

## **Guildford College of Further and Higher Education**

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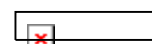
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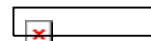
#### **Basic information about the college**



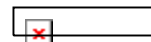
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|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of college:             | Guildford College of Further and Higher Education                 |
| Type of college:             | General further education   |
| Principal:                   | Clive Cooke   |
| Address of college:          | Stoke Park Campus<br>Stoke Road<br>Guildford<br>Surrey<br>GU1 1EZ |
| Telephone number:            | 01483 448500  |
| Fax number:                  | 01483 448600  |
| Chair of governors:          | Richard Watt  |
| Unique reference number:     | 130823  |
| Name of reporting inspector: | Richard Beaumont  |
| Dates of inspection:         | 25-29 April 2005  |

#### **Part A: Summary**



## Information about the college



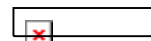
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education is a large general further education (FE) college. It has two campuses, Stoke Park, based in Guildford, and Merrist Wood, located three miles from Guildford in Worplesdon specialising in land-based programmes. Merrist Wood was merged with Guildford College in August 2003. Guildford College also provides education in over 20 venues across the south west and north west of Surrey, working with local community groups, and a range of work-based learning to local employers. Guildford is an affluent region of the country, with low unemployment and higher than national average numbers of pupils taking general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level), general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A-level) courses and staying on in education at ages 16 and 17.

The college recruits students from a wide geographical area. Some 54% of students come from within the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area of Surrey. A further 15% come from Hampshire and 5% from Kingston upon Thames. The college has two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), one in travel and tourism and the other in accounting and finance. Within the Surrey region, there are three other FE colleges and seven sixth form colleges. Guildford College has franchise arrangements with seven organisations to deliver programmes mainly in music, sign language, plumbing, complimentary therapies and first aid. The college has many partnership arrangements, for example, with the University of Surrey, five local secondary schools delivering vocational training and community projects. The college's core value is 'placing the learner at the heart of everything we do'.

The college's main provision covers health and social care, visual and performing arts and foundation programmes. Courses leading to qualifications are offered in 14 areas of learning, predominantly at levels 1 and 2. Some 15% of the college's enrolments are for courses at level 3, and 1% of the college's provision is undergraduate programmes. Work-based learning is offered in 8 areas of learning and at the time of the inspection 415 students were following apprenticeships and 113 students were undertaking an entry-to-employment (E2E) programme.

During 2004/05, 30% of students were full time and 70% part time; 16% were aged 18 or under, 84% were aged 19 or over and 8% of enrolments were students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The minority ethnic groups in Surrey accounted for 5% of the population at the 2001 census.

## How effective is the college?



Education and training are good in land-based and health, social care and early years. In all other areas except for construction, education and training are satisfactory. In the construction area, education and training are satisfactory in work-based learning, but unsatisfactory in the remainder of the provision.

### **Key strengths**

- strong, strategic leadership from the principal and senior managers

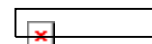
- management of the merger of two colleges
- specialist resources in some curriculum areas
- initial and diagnostic assessment
- range of courses in most areas
- provision of additional learning support
- staff development.

***What should be improved***

- pass rates in most areas
- students' punctuality and attendance at Stoke Park Campus
- more inspiring and stimulating teaching
- consistency of tutorial provision for students across college
- effectiveness of Skills for Life agenda
- implementation of quality assurance procedures.

subjects and courses in the full report.

## Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

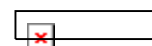


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

| Area  | Overall judgements about provision, and comment  |
|---|--|
| Science and mathematics                       | <b>Satisfactory.</b> The area is good at responding to local demand. Systems for assessing, supporting and monitoring the progress of students are effective. Students work diligently and effectively in lessons in pairs or individually, but much teaching fails to inspire or motivate them. Quality assurance procedures are ineffective.   |
| Land-based                                    | <b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates on many courses are high and students attain good standards of practical skills in a wide range of tasks relevant to industry. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in practical lessons. Links with industry are extensive and on-site practical facilities are good and well used. The curriculum is well managed and planned and teachers provide effective and inclusive support.                        |
| Construction                                  | <b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The contributory grade for work-based learning is <b>satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates for plumbing national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 are high, but for most other courses they are low. Apprentices' practical work is good, but most students make slow progress. Practical teaching is good, but theory teaching is dull and uninspiring and resources are poor. Support for work-based learners is good. |
| Business, management and professional studies | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention rates are high on management and professional courses, but pass rates are low on high-level accounting courses. Teaching is good on management, professional and administration courses and links with local employers are effective. There is insufficient provision for full-time students at levels 1 and 2 and quality assurance procedures are not carried out effectively.  |
| Information and communications technology     | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Adult students gain good vocational skills and understanding of software applications. Retention rates on courses for adults are low. Many theory lessons are dull and fail to motivate students. Assessment is good, students' progress is well monitored and tutors provide good support. Curriculum management lacks co-ordination and strategic direction.  |
| Hospitality, travel, tourism and sports       | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention rates are high on most full-time courses. On travel and golf courses, practical teaching is good, resources are excellent and there are good links with industry. However, pass rates and attendance are low and there is a lack of punctuality. In theory lessons, there is insufficient monitoring of individual learning, and ineffective use of targets to monitor students' progress.                                  |
| Health, social care and early years           | <b>Good.</b> Pass rates are very high on courses at levels 1 and 2 in early years and cleaning and pass rates are high on level 3 health studies   |

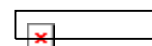
|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | and access to nursing courses. Teaching and learning are good or better on many courses and there is a very broad range of provision. Support for students with additional needs is particularly good. Retention and pass rates on NVQ level 3 early years courses and level 3 public services are low and quality assurance arrangements are inadequate.   |
| Visual and performing arts and media                           | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high in performing arts and media and retention rates are high on most full-time courses. Teaching overall fails to motivate students to learn. However, at the Academy of Contemporary Music, students' practical and performance work is good and resources are excellent. Tutorials are ineffective. Leadership and management are satisfactory.   |
| Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention rates are high on literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses and teaching is good. Pass rates in key skills are very low. Initial assessment and diagnostic assessment are not effectively linked to individual learning plans. Specialist learning support tutors and subject tutors work well together to provide additional learning support to meet the needs of individuals. |

