidence and communication skills improve and they are

able to reflect on and talk about their achievements.

Quality of education and training



5. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 185 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 78% of these, satisfactory in 20% and less than satisfactory in 2%. Learning was good or better in 76% of lessons. The percentage of teaching and learning that was good or better is significantly higher than the average for colleges of this type and the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching is also significantly lower.

6. The highest proportion of good or better teaching was in literacy and numeracy, journalism, media and art, hairdressing and beauty therapy, social care and public services. Few lessons were graded as outstanding. The lowest proportion of good or better teaching at 67% was in construction, which is above the national average.

7. The quality of teaching for adult students is better than for students aged 16 to 18, except in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Adults learn more effectively and have significantly higher levels of attainment. The presence of mature adult students alongside students aged 16 to 18 in many of the classes helps the learning of the younger students. Standards of teaching, learning and attainment in training sessions for work-based learners are lowest, although the sample of observations for this group of learners is small, at just under 10% of the total lessons observed. Overall, the quality of teaching is best at entry level and is better in practical lessons. On average, the proportion of lessons taught by full-time teachers is of higher quality than those taught by part-time teachers.

8. Standards of teaching and learning at the time of the last inspection were below the national average. Since then, the college has introduced improved procedures and support for teachers to raise standards. The best lessons are well planned. Students benefit from detailed schemes of work and well-planned lessons giving good coverage of the subject matter. Teachers prepare lesson plans which pay sufficient attention to the needs and learning styles of individual students. Learning outcomes are specific and shared and discussed with students. Practical lessons are well planned and relate closely to situations found in the workplace. In hospitality and catering, students with learning difficulties and difficulties are well supported by learning support assistants to work well in practical cookery.

9. Most lessons are stimulating and engaging. Teachers are skilled at developing topics and checking understanding through questions directed to individuals or to the class as a whole. Many theory lessons include different activities to better maintain students' interest. In the best lessons, teachers used a variety of teaching methods and learning activities, whole class, group and individual. For example, in a lesson on budgeting for entry-level students, some used the Internet to find out the cost of hiring a DVD, others researched promotional leaflets to add up the cost of a take-away meal, others read information from a utility company about saving energy and another group worked on a poster based around a photograph of group members. At the end of the lesson, all the groups came together to discuss their findings. Some students preparing for independent living found the lesson particularly helpful. In ICT and journalism, media and art, lessons incorporated a variety of innovative activities using technological solutions. Teachers make good use of question and answer techniques in lessons to check students are learning. In the best lessons, questions are directed to individual students and all students are engaged. Teachers regularly check on students' progress and understanding. Teachers and students have a high regard for each other, views of students are treated seriously and relationships are warm. Teaching of key skills is integrated with the curriculum and taught in a vocational context. Students enjoy these lessons and appreciate the value and relevance of key skills.

10. In less effective lessons, lesson plans do not always clearly identify differing levels of ability within classes. Teachers' treatment of topics is unimaginative, and visual aids are poor or are

insufficiently used. In some lessons, teachers use undirected questions and fail to gain the interests of some students.

11. Teaching staff have appropriate qualifications and many have relevant industrial experience. Most full-time and many part-time teachers have a teaching qualification and those who do not are required to achieve qualified teacher status.

12. The college has a systematic approach to health and safety. Overall, the current college buildings and accommodation are satisfactory and are effectively maintained. All curriculum areas are accessible to students with restricted mobility. Some parts of all buildings are inaccessible, particularly for sports, leisure and tourism students at the Larchfield Street site. The college is moving to a new college site in September 2006 which will address outstanding accommodation issues.

13. The range of IT resources available is good. Students have access to computers in all curriculum areas through local centres. The use of ILT in teaching and learning is underdeveloped. A virtual learning environment is used particularly effectively in ICT, but not in many other areas. The resources in media are outstanding and good for other arts courses. Good resources in health and social care include an effective video link to the college nursery for teaching childcare. In some areas, such as construction, specialist equipment is good, but in others, such as hospitality and catering, equipment is old and does not meet current industry standards.

14. Learning materials are good in many curriculum areas. The learning resources centre provides a pleasant learning environment with good access to computers and the Internet. Stock of books, periodicals, videos, and CD ROMs are adequate, but many books and some other resources are old and out of date.

15. Initial assessment is good and includes diagnostic tests for all full-time students aged 16 to 18, work-based learners and part-time students where it is felt to be particularly necessary. The results of this screening together with other interview evidence, prior qualifications, and results of induction activities are used effectively to identify additional learning needs and appropriate levels of key skills entry. Results are recorded on individual learning plans and appropriate targets are set with students. Other students can be referred for testing on request or by their teacher. This arrangement is unreliable for some students.

16. In most curriculum areas, assessment is satisfactory or better. However, in work-based learning in engineering, learners receive insufficient workplace assessment, and a narrow range of assessment methods are used on public services NVQs. Assessed work is marked quickly and teacher feedback on assessments is clear, encouraging and provides constructive comment. This enables students to improve their work. Students are aware of assignment deadlines and are encouraged to comply with them and take greater responsibility for their learning.

17. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory in most curriculum areas, but in sports, leisure, travel and tourism it is insufficiently planned. The college is highly responsive to feedback from external examiners, moderators and verifiers. Lead internal verifiers from each programme area meet frequently to share good practice, action plan from external reports, and review internal verification procedures and practice.

18. Most programme areas offer a satisfactory, or better, range of courses and programmes from entry level or level 1 through to level 4. In sports and travel and tourism, however, there is no level 1 provision and it is limited in engineering. Student progression is good in most curriculum areas. Work-based learning is available in five curriculum areas. Community partnerships are strong. Enrolments from deprived wards have grown year on year. Much of the community provision is taught through learndirect centres.

19. The college takes an active role in a number of local and regional strategic partnerships that seek to widen participation and promote social inclusion including the Darlington 14 to 19 trust and learning partnerships in both Darlington and Richmond. The college has a good relationship with the

local sixth form college resulting in improved curriculum planning and a joint information shop. The college's response to the needs of local schools is excellent. The college's 14 to 16 provision is extensive and progression to mainstream college courses is good.

20. Links with employers are particularly effective. The college has a successful college employer network of 32 employers. Employer task groups contribute well, meeting regularly to review and advise on provision and curriculum development. A subsidiary company promotes specially designed training services and course to employers. In 2003/04, workforce development initiatives resulted in engagement with 366 employers. The college has particularly strong links with the army at Catterick.

21. The college provides a wide range of curriculum enrichment activities for students including visits to exhibitions, overseas trips, and charity fund raising activities. Many students benefit from regular visits from specialist speakers. Opportunities for sports and other general interest activities are good.

22. The management and teaching of key skills has recently changed and in many areas integration of key skills with vocational programmes is good. In construction, there is insufficient gathering of key skills evidence from the workplace. Whilst there are indications of improvement, it is too early to judge the full effect of these changes.

23. The student services team provides good information, advice and guidance. Prospectuses and course leaflets are attractively produced. Information in different formats such as audio or Braille is available on demand. Good careers advice is available for students applying to the college and for existing students applying through Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) for entry to HE. Financial support is readily available and specialist counselling has been used well to help students who are at risk of leaving to stay on courses.

24. Students are well informed of the support services available at enrolment, through induction and through ongoing guidance. Extensive partnerships with other agencies enrich the range of the support services provided by the college and the opportunities for impartial advice for prospective students.

25. Support for students with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly good. Accommodation and resources are good, and teachers and support staff are well qualified. Clearly written leaflets provide staff with enough knowledge on how to recognise and deal with students who may have conditions such as Prader-Willi or Aspergers syndrome that could adversely affect their learning. Learning mentors for students needing extra help with their studies or their motivation are effective. They help to ensure that learning materials are adapted into suitable formats to meet the needs of their mentees.

26. Arrangements to support full-time students likely to need additional support for literacy and numeracy are planned in advance. Most students needing additional support receive help from specialist tutors working collaboratively with vocational tutors. This support has improved these students' retention rates. In the current year, the student retention rate has improved significantly to 86%. Management data are insufficiently used to measure the effectiveness of learning support and to plan for improvement.