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



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers provide strong leadership and strategic direction for the college. The merger of Guildford and Merrist Wood colleges has been effectively managed and successfully implemented. Overall, retention and pass rates are close to the national averages for general FE colleges. Teaching and learning grades awarded during the inspection were very close to the national averages for colleges of a similar type. Teaching grades have improved since the last inspection. Appropriate quality assurance arrangements are in place, but are not effectively implemented in several areas. The college's self-assessment report is satisfactory. The arrangements to maintain equality and diversity are satisfactory. Financial management of the college is effective and has brought about a sound recovery from the situation in previous years. The average class size is slightly lower than the national average. Teachers are generally deployed effectively and resources are allocated to areas according to need. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

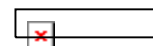
#### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to education and social inclusion is satisfactory. Successful strategies to widen participation are based on attracting students who do not traditionally undertake FE. A wide range of courses is available, with good progression routes from entry level to higher education (HE) in most curriculum areas. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the community profile, but only 2% of staff are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with 5% in the local population. The college meets its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Policies and procedures have been updated and a programme of staff training is underway. Two thirds of members of staff have attended equality and diversity training. Students' data are collected and analysed by gender, age and ethnicity, but the college does not systematically address the issues that have been identified. The college is working towards the requirements of the Special

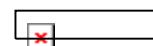
2005. The college is working with partners to implement the Skills for Life strategy and is delivering literacy, numeracy and language provision in a range of community venues and on employers' premises.

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



Support and guidance for students are satisfactory. Students receive effective advice and guidance to choose a suitable course or programme of study. Induction arrangements are effective. Careers education and guidance are good. Average attendance during inspection was 75% which is around the national average for general FE colleges. There is a lack of punctuality in a significant minority of lessons. The individual learning needs of students aged 16 to 18 are accurately diagnosed. Good support is provided both within lessons and in the learning centres. However, there is a need to improve the provision for adults, particularly in the community. Tutorial arrangements are satisfactory, but there is inconsistency in the way tutorials are delivered across the college. There is a good range of support services for students. The child protection policy is in place and has been agreed by the governors.

### **Students' views of the college**



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

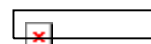
#### ***What students like about the college***

- friendly and supportive staff
  
- good resources
  
- knowledgeable teachers
  
- work experience opportunities
  
- outside speakers and visits
  
- young people treated as adults.

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

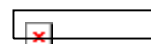
- car parking
- poor information technology (IT) equipment
- food in refectory
- quality of some classroom accommodation.

### **Other information**

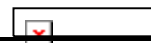


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

### **Part B: The college as a whole**



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



| Aspect and learner type | Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) % | Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) % | Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) % |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Teaching 16-18          | 61                                      | 31                              | 8   |
| 19+ and WBL*            | 68                                      | 28                              | 4   |
| Learning 16-18          | 52                                      | 40                              | 8   |

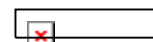


|              |    |    |   |
|--------------|----|----|---|
| 19+ and WBL* | 68 | 30 | 2 |
|--------------|----|----|---|

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

*\*work-based learning*

## Achievement and standards



1. Judgements on college achievements and standards for the period 2001/02 to 2002/03 are based on audited data produced by Ofsted, derived from data supplied by the college in its individual learner report. Judgements on achievements and standards for 2003/04 are based on non-validated data provided by the college at the time of the inspection.

2. In 2003/04, 17,162 students, of whom 85% were adults, enrolled on to 36,746 courses. Of all enrolments, 37% were at level 1, 22% at level 2, 15% at level 3, 1% at level 4 and 25% of enrolments were not allocated to any particular level, for example, professional development and first aid courses.

3. In lessons, students in land-based and health and social care programmes work at or above the level required for their course of study. Adult ICT, public service and secretarial students demonstrate good vocational skills. Foundation students are generally making good progress, particularly those on community courses who develop good listening and speaking skills. Most construction students are making slow progress. Students aged 16 to 18 on business courses work at levels below those required and students on the national diploma in business have significant amounts of coursework outstanding. Students' written and practical work are of a satisfactory standard overall. Students in visual and performing arts achieve higher grades in their GCE A levels than predicted from their prior attainment. However, in many subjects in science and mathematics, students achieve lower grades than predicted. Attainment grades in lessons are lower than the national average for similar colleges. Attainment is particularly poor in construction, business, management and professional studies and hospitality, travel tourism and sport.

4. Attendance and punctuality are monitored effectively. Students' attendance for 2003/04 is similar to the national average for comparable colleges, however, current 2004/05 attendance rates are no more than satisfactory with low attendance in hospitality, performing arts, engineering, science and mathematics. During the inspection, overall attendance was satisfactory with high attendance rates in ICT and low attendance rates in business, hospitality and visual and performing arts programmes.

### 16 to 18 year olds

5. Retention rates overall are satisfactory for students aged 16 to 18. Retention rates at levels 1, 2 and 3 have risen over the past three years by 21, 8 and 6 percentage points, respectively, and for all levels are at or above the national averages. Retention rates on most land-based courses and on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses at level 1 are good. Overall retention rates for all NVQ programmes, AS-level, and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) level 3 are significantly below the national averages, particularly on the national diploma in public services. However, the retention rate for NVQ level 2 in plumbing is high. On most full-time hospitality, travel, leisure and tourism and sports programmes and many visual and performing arts courses retention rates are high. Retention rates of female students at levels 1, 2 and 3 are at or above the national averages and at level 2 the retention rate is high. Conversely, the retention rate of male students at all levels is below the national averages and at level 2 the retention rate for males is very low. Overall pass rates are at or above the national averages. Pass rates at levels 1 and 2 have risen over the past three years, especially at level 1 where the rise is 29 percentage points. Pass rates on most land based

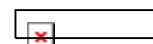
courses are high. Pass rates on GCSE programmes are also high, especially for film and video production and level 3 health studies and access to nursing. Key skills pass rates have been consistently low at all levels. Only 15% of students aged 16 to 18 registered for key skills in 2003/04 were successful.

### **Adult learners**

6. Overall retention rates for adult students at levels 1 and 2 have not risen in line with those for students aged 16 to 18. Over the past three years, the retention rate at level 1 has declined and is below the national average. The retention rate on a significant part-time ICT programme at level 1 is low and declining. At level 2, the retention rate has risen marginally over the past three years and is above the national average. Overall, retention rates on NVQ level 2 are very low. On level 3 courses, the retention rate has risen over the past three years and is now good. Retention rates on management and professional courses in business are high. Pass rates have risen significantly over the past three years. Overall, pass rates are high at level 1 and satisfactory at levels 2 and 3. Pass rates for health and social care programmes at levels 1 and 2 are good. However, at level 3, pass rates are low on early years, public services and higher-level accounting courses. Pass rates for key skills are very low for adult students.

7. Retention and pass rates for work-based learners are unsatisfactory and many students make slow progress. However, there has been some improvement in the pass rates for key skills for work-based learners and pass rates of apprenticeship frameworks are rising. The standard of practical work demonstrated by learners in construction is good. Retention and pass rates for entry into employment learners are good and in 2003/04 58% of young people progressed into further training or work.

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



8. Inspectors observed and graded 219 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 64% of lessons, satisfactory in 30% of lessons and less than satisfactory in 6%. The proportion of good or better lessons is just above the national average for general FE colleges inspected in 2003/04. Teaching was most effective on land-based, health, social care and early years and foundation courses in ESOL, literacy and numeracy. Teaching was least effective in science and mathematics and visual and performing arts and media. Teaching is better in lessons primarily involving adults and work-based students. Some 68% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 61% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons involving adults and work-based students was also lower, at 4% compared with 8%. Analysis of the standard of teaching by levels shows that the best teaching is on level 1 courses and the weakest is on level 3 courses.

9. In many curriculum areas, the best lessons are practical lessons or lessons that include both theoretical and practical activities. Of the theory lessons observed, 59% were good or better, compared with 68% for practical and practical with theory teaching. In the better lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching methods including group work, paired activities and role play to maintain students' interests and develop their learning and teachers on land-based and health and social care programmes use links to industry well to improve students' understanding of the world of work. The use of learning support assistants is well planned and clearly directed in many entry and foundation level lessons. In better lessons, learning support assistants are actively involved in planning, monitoring, assessing and recording learning alongside the tutor.

10. In the less satisfactory lessons, for example, in ICT, hospitality, travel, leisure and tourism and sport, business administration, management and professional studies, and construction, lesson planning does not meet the needs of students with different abilities. On visual and performing arts, construction, hospitality, and foundation courses, there is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons. In other curriculum areas, students' late arrival and poor attendance

disrupts learning and slows the pace for other students. Introductions into lessons are long and students lose concentration. The pace of learning is slow and in some curriculum areas there is too much input by the teacher and too few learning activities for students. In a few lessons, teachers do not check that all students have learned.

11. Key skills provision is unsatisfactory. Teachers are not always sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable to motivate students to complete their courses. Staff development is being undertaken to address this. Teaching and learning resources have improved and many are available on the college intranet. All students have a minimum entitlement to one hour of key skills teaching a week, but the majority receive two hours of tuition. The college has recently appointed a key skills manager to develop a consistent approach to key skills across the college and is appointing key skills champions in each school. The key skills user group meets and shares good practice. It is too early to judge the impact of these measures on improving key skills across the college. However, in 2004/05, there has been a rise in test pass rates and an increase in the number of completed portfolios. Students recognise the relevance of key skills where they are integrated with their main course of study. Students' progress is closely monitored and recorded and improvements are taking place.

12. Learning is generally satisfactory. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 58%, 36% and 6%, respectively, compared to the national average of 61%, 32% and 7%. Learning was better in lessons for adults. The proportion of lessons primarily involving adults where learning was good or better was 68%, compared with 52% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18.

13. For work-based learners, there are good links with employers, improved initial assessment of learning needs and more effective reviews with greater involvement of employers. The college has strategies for improving retention rates, increasing literacy and numeracy support and providing more qualified assessors for some courses. Teaching and learning are good in E2E provision. Lessons are well planned and tutors work together to ensure a high level of classroom discipline and to increase students' motivation. The work-based learning team work closely with E2E tutors to identify appropriate work experience placements and advise on further training opportunities.

14. The college has carried forward a planned programme of development and maintenance and considerable improvements have been made. Future planned developments will be based upon a review of the curriculum.

15. The college has some good specialist facilities for land-based provision and realistic work environments are of a high standard in the Blues Café, hair and beauty salons, fitness centre and training restaurant. Science laboratories are of a good standard and there are excellent resources available at the Academy of Contemporary Music. Facilities for the two CoVEs are of a high standard. Most classrooms are of a satisfactory standard, although there are restricted sightlines in some IT classrooms. Students' recreation facilities are well used. Much of the accommodation and facilities for construction are poor. The college has improved the IT infrastructure, core systems and services and now offers a faster and more reliable service to users. Teachers have been trained in the use of ILT, but it is not yet used effectively in many curriculum areas. Students' demands for use of computers at peak times cannot be fully met.

16. Most full-time teachers are suitably qualified and have appropriate current knowledge of industry standards in their vocational areas. Many part-time teachers have insufficient teaching experience. A high priority is given to promoting opportunities for continuing professional development for teachers and support staff. Activities are evaluated and used to inform further plans for training.

17. Access for students with mobility difficulties has improved and all vocational areas at both sites are accessible except for construction. The college has accelerated the programme of planned improvements and given priority to the provision of electronic entrance doors, improved signage and modifications to lifts.

18. The learning resources centres have adequate opening times and offer good study facilities and

support. Resources available online and through the virtual learning environment have considerably increased, although they are not widely used by teachers and students. Library stocks are good in science and mathematics, visual and creative arts and foundation courses. Librarians work co-operatively with teachers in curriculum areas.

19. Assessment practice in the college is satisfactory. There is an overall assessment policy and clear guidelines for staff. Assessment practice in most cases is carefully linked to the standards required by the awarding bodies and is well planned. Lead verifiers hold regular meetings to respond to any issues raised by external verification and moderation reports. Progress against action plans is monitored by curriculum managers and the college quality manager. In construction, progress in making required improvements has been slow in some cases.

20. Assignment briefs are generally clear and relevant. The overall standard of assessment feedback is satisfactory. Most work is marked and returned promptly and feedback is constructive and gives helpful guidance to students on how to improve. In areas of weaker practice, written feedback is vague and does not refer sufficiently to assessment criteria. Assessment practice is particularly effective in ICT.