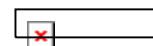
27. Systems designed to improve levels of attendance, including phone calls to parents of students aged 16 to 18 and student contracts have been mostly effective. However, during the inspection, attendance rates were low on many courses.

28. Full-time students receive regular individual and group tutorials. Many teachers are readily available to provide additional pastoral support on personal and academic issues. Students speak highly about the support they receive from tutors, learning mentors and other support workers. Support for adults studying in the community is more limited, but can be arranged when needed.

29. The college has satisfactory arrangements for responding to the needs of vulnerable adults and young people. A small team of managers monitor the implementation of the student protection

policy. Developments are regularly discussed with partners concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. There is a named student protection officer. Recommended procedures are stringently applied to the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers. Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse are well established and documented. Staff and governors have appropriate information on child protection issues, but have yet to receive more detailed training.

Leadership and management



30. Leadership and management are good. The quality of the teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now significantly above the average for general FE colleges. Pass rates have risen over the past four years and are around or above national averages. Retention rates have not improved to the same extent, however, and retention rates on level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18 remain low. With the exception of the weakness in retention rates, the college has addressed successfully many of the key issues identified at the previous inspection.

31. Curriculum management is good in most curriculum areas. It is poor in sport, leisure and tourism, however. The principal has been very successful in developing strong and effective working partnerships with employers, other educational establishments and the wider community. The college plays a leading role in the Darlington Learning Partnership and works in close collaboration with the neighbouring sixth form college. The principal is successfully leading the planning for the £34.7 million new college building project. This has involved a feasibility study, negotiations with funding bodies for FE and HE, discussions with the local authority and planners and extensive communication with interested parties across the area. The new building includes an innovative HE centre that is being developed in partnership with the local sixth form college and University of Teesside.

32. Governance is highly effective. Governors are committed and enthusiastic and they have a good range of skills and expertise. They are appropriately involved in determining the character, mission and strategy of the college. The college has an independent clerk. Corporation papers and minutes are well presented and particularly clear. Governors are informed by good financial and quality data and they are appropriately challenging in questioning managers. They have a good understanding of college standards and academic performance. The average attendance at corporation meetings is 71% which falls short of the target of 80%.

33. Communication with staff is good. In addition to a monthly newsletter, the principal holds formal briefing sessions for staff three times a year and regularly meets with curriculum teams on a more informal basis. The principal also meets regularly with students. A new initiative was launched in January of this year which assigns a governor to each curriculum area and already strong links are being formed in some areas. The governors also meet twice a year with students. These meetings are well attended and are very useful and constructive.

34. Management information system reports that enable managers and governors to monitor key performance targets such as recruitment, retention and pass rates are reliable and timely, however, managers do not make sufficient use of summary reports relating to other aspects of provision. For example, the college does not have an electronic register system and although curriculum managers in health and social care and in hairdressing and beauty therapy aggregate attendance data manually in order to monitor trends, most managers do not have an overall picture of attendance patterns in their area.

35. Staff induction, appraisal and development are good. There are strong links between the programme of lesson observations, staff development and the appraisal system. A key element is the 'teachers toolkit' which is a programme of training focusing on aspects of teaching that have

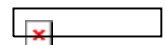
been identified as weak through the observation programme. The sessions are led by the teachers who have demonstrated good practice and are targeted at those who have not performed well in their lesson observation. Attendance at the training is monitored through the appraisal system. Appraisal of staff takes place annually and there is a mid-year review of progress against targets. There is a good programme of training for both teaching and support staff and attendance at external events is encouraged and supported.

36. Quality assurance has played a key role in enabling the college to raise standards. Quality assurance procedures are well documented and are understood by staff. The views of staff and students are collected regularly and action is taken where required. Targets are well understood by staff and are used to inform judgements on progress. The college has an accurate and well-informed view of the quality of its provision and its strengths and weaknesses. The curriculum grades awarded by inspectors are the same as those in the self-assessment report in the majority of curriculum areas and the teaching and learning grade profile derived from the college's quality assurance procedures closely matches those derived from inspection. Inspectors found that the annual course reviews are detailed and accurate in all but one of the curriculum areas.

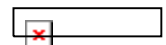
37. There is an active commitment to diversity and equality. Policies on equality and diversity meet the requirements of government legislation on disability and race. Substantial training has taken place on these issues. Measures for dealing with racial and sexual harassment, bullying and student grievances are clear and well understood. The college held a successful 'embracing diversity week' involving outside speakers, fun activities and 'taster' sessions designed to increase understanding of other religions and cultures, breakdown gender stereotyping and promote equality. Equality and diversity issues are more prominent in the teaching and learning in some curriculum than others. The internal equality and diversity group carefully monitors college-wide statistical data on staff and students. As yet, the group does not analyse data by curriculum area, in a systematic way, in order to identify good practice and to target action appropriately.

38. Financial management is good. Managers and governors monitor the college's financial position closely. A very effective costing model is used to check the viability of any new courses and projects. Managers and governors have carefully considered the risks associated with the new building project, they have taken appropriate measures to minimise the risks and they have contingency plans in place. The college provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- good standard of students' practical work
- good teaching and learning
- excellent student success in competitions
- particularly effective links with employers.

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning
- poor framework achievement on apprenticeship programmes.

Scope of provision

39. The college offers a broad range of craft and technician courses at level 1 to level 3 in bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, plastering, and construction technicians. Plumbing is offered at level 2. Apprenticeships are offered in most trades and advanced apprenticeship programmes in bricklaying and wood occupations. Entry to employment (E2E) is run within bricklaying. Higher National Certificates (HNCs), Open College Network courses and some short courses are also available. Some 112 students aged 16 to 18 and 31 adults attend full-time courses, and 202 students aged 16 to 18 and 249 adults attend part-time courses. There are 56 learners on apprenticeship and three learners on advanced apprenticeship programmes. The college provides subcontracted training to local providers and for a national providers' 261 apprentices. Some 32 pupils aged 14 to 16 from 6 local schools attend the college for 6 hours a week, undertaking units from the foundation construction certificate.

Achievement and standards

40. Pass rates on most courses are high and excellent on NVQ level 3 wood occupations, NVQ level 1 trowel occupations, and national certificate in construction. Retention rates are at the national average on most courses. Positive action has been taken to phase out underperforming courses and to introduce new ones. Achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is poor. In 2002/03, it was 23%. Work-based learners, who are still in learning, are making good progress towards completing their frameworks.

41. Standards of students' practical work are good and students develop good vocational skills. Technician students produce good written assignments. Most students make good progress and take great pride in their work. E2E learners in bricklaying are slow to develop vocational skills. Their standard of work and attendance is poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ wood occupations (construction) 1 year	1	No. of starts	26	28	41
		% retention	81	89	93
		% pass rate	62	100	97
Intermediate construction award 1 year	2	No. of starts	8	20	24
		% retention	63	90	71
		% pass rate	40	61	94
NVQ wood occupations (construction) 2 year	2	No. of starts	26	32	18
		% retention	73	59	83
		% pass rate	68	100	100
NVQ bricklaying (construction) 2 year	2	No. of starts	22	23	12
		% retention	64	57	50
		% pass rate	43	92	83
NVQ wood occupations (construction) 1 year	3	No. of starts	19	18	18
		% retention	84	94	94
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GNVQ pre-cursors (2 year)	3	No. of starts	32	13	27
		% retention	75	54	81
		% pass rate	75	86	93

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

Quality of education and training

42. Teaching and learning are good or better in the majority of lessons, with no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are well managed and lesson planning is effective. Learning outcomes are specific and, in the majority of cases, shared and discussed with students. In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge and industrial experience and that of students to reinforce key points. Teachers regularly check students' learning and progress by asking carefully directed questions. Teachers use differentiated learning materials which take account of the different abilities and needs of students in mixed-ability classes. Practical lessons relate closely to the workplace and are stimulating and engaging. In one lesson, students on the NVQ level 2 in wood occupations effectively constructed a stud walling from scratch. Teachers make insufficient use of ILT for teaching and learning. The college has specialist computer software for craft and technician studies, but it is rarely used. Few craft learners use computers to develop their learning and understanding. Technician students only use computers in key skills and computer-aided design (CAD) lessons. The teaching of key skills is appropriately integrated with the vocational curriculum.

43. Resources are satisfactory. Most workshops are well equipped and have a good range of industrial-standard resources. Workshop space for plastering is poor, with dust problems and some areas have insufficient lighting and unsatisfactory floor surfaces. With the exception of plastering, workshops have a good range of well-maintained tools. Students have access to a well-stocked building science laboratory, a good range of surveying equipment and a CAD suite with latest release software. The library provides a satisfactory range of textbooks and periodicals, but some textbooks are dated. Most classrooms provide a good learning environment. Teachers have good industrial experience and qualifications, but only 58% are teacher trained. Technician support is adequate.

44. Students are set relevant assignments which are mostly of a high standard. Most students are aware of assessment and how they are to be assessed. However, some students could not recall the units they had completed or had yet to commence. Assessment is thorough and appropriate. It is effectively recorded and counter checked by internal verifiers. Most NVQ learners compile a range of portfolio evidence, but there is little use of photographic evidence. Work submitted for assessment is returned promptly. Feedback from tutors is mainly effective. On-site assessment is frequent and rigorous for plumbing learners. Little workplace assessment takes place in bricklaying and carpentry and joinery. Progress reviews are satisfactory and include short-term target setting. Individual learning plans are updated appropriately.

45. A wide range of construction courses is provided to meet the needs of students and employers and provide good progression. Many students on the foundation construction award progress into apprenticeships. Some NVQ learners have progressed through national certificate courses on to higher national courses.

46. Students have been highly successful in winning competitions. From 2001 to 2003, they were national champions in carpentry and joinery and world champions in 2003. Other success in 2003 include national bronze medal winners in bricklaying and regional winners in plumbing. Students are motivated by these competition successes. Many strive for excellence and take great pride in their work. Teachers provide encouragement and support. Local employers are proud of the achievements of students.

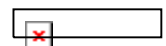
47. The college has particularly effective links with employers. A task group of employers meets regularly at the college to review and advise on construction provision. This ensures employers' needs are met, for example, in the development of plastering courses. Employers support the college in managing the construction curriculum centre. Recent centre developments include a mathematics learning pack which uses construction as a context for the development of numerical skills and good learning resource packs which are used extensively in Darlington's secondary schools. Employers provide good support for work-based learners and they are actively involved in learner progress reviews and target setting.

48. Students receive an appropriate initial assessment which accurately identifies support needs and have a satisfactory induction. Support provided by staff is effective; it is closely monitored and there are good links between support staff and vocational tutors. Tutorial support is satisfactory. All full-time and most part-time students receive individual tutorials which review progress, support needs and set targets. All full-time students have timetabled group tutorials.

Leadership and management

49. Communications are effective through team meetings which have agendas, recorded minutes, actions and timescales. Lines of responsibility for course organisation and management are clear. Course files are good, well organised and standardised across all courses. Self-assessment is detailed. Internal verification procedures effectively incorporate sampling plans, checklists and programme records, but in plumbing, on-site assessment is not internally verified. Initiatives to promote and raise the profile of the construction industry have been successful. For example, the introduction of a women-only course in creative woodworking has been useful in widening participation. Quality assurance of work-based learning is incomplete and does not monitor the quality of progress reviews. Equality of opportunity issues are insufficiently reinforced during learner reviews and the adequacy of employers approach to equality of opportunity is not checked.

Engineering technology and manufacturing



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

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

Strengths

- good achievements on many courses

- much good teaching

- good progress reviews for college-based students

- good workplace learning opportunities.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on a minority of courses

- narrow breadth of provision at level 1

- poor progress reviews for work-based learners.

Scope of provision

50. The college offers craft and technician courses in all the main engineering areas. Many can be studied through part-time or full-time attendance. Progression pathways are available on motor vehicle programmes from level 1 to HE and from level 2 to HE in the other engineering areas. There are 584 part-time students, of whom about 60% are aged 16 to 18, and 166 full-time students, mostly aged 16 to 18. The college manages 91 engineering apprentices, and teaches a further 170 apprentices from other training providers. About 80 pupils from local schools are taking engineering courses, and increasing numbers from this provision are continuing in college courses at age 16. The HE provision has 108 students on a range of HNC, Higher National Diploma (HND) and foundation-degree programmes.

Achievement and standards

51. Retention and pass rates on the majority of engineering courses are about or above national averages. The proportion of enrolled students who succeed in gaining their qualification has risen over the last three years for students aged 16 to 18 on level 2 and level 3 programmes, and for students aged 19 and over on level 2 programmes and are above national averages. Success rate of students aged 19 and over on level 3 courses declined in 2003/04 but are around the national average. Achievements in motor vehicle courses are good. A few programmes have some low

retention or pass rates. Students' practical work is often of a good standard, and they are confident and active participants in lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 4100 motor vehicle and precursor progression awards	1	No. of starts	23	29	10
		% retention	65	79	90
		% pass rate	47	96	89
First diploma in manufacturing engineering and precursor GNVQ	2	No. of starts	17	16	15
		% retention	88	69	80
		% pass rate	73	91	75
Certificate in electrical installation theory and practice Pt 1, and precursor	2	No. of starts	14	21	38
		% retention	79	62	95
		% pass rate	45	8	61
National certificate in engineering (2 year)	3	No. of starts	59	67	15
		% retention	63	60	53
		% pass rate	73	78	88
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	16	16	19
		% retention	75	69	74
		% pass rate	83	100	71

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

Quality of education and training

52. Much of the teaching is good. Teachers are skilled at developing topics and checking understanding through questions directed to individuals or to the class as a whole. Students respond well to questions, in turn put questions to teachers, and engage fully in discussions and group activities. Many theory lessons include different activities to better maintain students' interest. The presence of mature adult students with students aged 16 to 18 in many classes helps the learning of the younger students. Teachers draw on the adults' experiences, and their high level of application sets a good example. Teachers and students have a high regard for each other. Views of students are treated seriously and relationships are warm. Lessons are disciplined, but characterised by good humour. In a minority of lessons, learning is less effective because the teacher's treatment of topics is unimaginative, projected slides are poor, or insufficient visual aids are used. Motor vehicle and electrical installation students benefit from access to good work books for their theoretical studies, and to technical data. Students make frequent use of the Internet to research information.

53. Engineering staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their roles. Several staff have had recent placements in industry. Facilities for studying computer aided design (CAD) and advanced manufacturing are good. A new computer-based learning centre for engineering is well equipped, but is not yet fully used. Most teaching rooms contain computers. Much of the workshop machinery is old, though maintained well. Several of the teaching rooms are fitted with data projectors and some have interactive whiteboards, but these are not yet in regular use. In some teaching rooms, ventilation is poor and unshielded windows hamper the effective use of projectors. The vehicle refinishing workshop has ineffective extraction equipment and a spray booth that is not of industrial standard.

54. Work-based learners are employed in good work placements which offer good training facilities. Employers are very supportive of their apprentices and of the college. On-the-job and off-the-job training is insufficiently co-ordinated.

55. The progress reviews of college-based students are well managed. Assessment schedules are planned to distribute students' workloads. Assessments and assignments are marked thoroughly and give helpful feedback. Careful attention is paid to the progress of each student. Systems and documentation for tracking progress are clear. Tutors hold regular progress reviews with each student. All aspects of the programme are discussed, and effective short-term targets are agreed. The assessment and monitoring activity in electrical installation work-based learning has been particularly affected by staff illnesses. Progress reviews of work-based learners are poor and are insufficiently frequent. Records are often cursory. Few measurable targets are set and previous targets are not routinely discussed. The review form does not record the date of the next review, and the centrally planned dates are often not met. Copies of the review form are not routinely provided to apprentices or employers. In one review, the employer signed the form before the apprentice had been interviewed.