21. Initial assessment of learning needs is comprehensive. It is offered to all full-time and some part-time students. This analysis and further diagnostic assessments contribute to students' individual learning plans which are used with varying levels of effectiveness to monitor progress and set targets. Target setting for students is weak on a number of courses.

22. There is a wide choice of provision in most curriculum areas. The levels range from pre-entry through to HE, and students can progress within the college. The college has worked closely with local schools, including special schools, to develop Increasing Flexibility (IF) provision for young people 14 to 16. Over 200 school pupils attend courses in a wide range of vocational areas. The college is also collaborating with a local 11 to 18 school to increase sixth form students' choice. A common timetable has been developed for students to select courses from both institutions. Close partnership arrangements exist with a range of organisations to widen participation. A successful course has been developed with the Connexions service catering for young people who have dropped out of education and are unemployed. The college is also working closely with other organisations in the county to implement the Skills for Life agenda. There are over 100 employees on literacy and/or numeracy courses being delivered in the workplace.

23. The college is responsive to the needs of local employers. Bespoke courses are delivered on employers' premises at flexible times in order to meet the needs of the learners. A short course in infection control is particularly successful and has been delivered to a large number of employees in local care homes and healthcare trusts. An employers' advisory panel has been established in horticulture and there are plans to extend this into other areas. There are particularly strong links with employers from the land-based industries that benefit both the employers and the students.

24. Opportunities for students to enrich their knowledge through visits, work experience and additional options vary across the college. In visual and performing arts, the students benefit from an extensive range of visits and visiting professionals, and travel students have good work experience opportunities. Sporting and recreational activities are offered, but the take up for these is low.

25. All students receive effective advice and guidance. Induction arrangements help students to settle into their courses quickly. Careers education and guidance are good for full-time students.

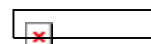
26. Support for students is satisfactory. Full-time students are allocated a personal tutor with overall responsibility for the students' welfare. Adults are able to join a tutor group if they wish, although most choose not to do so. A common core of tutorial entitlements, activities and expectations are central to the programme, which is adapted by curriculum areas to suit the needs of their students. However, there is inconsistency in the way the programme is delivered across the college and a few students do not receive the full entitlement. Average attendance at tutorials observed during the inspection was significantly below the average attendance at other lessons. There are good electronic tutorial resources in the sixth form centre. The involvement of employers in progress

reviews in work-based learning is effective and students are motivated to achieve their targets for learning. Information about students' progress is regularly made available to parents and employers.

27. There is good provision in the college for additional learning support. Good support is provided both within lessons and in the learning centres at both sites. Mentors provide support for students 'at risk'. However, there is a need to improve the provision for adults, particularly in the community.

28. There is a good range of support services that include effective links with the National Union of Students (NUS), staff who organise students' activities and a 'first responder' who deals with behaviour issues. Financial support is given to students with childcare costs. The college promotes the welfare of vulnerable students through its arrangements for child protection and associated professional development. Students aged 16 develop independent living skills successfully and are well informed about appropriate progression routes into HE, training and employment. The child protection policy is in place and has been agreed by the governors.

## Leadership and management



29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the inspections of the two previous colleges, which merged in August 2003. Retention and pass rates are rising and in most cases are at or close to the national averages for similar colleges. The proportion of teaching graded as good or better has improved since the previous inspections from approximately 58% to 64%.

30. The college benefits from strong leadership from the principal, senior managers and governors. The merger between Guildford College and Merrist Wood College, and the subsequent development of the new college, has been managed well. The pace and scope of change has been well judged to produce significant improvements to address the weaknesses of the two former colleges, while also gaining widespread support from the staff. Following a period of consolidating the merger, governors and managers are beginning a full review of the college's curriculum, which will be used to develop key strategies including a new accommodation strategy. There is a realistic recognition throughout the college that further development is necessary, to build on these good foundations.

31. Strategic plans set a clear direction to deliver the values and priorities of the college and link well to operational plans and procedures. Members of staff value the increasingly effective network of communication channels, together with increased access to, and the responsiveness of, senior managers.

32. Governors are carefully selected for the skills they can bring to the college. They have a good understanding of the strategic plan and are centrally involved in its creation and approval. They set challenging but realistic targets and use key performance indicators effectively, many of which they have introduced, to monitor students' performance as well as the corporate performance of the college. A system of linking each governor to one or more areas of the college operation enables them to gain a detailed understanding of these areas, and become well known to managers and staff.

33. Curriculum management is good in land-based provision. It is satisfactory in all the other eight areas inspected. There are regular meetings of different groups of managers and most staff teams, which support the development and implementation of many new policies and procedures which are being introduced, for example, for curriculum planning. Data are being increasingly well used as the basis for planning. However, some procedures need to be embedded in routine practice before they become fully effective.

34. The substantial programme of franchised provision is managed well, through seven long-

standing providers. Since the last inspection, the volume has been reduced to just under 10% of the LSC-funded provision, with plans to reduce this to 5%.

35. In three areas of learning; ICT, visual and performing arts, and Skills for Life, provision is the responsibility of more than one team and manager. There is a lack of strategic management and co-ordination in each of these three areas. Poor communication between teams has inhibited the sharing of good practice, and the creation of a more rational curriculum. There is no coherent college strategy for an integrated ICT curriculum, including ICT key skills. Although there is a Skills for Life task group, the strategic direction is unclear. The co-ordination of literacy, numeracy and language across the curriculum is ineffective.

36. There are comprehensive and well-documented arrangements for quality assurance, but these are not uniformly implemented across the college. A good range of data reports is available to support the processes. Students' views are taken into account and provide a significant element of the information used in course monitoring and review. Many of the arrangements for quality assurance have been reviewed or introduced relatively recently, as a result of the merger and the higher emphasis placed on quality assurance. It is still too early for some of these to have become routinely used and understood and there is a variation in the effectiveness of their implementation across the college. In science and mathematics, business, construction, and health and social care, quality assurance processes are weak. In land-based provision, quality assurance procedures are effective. There are thorough arrangements to assure the quality of the significant volume of franchised provision and all providers use the college's quality assurance systems.

37. Teachers share good practice in teaching and learning in health and social care. However, in ICT, hospitality, travel and sports, business and visual and performing arts, there is insufficient sharing of good practice.

38. Staff and managers are involved in drawing up the college's self-assessment report. Its overall grading of curriculum areas agreed closely with judgments made by inspectors. However, several curriculum area self-assessment reports were not sufficiently self-critical and some failed to recognise weaknesses which were identified by inspectors.