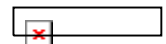
56. Whilst progression routes from level 1 through to HE in automotive engineering are good, access to provision at level 1 in other engineering areas is unavailable.

57. The support and guidance offered to students at the college is good. Diagnostic assessments are used during induction to determine whether the student needs any additional support to succeed. Second-year national diploma students take additional assessments so that appropriate help can be provided to meet the demands of their integrated assignment. Progression guidance is a prominent feature of the tutorial programme for full-time students. Teachers give strong and readily available support for their students in technical and personal matters. Students feel valued as individuals and appreciate the safe and supportive environment of the college.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management of the engineering provision are good. Each sub-programme area has an annual planning day at which their provision is reviewed. Course targets are agreed for enrolments, retention and pass rates. Teachers understand the cost of their courses, and the income generated. A rigorous appraisal process determines professional development needs. Self-assessment at course and programme-area level is thorough and inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report. The chair of governors, who has an engineering background, has met with the engineering managers to discuss their curriculum area report. Effective staff training followed a programme of lesson observations by external consultants. Significant improvements had been made in the management of engineering work-based learning in the period leading up to inspection, but changes have not yet been fully established in practice.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- good teaching

- good academic and pastoral support

- effective use of virtual learning environment in teaching and learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for the one-year ECDL course
- low pass rate for AVCE IT in 2004
- insufficient challenge for more able students.

Scope of provision

59. The college offers a limited range of full-time courses at levels 2 and 3. HE courses are also available. Part-time courses for adults are offered at the main site and other centres. Courses offered include computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), the European computer driving licence (ECDL), an introductory course and a visual basic course. ECDL course is also taught to Year 9 pupils in a local high school. At the time of the inspection, there were 91 full-time and 330 part-time students.

Achievement and standards

60. Retention rates for the one-year ECDL course are high, but pass rates are low. The retention rate for AVCE IT improved in 2004, but the pass rate fell to well below the national average and the proportion of students achieving higher grades was also low. Retention rates on GNVQ foundation have improved to above the national average and pass rates have been maintained in line with national averages. Retention and pass rates for GNVQ intermediate IT were similar to national averages in 2004, but few students gained high grades. Basic IT courses have high retention and pass rates. Attendance during the inspection was below average.

61. Students demonstrate sound IT skills appropriate to their level of study and use the Internet for research and project work. The standard of much assignment work is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	26	19	22
		% retention	62	74	82
		% pass rate	88	79	78
Using ICT (short)	1	No. of starts	212	149	98
		% retention	95	93	91
		% pass rate	67	67	82

GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	39	48	29
		% retention	79	92	76
		% pass rate	77	64	68
ECDL (1 year)	2	No. of starts	78	100	85
		% retention	87	99	92
		% pass rate	88	27	50
AVCE ICT (double award)	3	No. of starts	48	47	48
		% retention	48	62	71
		% pass rate	78	79	71

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

Quality of education and training

62. Much teaching is good. Lessons are thoughtfully prepared and teachers incorporate a variety of interesting activities to promote understanding and check learning. For example, in one lesson on business calculations, students made boxes to aid the investigation of comparative volumes. In another lesson, students practised using graphic effects by introducing an image of a modern telephone into the image of a cave painting. Teachers make good use of paired and small group work which promotes support and discussion between students. In a minority of lessons, work does not sufficiently stretch or enthuse the more able students. On occasion, full-time students are not given sufficient direction and encouragement to manage their own learning, and some fail to bring their own pen or paper.

63. Teachers use a wide range of high-quality teaching resources which include presentations, demonstrations, practical exercises, handbooks and documents. Many are stored on the virtual learning environment which is used effectively for teaching and learning. Teachers and students access materials from home and in the classroom. Students submit work and receive feedback online. Students can also view their assessment progress within the group. In a part-time lesson, two adult students were able to access materials from home and avoid falling behind despite an unavoidable absence. Students receive good feedback on their work. Students on part-time courses are given clear understanding of the assessment requirements of their course.

64. Accommodation is satisfactory. On the main site, in open-plan teaching areas, noise from students in adjacent bays is disruptive. Some teaching areas have inadequate space for students to complete written work. A hardware installation room provides a realistic environment for students to gain experience of computer maintenance and hardware tasks. The learning centre has a good selection of recent books, but also has many books which are outdated. Adjustable height desks and a range of specialist equipment are available for students with physical disabilities. All teachers have teaching qualifications and regularly undertake professional development. A minority of teachers have recently updated their skills through industrial placements.

65. Key skills are integrated well with full-time courses. Full-time students attend a three-day residential where they develop and achieve the key skill of working with others. A programme of visiting speakers provides students with an insight into industrial practices and careers, but student work placements only occur through individual arrangements.

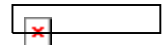
66. Academic and pastoral support for students are good. Students with learning difficulties receive effective learning support within the classroom. For example, in one lesson, a student with behavioural difficulties made good progress with the support of a mentor. Learning support workers are effectively used to follow-up absences, provide support when students are struggling with personal issues, and to offer a confidential contact for students. This support is having a positive effect on both attendance and retention rates. Both full-time and part-time students appreciate the helpful and friendly support of teachers who provide good academic support in practical lessons.

Support is thorough and constructive without being overly directive. Teachers on an introductory IT course were particularly sensitive to the needs of the less confident adult students.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are effective and teachers are aware of the strategic direction of the curriculum area and the college as a whole. Teachers are sensitive to equal opportunity issues. Significantly more male than female students study ICT and managers are developing strategies to counter this imbalance, including a computer club for women. Significant curriculum changes have been made to improve the provision and to improve the rigour of self-assessment. The self-assessment report effectively identified most of the issues raised by inspectors. Course teams meet regularly and quality reviews consider three-year trend data for retention and pass rates. However, there are no readily available reports for analysing attendance data.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses
- good teaching and learning
- very effective community links which benefit students
- very good support for students
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of apprenticeship frameworks
- low pass rates on the part-time NVQ level 2 food preparation course.

Scope of provision

68. The college offers a wide range of courses in hospitality and catering for full-time and part-time students. Courses in food preparation and cooking, food and drink service and housekeeping are provided at NVQ levels 1 to 3. Food hygiene courses are offered at levels 1 to 3 and health and safety at level 1. Certificate courses for the licensed trade and for door supervisors are also available. The college offers a wide range of short courses such as cake decoration, vegetarian cookery, sugar craft and bread making. At the time of inspection, there were 344 students aged 16 to 18 and 859 adult students. The majority of students on full-time courses are male. On part-time courses, the majority of students are adult and female. There are 9 learners are on apprenticeship programmes.

Achievement and standards

69. Pass and retention rates on most courses are high. For the NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking course, both retention and pass rates are high. For NVQ level 2 food preparation and food service one-year courses, retention rates are outstanding, 100% in 2002/03 and 2003/04. Pass rates were also high in 2003/04. For the two-year level 2 NVQ food service course, retention and pass rates are close to the national average. For NVQ level 2 food preparation, the retention rate was above the national average in 2003/04, but the pass rate was low. Retention and pass rates on NVQ level 3 are very high. Achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is poor.