39. The effectiveness of the college's lesson observation scheme is limited by significant overgenerous grading of lessons compared with the grades awarded by inspectors. The scheme has consistently produced a teaching grade profile very significantly higher than the national average for good or better teaching. The scheme was thoroughly revised for 2004/05, but of the 300 observations carried out prior to the inspection, 71% of lessons were graded as good or better. This is 7% higher than the grades awarded during this inspection.

40. There is a comprehensive programme of staff development. It is carefully linked to the needs of the college and individual members of staff. Significant resources are allocated to improving teaching and learning. Teachers are given support through an effective mentoring scheme and 10 advanced practitioners. There is a good range of leadership and management programmes for college managers.

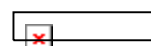
41. The arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity and diversity are satisfactory. Some 8% of students are from minority ethnic groups compared with 5% in the local community. Students feel welcome and safe in the college and an increasing volume of effective provision is made in the community, some of which is specifically targeted at minority ethnic groups, through links with organisations such as the local mosque in Woking. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups is 2%. The college complies with the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000, through its racial equality policy and action plan. The college has made arrangements to be compliant with the requirements of SENDA by September 2005.

42. Members of the college's staff are provided with equality and diversity training. Some 65% of the total of over 900 full-time and part-time staff have attended. The college also engages specialist consultants to work with managers to develop the effectiveness of its response to equality and diversity issues. Data are produced to illustrate students' performance by age group, ethnicity and

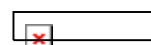
disability. The college has recognised a need also to assess students' performance according to economic and social deprivation. However, although priority target groups have recently been identified for support, the range of actions arising from the collection of this data has been relatively restricted. Monitoring of many aspects of equality and diversity is underdeveloped.

43. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Both previous colleges were financially weak, but since 2002/03 prudent financial management has re-established a sound financial position and stability, enabling the college now to contemplate investment and accommodation strategies to support its strategic plans, on a broader scale. A course costing model has been recently introduced as a part of the annual curriculum and financial planning processes. The average size of classes visited by inspectors was 9.9, slightly lower than the national average of 10.3.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Science and mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- good learning in practical activities
- good support and monitoring of students' progress
- good response to students' and employers' needs.

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient variety in teaching methods and activities
- weak quality assurance.

#### **Scope of provision**

44. The curriculum area offers a range of GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level courses in all the main sciences and mathematics. There is also a university foundation course that is offered in partnership

with Surrey University. Level 2 courses in anatomy and physiology and a certificate in infection control have been introduced recently. There are approximately 2,000 students in the area, of whom 1,700 are adults enrolled mainly on level 2 short courses.

### ***Achievement and standards***

45. Pass rates for AS-level physics, GCE A-level human biology and GCSE mathematics rose significantly in 2003/04. However, the retention rate for GCE A-level human biology declined substantially over the same period to well below the national average. The retention rate on AS-level biology/human biology rose to 83% in 2003/04, but the pass rate declined to 10 percentage points below the national average. Retention on AS-level mathematics has risen and is in line with the national average, but the pass rate has declined to substantially below the national average. The retention rate for students aged 16 to 18 have been around the national average for the past three years. Retention rates for adults are generally high.

46. Students' achievements at AS level and GCE A level are good when compared to predictions based on their performance at GCSE. In 2003/04, students taking AS-level physics and GCE A-level mathematics and statistics, further mathematics and human biology subjects achieved higher grades than those predicted from their prior attainment. However, students taking other subjects failed to achieve the grades predicted for them.

47. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Students demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Written work and students' responses in lessons show that they have made progress and are working at an appropriate level for their course. Science students work enthusiastically and safely in practical sessions and students of mathematics work methodically and effectively on set questions. In several lessons, the different speeds at which students work is effectively managed through the provision of extra work for the more able learners and individual support for others.

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

| Qualification                     | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| GCSE mathematics                  | 2     | No. of starts    | 125  | 145  | 124  |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 72   | 72   | 68   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 51   | 38   | 49   |
| AS-level biology/human biology    | 3     | No. of starts    | 43   | 33   | 40   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 86   | 73   | 83   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 49   | 71   | 55   |
| AS-level mathematics              | 3     | No. of starts    | 34   | 24   | 38   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 65   | 63   | 76   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 32   | 55   | 45   |
| GCE A-level biology/human biology | 3     | No. of starts    | 18   | 30   | 30   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 83   | 77   | 57   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 87   | 70   | 82   |
| Diploma in anatomy and physiology | 3     | No. of starts    | 158  | 125  | 236  |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 86   | 95   | 91   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 77   | 63   | 73   |
| AS-level physics                  | 3     | No. of starts    | 10   | 11   | 17   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 90   | 64   | 88   |



|  |  |             |    |    |    |
|--|--|-------------|----|----|----|
|  |  | % pass rate | 89 | 43 | 87 |
|--|--|-------------|----|----|----|

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

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

48. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where practical activities are planned, learning is good. Students work enthusiastically and effectively both individually and in pairs. In one lesson, apparatus using vibrating beads was effectively used to gain students' attention and motivate them, while introducing the concept of kinetic energy. In a practical chemistry lesson students were actively involved in identifying compounds by physical tests. In mathematics, students worked effectively in pairs to produce acetate transparencies of graphs to illustrate their answers.

49. Lesson plans generally take account of the differing needs of individuals and a minority identify additional learning needs and appropriate teaching methods. However, these plans are rarely put into effect in lessons. In weaker lessons, teaching is unexciting, students are not stimulated to learn and they lose interest. There is an insufficient variety of teaching methods and activities to maintain students' interest. Teachers pay due care and attention to health and safety issues in science classes.

50. Laboratory resources are good. Specialist accommodation is well equipped, but lacks visual display material. Students' work is used occasionally to produce bright informative displays. Laptops and data projectors are available and specialist equipment provided for students is adequate. Technicians provide satisfactory support for the laboratory work and the ILT needs of teachers.

51. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Work is set regularly and marked effectively. A good system of progress tests, reports and marked homework keep students well informed about their progress. Feedback is fair and useful to the students. Students' progress is monitored effectively using individual learning plans in which targets are set and monitored. An online facility provides independent access to tutorial, academic and study materials and is having a positive impact on student progress.

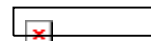
52. The range of courses on offer is satisfactory. The area has successfully developed a diploma in anatomy and physiology and a certificate in infection control, in response to demands from students and employers. The certificate in infection control has over 600 students and is taught in a wide range of local venues.

53. Tutors support science students effectively. Initial induction and guidance on future progression are good. There are attractive prospectuses and some useful information and subject study guides, particularly for students studying chemistry. The college invites current and former students to give talks to prospective students. Mathematics clinics provide formal and informal academic support for science students.

### **Leadership and management**

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum planning is satisfactory. Self-assessment is led by the curriculum manager and there is a regular cycle of reviews using performance indicators. However, teachers are not fully involved in the process and the monitoring of their subject reviews and targets is weak. Many action points have no review date, are not measurable and do not translate into meaningful strategies. Equality and diversity information is collected, but is not disseminated or discussed.

### **Land-based**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on most level 1, level 3 and short courses
- good teaching in vocational subjects
- very good practical learning resources
- strong and productive links with industry
- particularly wide range of courses and progression opportunities
- well-planned and managed curriculum.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low success rates on many first diploma courses
- insufficient use of targets to monitor students' progress
- insufficient attention given to correcting students' written work.

### ***Scope of provision***

55. The college offers a wide range of courses which cater well for students interested in equine, animal care, horticulture, floristry, arboriculture and countryside studies at the Merrist Wood campus. Full-time and part-time provision is available for most courses to provide clear progression routes from entry level through to HE. Courses include first diploma, national diploma, national certificate and national awards. The college offers two programmes, country start and next steps, which are aimed at entry level and level 1. Most courses offer a wide range of optional units which allows students to tailor their course to their career aspirations. The college also offers, British Horse

Society exams, Royal Horticultural Society programmes, programmes in sports turf and an extensive programme of short part-time courses aimed largely for people working in industry. There are opportunities for young people aged 14 to 16 to study animal care or horticulture as part of their school syllabus and the college's widening participation agenda. Enrolments on to land-based courses represent 6% of the total college enrolments. Of these, about one third are students aged 16 to 18.

### ***Achievement and standards***

56. Over the past three years, retention and pass rates have remained above the national average for many courses at levels 1 and 3 and short courses. Retention and pass rates for the 10-week course in tree surgery for craftsmen are particularly high as are pass rates for NVQ in animal care at level 1. However, success rates for first diploma courses are either declining and/or below the national average. The college has recognised the poor performance of the first diploma courses and has taken action to improve the success rates. Pass rates for key skills are low, however, pass rates are high for additional qualifications taken as part of the enrichment programme.

57. The standard of students' work in lessons and in assignments is good. Much assignment work is well presented using a variety of photographs, computer images and software packages. Most students gain a high standard of industry-relevant practical skills. Progression rates within FE and to employment and HE are good. Student attendance and punctuality are thoroughly monitored and levels are high.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in land-based, 2002 to 2004***

| <b>Qualification</b>                        | <b>Level</b> | <b>Completion year:</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| NVQ animal care                             | 1            | No. of starts           | 20          | 15          | 19          |
|   |              | % retention             | 90          | 93          | 74          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 94          | 93          | 93          |
| First diploma animal care                   | 2            | No. of starts           | 39          | 54          | 61          |
|   |              | % retention             | 92          | 85          | 82          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 97          | 83          | 76          |
| First diploma horticulture                  | 2            | No. of starts           | 13          | 20          | 54          |
|   |              | % retention             | 77          | 85          | 80          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 30          | 35          | 75          |
| City and Guilds tree surgery for craftsmen  | 2            | No. of starts           | 85          | 89          | 86          |
|   |              | % retention             | 91          | 96          | 95          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 91          | 87          | 95          |
| National certificate floristry              | 3            | No. of starts           | *           | 23          | 44          |
|   |              | % retention             | *           | 96          | 82          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | *           | 82          | 83          |
| National diploma animal management          | 3            | No. of starts           | 50          | 62          | 52          |
|   |              | % retention             | 80          | 85          | 96          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 100         | 81          | 96          |
| National certificate countryside management | 3            | No. of starts           | *           | 23          | 28          |
|   |              | % retention             | *           | 87          | 82          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | *           | 95          | 87          |

|                             |   |               |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------|----|----|----|
| National diploma horse care | 3 | No. of starts | 40 | 23 | 22 |
|                             |   | % retention   | 88 | 96 | 86 |
|                             |   | % pass rate   | 94 | 91 | 95 |

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

\* course did not run

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

58. There is much good teaching, particularly in vocational subjects. Teachers use a particularly good mix of activities to keep students interested. Very good use is made of mentors and classroom assistants to support students with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Learning is reinforced regularly and teachers use a variety of approaches to ensure that students can retain information and develop their knowledge and understanding. Health and safety management and awareness amongst staff and students is good and is emphasised in all practical sessions. Good use is made of work experience placements to support teaching and help to consolidate students' learning.

59. Teachers make excellent use of their own experiences within the industry to illustrate and enliven their teaching. In the best sessions, there are strong links between theory and practical. Teachers place a strong emphasis on team working skills and students carry out group work diligently and effectively. In the weaker lessons, there are insufficient links between theory and practical application. For example, in a science-based class, students failed to see the relevance of the subject and could not relate it to other areas of their work.

60. Practical teaching resources are very good. The standard of horses in the equine unit is particularly high and they are an effective resource for developing riders' skills. Riding arenas are large and airy with good viewing facilities. The animal care unit has a wide range of animals including exotics, marine and freshwater aquariums, aviaries, rodents, small mammals, and farm animals. There is a very good partnership with a local zoo which is used to swap animals and allow animal care students to work with animal collections and large zoo animals. Excellent use is made of student projects to manage breeding programmes in the unit and also to develop new housing and enclosures. Horticulture and arboriculture programmes make excellent use of the extensive college estate for practicals. The machinery and tools used reflect current industry standards. Many staff are recognised experts in their own fields and their extensive industrial knowledge is well used to set up valuable practical visits and make use of current industrial-standard equipment to support teaching. There are a number of technical staff who also make a significant contribution to the teaching programme. Staff make good use of professional development opportunities and maintain close links with industry to maintain their current knowledge.