70. Students achieve good practical and social skills by working in the college restaurant and through other activities. Students work well within mixed level groups and students are good at helping each other. Students participate in competitions with successes such as winner of Northern Region young pastry chef. Student progression from entry level through to level 2 and into employment is good. Progression to level 3 and then to the foundation degree is also good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ catering and hospitality, food preparation and cooking 1 year	1	No. of starts	38	36	32
		% retention	84	81	88
		% pass rate	84	90	96
NVQ catering and hospitality, food preparation and cooking 1 year	2	No. of starts	39	32	36
		% retention	97	100	100
		% pass rate	76	66	86
NVQ catering and hospitality, food preparation and cooking 2 year	2	No. of starts	27	38	30
		% retention	89	13	60
		% pass rate	46	100	56
NVQ catering and hospitality, food and drink service 2 year	2	No. of starts	45	36	24
		% retention	80	58	58
		% pass rate	42	100	86
National certificate for licensees short	3	No. of starts	*	109	111
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	72	85

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

**course did not run*

Quality of education and training

71. Teaching and learning are good. Students in most lessons are motivated and challenged. They learn a good range of skills in the preparation of meat, fish and poultry and in the production of cold preparations such as pates and terrines. Schemes of work are well planned. Lesson plans do not always take account of students' differing levels of ability. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to involve students. Students contribute well in lessons. There are good examples of the use of ICT by teachers and in one lesson students were producing good computer presentations. In another lesson, students applied their knowledge of employment and disability discrimination well to their workplaces.

72. Resources for food preparation, whilst adequate, do not fully reflect industrial standards. Teachers have good knowledge and industrial experience, and use this well in teaching. A wide range of professional development activities for teachers includes close contact with industry. Master classes are offered to students in topics such as chocolate work, butchery skills and ice cream manufacture. These are made available to other colleges and to industry. Learning materials to help students are clear and well produced. The new college virtual learning environment contains some learning and assessment materials. Resources have been developed to accommodate a wide range of students with learning and physical disabilities and for those with visual impairments. General teaching rooms are of a satisfactory standard and there are good displays of student work.

73. Initial assessment adequately identifies individual learning needs, which are provided by teachers or learning support services. Students are effectively involved in target setting and with individual learning plans. These are closely monitored to track student progress. Students understand the assessment process. They complete comprehensive diaries of work and reference this to their portfolios of evidence. Photographic evidence is used well in portfolios. Teachers keep good records of progress. Internal verification is satisfactory.

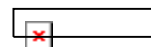
74. Links with local schools are good and assist with progression to college courses. Key Stage 4 pupils have opportunities to work towards a range of qualifications in food hygiene, food preparation and cooking. A junior apprenticeship programme allows pupils to learn in school, work placement and college. The broad range of enrichment activities available to students includes visits to exhibitions and trade fairs as well as hotels and restaurants. These activities improve their knowledge of the industry. Community links are used well and have resulted in the introduction of bespoke courses. One example is the development of a cookery course for those with visual impairments in conjunction with social services. The college is a lead partner in the development of a CoVE in hospitality and catering in North Yorkshire.

75. Students receive very good support. The college is a caring community and provides a stable environment for students who lack confidence and have personal or financial difficulties. Initial guidance is thorough. Students receive a good induction. Group and individual tutorials contribute to support. The college has introduced good strategies to support students at risk of leaving or failing to remain on their courses and gain qualifications. An effective strategy to follow-up absence and poor punctuality has helped to improve attendance. Students with additional learning needs receive particularly sensitive and discreet help in lessons.

Leadership and management

76. Curriculum management is good. Communications both within the curriculum area and with senior managers are good. Clear responsibilities are assigned to staff and teachers are effectively involved in decision-making processes. Targets are set for retention and pass rates and course teams monitor these closely. The structure of meetings is good, with well-recorded outcomes and identified actions. Appraisal is used well to further develop the skills of all teachers, to set specific objectives and to monitor achievement of these. All teachers contribute towards self-assessment which was comprehensive and identified the main strengths and weaknesses, but inspectors considered that it was over generous in the grading of the area.

Sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many programmes
- good teaching and learning
- highly effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- inadequate accommodation
- narrow range of provision
- poor leadership and management of curriculum.

Scope of provision

77. There are 193 students studying at levels 2 and 3 in travel and sport. In sport, 122 full-time students attend a first diploma in sport or outdoor education, or a national certificate in performance and excellence, outdoor education or exercise science. In travel, 44 students attend primary and advanced travel agent's certificates or a diploma in resort operations or national diploma in travel and tourism. Some 27 students are taking the primary and advanced travel agent's certificates part time in the evening. Vocational general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) in leisure and tourism and Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA) and GCSE physical education are offered to 68 pupils aged 14 to 16 as part of a school link programme and for some students who have becoming disengaged from education. Of the 193 students, 41% are male and 49% female.

Achievement and standards

78. Retention and pass rates on the travel agent's primary certificate, alpine ski instructor and the national diploma in applied science (sports studies) are high. Most programmes are above the national average for both retention and pass rates.

79. Progression from the football development project into football clubs is good, with two students having trials with premier league teams in 2004 and one student offered a scholarship at a professional football club. Five students have progressed to the last 30 in recent England trials. Students who completed full-time programmes in 2004 have secured full-time and part-time employment in the appropriate industries, for example, with travel organisations, outdoor centres, fitness centres and football clubs. Progression from level 2 into HE is good. Students achieve high levels of skills and knowledge during their training, particularly in travel agency and outdoor education.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Alpine ski instructor	short	No. of starts	59	25	53
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Association of British Travel Agents certificate (ABTAC) primary	2	No. of starts	*	27	15
		% retention	*	81	93
		% pass rate	*	82	93
Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in applied sciences (sports studies)	3	No. of starts	20	22	14
		% retention	75	73	86
		% pass rate	87	63	92
AVCE (double award) in travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	23	16	16
		% retention	43	25	63
		% pass rate	80	75	100

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

*no data available

Quality of education and training

80. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good up-to-date vocational experience and skills. They use a wide range of innovative learning activities, linking theory to practice in sport. Development of water-based activities and skills are excellent. In many aspects of sport, development of students' analytical, evaluative and coaching skills is good. Resources are very well used, with effective presentations through interactive whiteboards. Well-produced handouts are detailed and clear. Teachers ensure that lessons take account of the differing abilities of students and give additional help sensitively whenever needed. Observation of performance and progress is rigorous. Students are set appropriate individual learning tasks to be completed within realistic timescales and with clear feedback given. Students develop a good work ethic. Students have a good rapport with their teachers and make good progress within a stimulating atmosphere to promote learning.

81. The accommodation at the Larchfield Street site is inadequate, with poor access for those with physical disabilities. It is cramped and hard to adapt. Some areas are poorly lit. The sports hall is a thoroughfare to other teaching accommodation. Classrooms are doubled up as computer rooms, with groups sitting at tables with insufficient space to work comfortably. Staff improvise to create a conducive learning environment wherever possible. Some facilities for performance and exercise do not adequately mirror current practice. This site will close in 2006.

82. There are some good resources, but not in all classrooms. Interactive whiteboards are available

and used effectively in two rooms. Other classrooms only contain minimal equipment. Equipment for students to access four operators' computerised reservation systems are inadequate. ICT facilities are good, with recent purchases of very modern computers. The staff are well qualified and are current industry practitioners, although many are new in post. Staff have a strong commitment to continuous professional development.

83. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Students complete computer-based tests, are given their results and timetabled for additional support where it is needed. They are additionally tested for their preferred learning style. Group profiles are informative and ensure that the planning of lessons takes account of the different needs and abilities of students. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Individual learning plans are satisfactory. In most cases, there is clear target setting. Progress reviews are satisfactory. Student reports are comprehensive and informative. Parents are kept informed of progress and work effectively with the staff when needed.

84. The range of provision is narrow. Students do not have access to level 1 provision or NVQs and the range of short courses is narrow. Full-time students requiring additional qualifications identified in their learning plans and needed to improve progression into employment are no longer able to study for them at the college.

85. Support for students is highly effective with very good rapport between students and their teachers. Individual support is available on demand, with help offered to catch up with assignment work when students have fallen behind. Responses to issues raised by student representatives are good and have included slowing the pace of teaching in lessons to ensure that the weaker students are not disadvantaged. Sports students have access to physiotherapy and rehabilitation support after injury. Support from coaches for students' individual training programmes is good. Pastoral help is readily available and parents can meet with teachers where appropriate. Students receive constructive advice about progression into industry or HE.