61. Assignment briefs are clear and well written. They contain useful guidance to students and many assignments are interesting and encourage research and analysis. There is, however, insufficient attention paid to correcting students' written work. Assignment work is marked and returned promptly, but spelling and grammar mistakes are not corrected in most scripts. Where information has been sourced from the Internet, American spellings are not corrected and in some cases in summarising information students have made incorrect statements which are not noted by the assessors. In some cases, technical and factual inaccuracies are not corrected. Students receive little help or guidance to improve their literacy from the assignment feedback. Even distinction-level first diploma students who may progress to national diploma are not helped to improve the standard of their written work.

62. There is a particularly wide range of courses with good progression rates. The range of courses includes entry level courses, levels 1, 2 and 3 and HE. These courses are offered across most land-based subject areas. A range of short specialist courses has been developed and these are particularly successful. Progression rates to higher-level courses are good. The college offers an extremely popular and particularly successful option for young people aged 14 to 16 in either horticulture or animal care.

63. Links with industry are strong. Industry liaison boards are used effectively to maintain close contact with commercial land-based developments and requirements. The college is committed to preparing students effectively to work within the industry. Teachers set high industry standards and demand that students work at industrial speeds. Collaborative partnerships with machinery manufacturers are used extensively to ensure that industry-standard equipment is available for teaching.

64. Tutorial support is good and there are particularly good working relationships between staff and students. However, there is insufficient use of targets to record or support student achievement. In some cases, there is poor recording of the informal support given so that the tutorial record does not provide an accurate view of the student's progress or action taken in response to difficulties. In other cases, students wait too long before action is taken as a result of problems identified through individual tutorials. For example, one student assessed at entry level 3 who needed to achieve key skill at level 2 in application of number to progress, failed to receive any support until nearly half way through the course. For many students, tutorials do not result in meaningful target setting for improvement, however, where targets are set they are good.

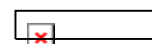
### ***Leadership and management***

65. Leadership and management of land-based studies are good. Lines of management and communication are clear. Heads of school provide good leadership and agree achievable and realistic targets for enrolments, retention and pass rates. The curriculum is well managed and planned. Leaders set a very clear strategic direction which is followed by all staff. The morale of staff is high and course teams work well together to plan, develop and deliver courses that meet the needs of students and the community.

66. Communication within the staff teams and between staff and students is good. There are regular meetings to discuss student progress, review provision and consider the views of students. Staff make good use of data and have a clear understanding of the performance of individual courses within curriculum areas. Managers have kept a good focus on improving the weaker courses and have taken sensible decisions on the expansion of the curriculum. A comprehensive staff training plan has included the use of data, carrying out tutorials and lesson observations. Time tables are well designed and schemes of work include a good mix of practical and theory with strong links between these different areas of work.

67. Quality assurance is well developed and staff understanding of, and involvement in, quality assurance procedures is improving. All teachers are involved in programme reviews and self-assessment. There is an adequate focus on equality and diversity. The college has recognised where improvements can be made and is beginning to take action.

### **Construction**



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**  
Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on plumbing NVQ level 2
  
- good standards of apprentices' practical work

- good teaching and learning in practical lessons
- good support for work-based students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention and pass rates on most courses
- slow rate of progress of most students
- dull and uninspiring teaching in most theory lessons
- poor resources for teaching.

### ***Scope of provision***

68. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time construction craft courses at intermediate and advanced levels. These include trowel occupations, wood occupations, decorative occupations, plumbing, heating and electrical installation. The only level 1 course is in electrical installation. Technician courses include national and Higher National Certificates (HNC) in construction. Site management and short courses in gas and electrical installation are also offered. Plumbing and short gas courses are franchised to a local training provider. At the time of inspection, there were 146 full-time students of whom 79% are aged 16 to 18. Some 93% of the 852 part-time students are aged 19 or over. There were also 195 modern apprentices. School-link programmes for pupils aged 14 to 16 are offered in bricklaying.

### ***Achievement and standards***

69. Retention and pass rates for NVQ level 2 in mechanical engineering services (plumbing) are high. However, retention and pass rates on most other courses are low. In 2003/04, the retention rate for intermediate construction awards was 24% and the pass rate for the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in construction and the built environment was 56%. Pass rates on apprenticeship programmes are also poor. Only 30% of the apprentices that have completed their programme achieved all their qualifications.

70. Students work well in workshops where they develop a range of hand skills. Students' written work and portfolios of evidence are satisfactory. Some technician students' written assignments and sketches are poorly presented. Several students gained medals in the regional heats of the 'Skillbuild' competitions in painting and decorating. Work-based learners develop good practical skills in the workplace. For example, a plumbing apprentice installed bathroom suites to a very high standard in a listed building.

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

| <b>Qualification</b>   | <b>Level</b> | <b>Completion year:</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| City and Guilds electrical installation, part 1, theory and practical (2 year) | 1            | No. of starts           | 56          | 55          | 55          |
|  |              | % retention             | 54          | 47          | 55          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 60          | 50          | 57          |
| Intermediate construction award (2 year)                                       | 2            | No. of starts           | *           | 83          | 83          |
|  |              | % retention             | *           | 77          | 24          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | *           | 39          | 80          |
| NVQ wood occupations (construction) (2 year)                                   | 2            | No. of starts           | 94          | 45          | 21          |
|  |              | % retention             | 43          | 71          | 48          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 85          | 53          | 70          |
| NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing) (2 year)                        | 2            | No. of starts           | 75          | 102         | 65          |
|  |              | % retention             | 23          | 76          | 78          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 29          | 59          | 94          |
| City and Guilds electrical installation part 2, theory and practical (1 year)  | 2            | No. of starts           | 10          | 38          | 38          |
|  |              | % retention             | 70          | 82          | 84          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 71          | 23          | 31          |
| AVCE (double award) in construction and the built environment (2 year)         | 3            | No. of starts           | 9           | 26          | 20          |
|  |              | % retention             | 33          | 46          | 46          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 67          | 58          | 56          |

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

***Quality of education and training***

71. Teaching is good in the majority of practical lessons. Practicals are well planned and teachers regularly check on students' progress and understanding. Good use is made of different learning materials to help students in mixed ability groups. Practical work is carried out safely. Theory lessons are often dull and uninspiring. Planning is ineffective and learning outcomes are not always clear. The differing needs of students are not taken into account. More able students have to wait for others to catch up while less able students do not complete their tasks. There is little use of ILT to support and enhance students' learning.