Leadership and management

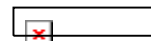
86. Leadership and management are poor. Recent staff changes and some absences through illness have been poorly managed. Induction of newly appointed staff into their role lacks detail. Meetings are held regularly, but action points are not routinely identified or followed-up. Systems are in place for internal verification, but are used inconsistently. Internal verification plans and records of assessment activities that have taken place are weak and lack detail. There are no standardisation meetings and internal verification of students' work is insufficiently frequent. Not all assignment briefs have been internally verified.

87. Management of data is poor. Statistics on the number of students on the different courses are difficult to access. Management information systems do not differentiate between students on certificate, diploma or award at national level and contains misleading programme titles.

88. Co-ordination of timetables in sport is weak. Students experience timetable clashes resulting in some activities taking place in inappropriate classrooms. Work placements are insufficiently planned and students have insufficient opportunities to gain industrial experience. Staff and students' commitment to equality of opportunity is satisfactory and clearly understood.

89. Observations of teaching and learning take place regularly. Teachers receive clear feedback which is effectively linked to training and appraisal. Students evaluate their programmes three times annually and record reasonable levels of satisfaction. Actions to follow-up areas of concern are inadequate. The self-assessment report did not identify the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses

- very good teaching and learning

- good professional standards

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- inappropriate room utilisation

- poor work-based learning assessment and review practice.

Scope of provision

90. The college offers full-time NVQ courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy at different levels. Other courses include a fast-track course in hairdressing and a range of part-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy, holistic therapies, Indian head massage, body massage, aromatherapy, reflexology and nail treatments. There are 160 full-time students, 128 aged 16 to 18 and 32 adults. On part-time courses, there are 78 students, almost all are adults. Work-based learning in hairdressing has 19 apprentices. The college also offers a junior apprentice scheme which currently has 11 pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

91. Retention and pass rates are consistently high for most courses. For example, for NVQ hairdressing levels 1 and 2, both retention and pass rates were well above national averages in 2002/03 and 2003/04. For NVQ level 3 beauty therapy, pass rates were 100% in both 2002/03 and 2003/04 and retention rates were also high. Retention and pass rates for the one-year NVQ level 2 beauty therapy course were similar to national averages in 2003/04, having fallen slightly. Pass rates for the Indian head massage short course are below national averages. Students achieve a good standard of practical work in lessons. For example, early in the manicure certificate programme, students can perform a range of skills competently, including use of cuticle knife and cuticle nippers. Beauty therapy level 2 students perform competently using a range of treatments for nails and face. NVQ level 2 hairdressing students demonstrate a good practical standard at industrial speed. All students are courteous and respectful and have a very good rapport with clients. Progression from

level 1 to level 2 hairdressing is good and progression from level 2 to employment is good. Punctuality and attendance are good. Completion of apprenticeship frameworks is poor, but the retention rate has significantly improved.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	1	No. of starts	36	41	*
		% retention	75	80	*
		% pass rate	81	97	*
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	2	No. of starts	40	29	58
		% retention	80	86	84
		% pass rate	78	84	92
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	2	No. of starts	50	55	58
		% retention	82	80	79
		% pass rate	76	93	83
Indian head massage (short)	2	No. of starts	41	29	47
		% retention	88	93	85
		% pass rate	92	70	75
Manicure certificate (short)	2	No. of starts	37	24	31
		% retention	84	100	100
		% pass rate	58	96	90
Diploma in reflexology (short)	3	No. of starts	19	39	10
		% retention	100	87	100
		% pass rate	79	94	100
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	*	25	23
		% retention	*	92	100
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

92. Teaching and learning are very good, although few lessons are outstanding. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods to meet individual learning styles. Professional practice in both hairdressing and beauty therapy is promoted and reinforced very effectively. Practical skills are taught well, particularly at level 2. Teachers act as excellent role models. Students are highly motivated and respectful to both each other and to teachers. They adhere rigorously to the uniform code and their appearance is exemplary, promoting a professional image. Activities in theory lessons are well designed to encourage participation. Group activities promote confidence and team building. The teaching of IT key skills for work-based learners is ineffective.

93. The specialist accommodation is dated. One beauty salon is small and in all the beauty salons clients have insufficient space to store their belongings. Timetabling and room utilisation arrangements make insufficient use of all available salons. Students sometimes have to wait while

previous practical lessons are completed. Learning resources are good. For example, high-quality laminated cards are used to record results of analysis. Posters and photographs on walls and in corridors celebrate students' success. The resource room is well stocked. Students have access to a good range of clients to develop their skills, but in some lessons too few clients are available for the number of students present. Teachers are well qualified and have good professional development opportunities.

94. Student literacy and numeracy needs are assessed on entry. Students receive constructive feedback during lessons and on their written work. Work-based learners' progress reviews are poor. Target setting is ineffective and targets set at one review are rarely followed-up at the next. Internal verification for college courses is well planned and effective. Work-based learning assessment practice is poor.

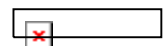
95. Full-time students have good industrial placements. Students have directed tasks to complete whilst on placement which are monitored. The college's peripatetic assessor makes regular visits to learners in the workplace. Communications with parents through parents' evenings and reports are effective. Students can attend a wide range of enrichment activities, including master classes. Many students enrol on to additional courses. Taster days are arranged for local schools.

96. Support for students is good. Individual tutorials are used effectively to agree action plans, set targets and plan assessments. Teachers and students make good use of student tracking records, which are held in portfolios and are reviewed at each tutorial. Students with specific learning needs have good support. Examples include the preparation of learning material for a student with dyslexia, signer support for a student with a hearing impairment and support for a student with a serious speech impediment. Absence is followed-up effectively.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership and management are good. Teachers make good use of the management information system and use data effectively to set and monitor targets. Communications from senior managers through to course level are effective. Students are appropriately represented at meetings. Equal opportunities are effectively introduced to students through their induction period and reinforced through tutorials. A range of equality of opportunity initiatives have been introduced, including a newsletter for teachers and professional appearance spot checks. Teacher absence is not always managed effectively and has resulted in slow progress for part-time students on the NVQ level 3 hairdressing course. Course reviews are used effectively as a basis for the self-assessment report. This identified most of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, with the exception of weak aspects of management of work-based learning.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on the majority of courses

- much good teaching in care and early years

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on NVQ level 2 in care
- insufficient access to language and literacy support for students on the NVQ in public services.

Scope of provision

98. There is a wide range of courses in care and early years. These include full-time courses in health and social care and childcare at levels 1 to 3. There are NVQs in care and in early years, care and education at levels 2 and 3, and an NVQ in playwork at level 2. Counselling courses are also offered at several levels. An NVQ level 2 in public services is provided at the Catterick campus for army personnel. There are 176 students aged 16 to 18 and 10 adults on full-time courses and 586 students aged 16 to 18 and 695 adults on part-time programmes.

Achievement and standards

99. Retention and pass rates are high for most courses. Retention rates for Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) foundation and certificate courses were above national averages in 2003/04. The retention rate on the diploma in childcare and education dropped in 2003/04, but remains above the national average. Pass rates on the foundation and certificate in childcare and education are very high. On the diploma in childcare, pass rates are consistently above the national average. Retention rates are low on NVQ level 2 in care, 9% below the national average in 2003/04. Pass rates on NVQ level 3 in care and early years are high. Retention rates on NVQ level 2 in public services are declining as a result of students leaving their employment with the armed forces. Progression to higher-level courses within college is good. Most full-time students progress from level 3 courses to HE or employment in early years and care.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in basic counselling skills	2	No. of starts	209	226	127
		% retention	90	90	92
		% pass rate	81	63	86
Certificate in child care and education	2	No. of starts	20	33	33
		% retention	75	85	85
		% pass rate	87	93	89
NVQ public services	2	No. of starts	1,156	2,381	2,200
		% retention	92	83	79
		% pass rate	78	86	87
Certificate in	3	No. of starts	20	70	39

counselling		% retention	90	89	90
		% pass rate	100	50	83
Diploma in child care and education	3	No. of starts	19	19	24
		% retention	84	89	67
		% pass rate	88	100	94

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

Quality of education and training

100. Much of the teaching in care and early years is good. Schemes of work are detailed and lessons are carefully planned. Teachers make effective use of an appropriate variety of teaching and learning methods, including oral and written presentation of material, frequent questioning of students and practical activities. For example, during a lesson on baby massage, the teacher used video, overhead projector, information sheets, group discussion, a virtual baby and a quiz. Students make good use of group work and presentations and this is well managed. Teachers draw on their own experience to develop the links between theory and practice. Students' workplace experiences are used well to explore ethical and professional considerations. Well-chosen case studies are used to examine equal opportunities. In a lesson on self-abuse, students discussed the balance between the rights of an individual and state intervention in decisions about eating disorders.

101. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Physical resources in care and early years are good. Bright, well-decorated classrooms are supplied with audiovisual aids. Computers are available for independent study. Students' work to celebrate their achievement is well displayed. Resources in public services are satisfactory, but some accommodation is inappropriate for the learning activities. Childcare students benefit from a closed circuit television system allowing observations within the college nursery.

102. Assessment in early years and care is good. In public service NVQs, assessment is restricted to a small range of methods. Early years and care assignments are well structured. Students' achievements are carefully tracked. The feedback given on assignments is good. The internal verification procedures on courses are particularly rigorous. Assessment opportunities for workplace learners are well planned. Skills achieved in the workplace are recorded on individual learning plans. Work placements are well organised and carefully monitored. College staff have effective relationships with workplace providers who contribute to the assessment of students.

103. The college has responded to local employer needs by introducing a specialised course for mental health professionals. In public services, the introduction of the NVQ and key skills programme has effectively met the requirements of the army and gives students a transferable civilian qualification. The college works effectively to provide advice and guidance to students who have to leave the army before they have finished their NVQ.

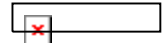
104. Students in early years and care are supported effectively. They receive good initial guidance. On courses in care, learning support workers liaise effectively with teachers to provide individual support. Individual learning plans are used effectively on early years and care courses to support and accelerate learning and achievement. Students receive good career guidance. Students on the NVQ in public services have insufficient access to language and literacy support during their 24-week period of basic training. An initial assessment of learning needs is carried out, but the results are not used to plan learning or support. The college offers a programme of support on completion of the period of basic training.

Leadership and management

105. Leadership and management are good. Course teams work well and teachers effectively support each other. Roles and responsibilities are clear. Formal and informal communications are

good. Staff make good use of the college's management information system. Team meetings are regular and minutes are clear. Partnership links with workplace providers and local agencies, particularly the army, are successful. Course evaluation and self-assessment are rigorous. Staff development and professional updating are planned well. Equal opportunities are promoted effectively.

Journalism, media and arts



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

Strengths

- high standard of work

- good teaching

- outstanding resources in the media design centre

- very good enrichment programme

- good curriculum management and development.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on several courses

- low attendance on some courses.

Scope of provision

106. Journalism, media and art programmes cover design, graphics, multimedia, fashion and music. The area has CoVE status in digital media, which is now in its third and final year of funding. Courses are offered at level 2 in media and performing arts, level 3 in multimedia, design and fashion and clothing and a national certificate in music practice. There are 199 full-time students, 83% are aged 16 to 18, and 3 part-time students. All courses are located at the main college campus.

Achievement and standards

107. Pass rates for small groups of students on the national diplomas in design and fashion and clothing are high. Pass rates on the first diplomas in performing arts and design have varied, but have improved to match national averages. The pass rates on the pre-entry journalism course are low; 25% of students passed the course in 2003/04. The retention rate on the national diploma in fashion and clothing has been 100% for the past three years. Retention rates on several courses are low. Attendance on some courses is poor. Opportunities for effective learning are significantly reduced where students are timetabled to small group work.

108. The standard of students' work is high. Students on media courses have produced a well-used promotional video about the college. Multimedia students produced imaginative designs for a concept car in a project with a car manufacturer. Music students perform with assurance and demonstrate good technical skills and design students have produced ambitious paintings of aspects of the college architecture using imaginative depictions of perspective and a sensitively limited palette.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Practical craft skills stage 1	1	No. of starts	93	35	19
		% retention	80	77	84
		% pass rate	49	89	100
BTEC first diplomas*	2	No. of starts	9	22	21
		% retention	67	82	71
		% pass rate	83	44	93
BTEC national diplomas**	3	No. of starts	42	31	20
		% retention	50	71	75
		% pass rate	95	95	100
Pre-entry cert in newspaper journalism	H	No. of starts	91	78	61
		% retention	100	97	100
		% pass rate	30	26	25

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

* combined numbers for BTEC first diploma in media and performing arts

**combined numbers for BTEC national diplomas in media with endorsements (audio) (moving image) (digital media) and fashion and clothing

Quality of education and training

109. Teaching is good and students make good progress in most lessons. Teachers use a range of methods to engage the students and lessons are well structured. Students are required to present their work for evaluation by their fellow students; this is done sensibly and frankly and is a valuable experience for the students. In a media lesson, second-year students confidently presented their ideas using sophisticated powerpoint presentations. Key skills achievements are recognised during the lessons. Students also use video recording to enhance their learning. In a few lessons, opportunities to extend the students' active learning and develop collaborative skills are missed.

110. Resources are good and those in the media design centre are excellent. The industry-standard

television studio enables students to work with external clients on professional assignments. For example, a local football club record all their promotional and news features each week at the college. These are then broadcast over the 50 closed circuit television monitors at the club's next home game. Students have access to a very good range of visual aids and ICT equipment and software applications to help them in their studies. Technician support is good. Art and design facilities and accommodation are well maintained and equipped. Work in the three-dimensional workshop is limited to small-scale models. Staff are well qualified and several are current specialist practitioners.

111. Assessment methods and standards are good. Individual learning plans are effectively drafted at induction and appropriate targets are set. They do not always contain sufficient information on additional support for developing students' key skills. Assignments are vocationally relevant and assessment criteria clearly indicate what students need to do. Work is marked quickly and returned with helpful advice on how to improve it. Students comment that the process is fair and supportive. Students' progress is effectively monitored using a well-designed review and guidance sheet in tutorials. The reviews are regular and parents are kept informed of progress.

112. The range of provision is satisfactory. Journalism and media courses effectively meet the needs of students, but the number of courses offered in visual and performing arts is small. Enrichment and partnership activities are very good. Visual arts students have regular opportunities to visit exhibitions nationally and internationally. Music students have annual opportunities to visit northern France to perform their work in schools, colleges and at other venues. Journalism students have weekly high-profile guest speakers from industry providing invaluable industrially relevant insights. Design students benefit from the partnership arrangements with a major car manufacturer. The majority of students on the pre-entry journalism course secure related employment on completion of the course.

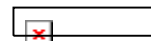
113. The CoVE in digital media offers a broad range of full cost courses, designed to meet the needs of industry. This includes the first nationally offered course in digital photography. The CoVE directly benefits students in the area and provides opportunities for progression to new foundation degrees in journalism and digital media in the college. The employers' task group is a strong partner with representatives from local and regional business. It works effectively offering advice on the technical requirements of related industries and helping to develop courses, particularly in journalism. Local and regional businesses speak highly of the quality of training offered.

114. Support for students is good. Pre-course information and advice give students an accurate picture of what to expect on the course. Induction is thorough and well planned. Individual learning needs are identified and appropriate support offered. For example, in art and design lessons, students with dyslexia have peach-coloured overlays for their handouts helping them to work. Learning mentors support students who find punctuality and attendance difficult. Most teachers recognise individual learning styles and take account of these in lesson planning. Students comment that advice and guidance is very good and value the support they get from their tutors. Students feel safe within the college.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management are good. Staff feel well supported. Communications are good. Programme teams meet regularly, and contribute effectively to curriculum development and the sharing of good practice between courses and across the college. Staff appraisal is used effectively for professional development planning. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. Staff are actively involved in self-assessment. Equal opportunities issues are addressed in projects and the area has successfully recruited high proportions of male students on to the fashion course and female students on to the course in music practice.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- much good achievement

- very good teaching and learning

- good support for students

- high-quality short courses for army personnel

- very effective management.

Weaknesses

- low key skills pass rates

- some unsuitable teaching accommodation.

Scope of provision

116. There are 66 full-time and 1,342 part-time students on Skills for Life literacy and numeracy courses at the college. Of these, 30% are aged 16 to 18. Courses run from pre-entry to level 2. There are 236 students enrolled on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Students were not attending ESOL courses at the time of the inspection.

117. There are 436 students enrolled on key skills application of number level 1 and 195 on level 2 and 436 students on key skills communication level 1 and 204 on level 2. The majority of key skills enrolments are aged 16 to 18. Additional learning support in literacy and numeracy is provided for 383 students across the college. Courses run at the two main college sites at Darlington and at Catterick. The Catterick site also runs courses specifically for army personnel.

118. There are 50 students enrolled on GCSE English and 34 on GCSE mathematics. There are 14 learners on an E2E programme, of whom 9 take a separate literacy and numeracy course. A further four of these students are developing their literacy and numeracy skills through the key skills element of a mainstream vocational programme.

Achievement and standards

119. Achievements across the majority of programmes are high. Students gain accredited qualifications and effectively develop their personal and learning skills. Achievement of literacy and numeracy qualifications at entry level and level 1 are high. Achievement in GCSE mathematics at grades A to C is high and improving. Pass rates for GCSE English have been steadily improving and in 2003/04 were above the national average. The retention rate is high across all courses. Achievement on army courses is very high. Pass rates for the basic literacy course are high.

120. Pass rates in key skills application of number levels 1 and 2 and communication level 1 are low. A new strategy is in place to improve links between key skills and vocational areas. This has already led to improvements in achievement with 119 passes overall from new starts in September. At this stage last year, there had been no achievements.

121. Students develop good levels of confidence which enable them to carry out tasks requiring literacy and numeracy skills, such as helping their children with homework, reading manuals at work and understanding weights and measures. Students improve their accuracy in grammar and command of vocabulary and are able to reflect and talk about their achievements.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic numeracy course (1 year)	entry	No. of starts	*	35	23
		% retention	*	97	100
		% pass rate	*	100	100
Key skills communication 1 year	1	No. of starts	*	324	678
		% retention	*	80	82
		% pass rate	*	18	20
Basic literacy course (short)	1	No. of starts	*	147	476
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	100	100
Key skills application for number (1 year)	2	No. of starts	192	106	63
		% retention	87	95	93
		% pass rate	11	26	10
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	146	113	92
		% retention	61	62	82
		% pass rate	35	56	61
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	125	60	48
		% retention	74	53	67
		% pass rate	34	40	69

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

*no data is available

Quality of education and training

122. Teaching and learning are very good. Attendance is good. Most teaching is lively and

stimulating and pitched at a level which stretches and challenges students. For example, entry level students worked effectively in groups to research product costs using the Internet and publicity material before coming together to discuss their findings. Some students preparing for independent living found the lesson particularly helpful. Teachers skilfully adapt their teaching methods to help students fully understand the concepts they are learning. In an E2E literacy lesson, students develop a good grasp of the power of language through cutting out newspaper articles and assembling a collage. Students benefit from well-planned lessons. Students are well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They work hard in their lessons and make very good progress. Students are involved in short intensive activities that develop appropriate skills. Students are encouraged to become independent learners, for example, through the development of strategies to remember difficult spellings. Portfolios of work are well organised. There are good links between key skills and vocational work with staff from both areas working alongside each other in some cases.

123. Some open-plan teaching rooms are unsuitable. The key skills centre, the media centre and the training centre at Catterick all have large, shared teaching rooms. The noise from other classes or from large groups of students disrupts learning. It is difficult to hear the teacher particularly for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff comment that they find it very tiring trying to teach above the background noise. Staff produce high-quality learning materials which are well matched to the needs of the students. The range of resources to support students is good. Teaching staff are well qualified and most have a level 4 subject specialism. Many of the learning support staff are well qualified.

124. The initial assessment of learning needs is satisfactory for numeracy, but for some students the literacy test has given an inaccurate result. Measures are being put into place to address this. Not all part-time students have an initial assessment test. The level of individual learning support is good. Some comments from teachers on individual learning plans and review sheets, however, are too generalised and detail work to be done rather than skills to be learned.

125. The college runs high-quality short literacy courses for army personnel. Staff quickly establish good working relationships in spite of the fact that attendance on the courses is mandatory and many of the students have had negative experiences with earlier education. A large proportion of students are dyslexic. Work is closely matched to the needs of the army. For example, learning how to spell key military words and work on an exercise to identify adjectives using sentences such as 'The tired soldiers returned to barracks.' Students' files show good evidence of improving levels of work and achievements are high.

126. Many of the students have poor experiences of education and value the encouragement and practical help they receive from the staff. Teachers give students effective strategies to become independent learners and to apply their skills in their everyday lives. There is good progression on to higher levels of literacy and numeracy and other college courses.

127. Support for students is good and enables students to clearly explain their difficulties in learning. Initial assessment is effective and results in effective plans to develop students' skills. Working relationships between specialist and vocational teaching staff are good and well planned. They work collaboratively to provide good support. Teachers provide practical suggestions and strategies to help students to learn, and these are shared with subject staff. Learning support workers are well used. Students know where to go to ask for help and feel comfortable approaching staff.

Leadership and management

128. Leadership and management are very effective. Communication is good and staff meet regularly at both college sites. Promotion of the Skills for Life agenda across the college is good. Induction for new staff is good. Staff make effective use of the continuing professional development programme. Some 48 members of staff have been on dyslexia awareness training. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, but the student satisfaction questionnaire is not easy to understand for entry level and ESOL students. Quality assurance arrangements are good. The programme of lesson observation is good and has led to improvements in teaching and learning. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory.

Part D: College data

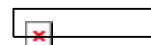
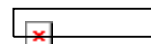


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2003/04



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	29	35
2	53	36
3	14	13
4/5	0	8
Other	4	8
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	94	153	2
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	321	436	5
Engineering, technology and manufacture	351	214	4
Business administration, management and professional	522	1,867	15
Information and communication technology	235	854	7
Retailing, customer service and transportation	3	77	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	605	1,171	11
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	304	241	3
Health, social care and public services	1,872	2,567	28
Visual and performing arts and media	357	249	4

Humanities	13	238	3
English, languages and communication	60	421	3
Foundation programmes	546	1,602	14
Total	5,283	10,090	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	519	523	617	992	950	678
	Retention rate %	72	81	82	85	74	81
	National average %	76	76	**	71	71	**
	Pass rate %	78	81	86	72	75	81
	National average %	69	73	**	70	77	**
2	Starters excluding transfers	816	733	784	1,262	975	1,332
	Retention rate %	69	69	73	72	74	71
	National average %	71	71	**	68	69	**
	Pass rate %	69	79	75	72	72	74
	National average %	70	73	**	71	73	**
3	Starters excluding transfers	609	520	544	1,209	945	763
	Retention rate %	71	68	68	67	74	73
	National average %	77	77	**	70	69	**
	Pass rate %	71	84	82	66	72	80
	National average %	77	80	**	71	74	**
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	7	*	*	381	288	503
	Retention rate %	86	*	*	80	65	75
	National average %	71	**	**	68	69	**
	Pass rate %	50	*	*	50	53	54
	National average %	57	**	**	54	58	**

colleges or sixth form colleges). Where applicable, the national rates used in the table are for GFE colleges which are grouped in the LSC benchmarking data as colleges with a high widening participation factor.

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.

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

* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation

** data not available

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)	78	19	2	72
Level 2 (intermediate)	76	23	1	62
Level 1 (foundation)	70	30	0	20
Other sessions	91	9	0	31
Totals	78	20	2	185

© Crown copyright 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced verbatim without adaptation, and the source and date of publication are stated. Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