72. Most students make slow progress. Work-based learners are regularly required to complete practical activities in the college workshops, although they have already demonstrated their competence in the workplace. The work produced by students as part of their occupational training is not used as evidence for their key skills portfolios and they are required to carry out additional work which may not be relevant to their trade. Progress in collecting evidence is slow.

73. Resources are generally sufficient. Teachers have relevant vocational qualifications and have, or are working towards, assessor and teaching qualifications. Several new teachers have up-to-date industrial knowledge and expertise in modern construction practice and techniques. Classrooms are poorly maintained, decorated and equipped and some are used as access routes to other rooms. They lack vocational identity and do not provide a good learning environment. Workshops do not always provide realistic simulated work environments. Plumbing and electrical installation students do not have the opportunity to work in confined spaces such as in lofts and under floors. Some hand tools are worn and need replacing. The learning resource centre has sufficient modern construction textbooks, technical journals and reference materials and computers with Internet access.

74. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Students' progress is regularly reviewed. However, there are no specific milestones against which to measure progress and students rarely know how well they are progressing and when they expect to finish. Individual learning plans are seldom utilised or updated as a result of reviews. The quality of assessors' written feedback is variable.

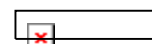
75. Courses generally meet the needs and interests of students and employers. However, electrical installation is the only level 1 course and there are insufficient work placement opportunities for full-time students. Few construction students take part in the college's enrichment programme.

76. Support for students is satisfactory. Students receive good advice about appropriate programmes, courses and career opportunities. Full-time and many part-time students undergo initial diagnostic assessments in literacy and numeracy to identify additional support needs. Adequate support is provided for those where a learning need is identified. Induction programmes include health and safety and equality and diversity issues. Work-based learners are well supported. Employers and supervisors take a close interest in the progress and development of their apprentices. They provide a good range of opportunities to develop competencies which are well matched to the requirements of the NVQ. Employers move apprentices between contracts to provide them with experience across the full range of their work. The college's work-based development officers work hard to encourage effective relationships with apprentices, their employers and supervisors.

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

77. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership and management of work-based provision are good. Teams meet regularly and lines of communication have improved. New systems and procedures have been introduced for course reviews, tutorials, recording students' achievements and internal verification. Nominated work-based assessors have been appointed and key skills delivery has been revised to improve their integration within the vocational programme. Key skills achievements are rising. Quality assurance is underdeveloped. There are no regular observations of tutorials and reviews. Course reviews are insufficiently self-critical and the resulting development and implementation plans are poor. The self-assessment report overstates some of the strengths and omits a number of significant weaknesses. The resulting development plan for improvement is insufficiently specific and evaluative. Staff development is good and is linked to appraisal. However, there is little active promotion of equal opportunities.

### **Business, management and professional studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on management and professional courses
  
- much good teaching on management, professional and administration courses
  
- effective links with local employers



- very effective use of individual learning plans for part-time and administration students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low attendance and a lack of punctuality on many courses
- low pass rates on high-level accounting courses
- insufficient provision at levels 1 and 2 for full-time students
- ineffective implementation of quality assurance procedures.

### ***Scope of provision***

78. Over 900 part-time adult students are enrolled on a wide range of courses, mainly at levels 3 and 4. Approximately 250 of these are enrolled to teacher education and related courses. There are about 100 students following AS levels or GCE A levels in business and accounting. Provision for full-time business students includes the diploma and higher diploma in administrative procedures, GNVQ foundation in business and a national diploma in business. There are approximately 70 students enrolled on these courses. A recent innovation is a national award in personal and business finance which is provided as enrichment for selected students following the national diploma in business. This course is run in the college's finance academy which is being developed as part of the CoVE in accountancy and finance.

### ***Achievement and standards***

79. Retention rates are high on many management, professional and administration courses. In 2004, the retention rate on the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) level 4 and the certificate and advanced certificate in marketing was 100%. Retention rates on the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) part 1 have been consistently above national averages over the past three years. Pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level business were above the national averages in 2004. However, pass rates on high-level accounting courses are low. In 2004, the pass rate on the AAT level 4 accounting was significantly below the national average, and pass rates on the AAT level 3 have been below the national average for the past three years.

80. Students on administration courses produce work of a good standard. They manage complex tasks competently and present their work professionally. Higher diploma students demonstrated good organisational and social skills in planning and running a job fair. They were confident in making oral presentations. Students on the national diploma in business course do not work at the level that is expected. They lack appropriate skills for research and independent working. Many have significant amounts of work outstanding and their portfolios are incomplete. In many lessons in the business area, attendance is low and students are often late. Attendance observed during the inspection was 68%, well below the national average.

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

| Qualification                               | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Word processing stage 2 (short course)      | 2     | No. of starts    | 36   | 29   | 29   |
|   |       | % retention      | 89   | 90   | 86   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 94   | 62   | 60   |
| NVQ accounting                              | 3     | No. of starts    | 59   | 36   | 56   |
|   |       | % retention      | 92   | 83   | 88   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 44   | 43   | 57   |
| AS-level business studies                   | 3     | No. of starts    | 61   | 57   | 48   |
|   |       | % retention      | 79   | 81   | 75   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 63   | 80   | 92   |
| Certificate in personnel practice           | 3     | No. of starts    | 17   | 15   | 25   |
|   |       | % retention      | 82   | 83   | 80   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 86   | 93   | 90   |
| Higher diploma in administrative procedures | 4     | No. of starts    | 11   | 14   | 13   |
|   |       | % retention      | 91   | 64   | 100  |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 90   | 89   | 92   |
| NVQ accounting                              | 4     | No. of starts    | 33   | 38   | 23   |
|   |       | % retention      | 97   | 95   | 100  |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 47   | 28   | 9    |

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

***Quality of education and training***

81. Teaching and learning on management, professional and administration courses are mostly good. Teachers effectively use a variety of methods to stimulate students and maintain their interest. Learning is developed in a logical sequence and students are encouraged to analyse, apply knowledge and evaluate their conclusions. Students respond well in lessons and develop their potential. For example, in an administration lesson, students critically evaluated what they had gained from a recent period of work experience and used their conclusions to set new targets for the acquisition of further skills. In the less effective lessons, students do not make the best use of their time. Planning does not take sufficient account of the needs of students of differing ability levels and learning proceeds at the pace of the slowest students. In one lesson, the teacher demonstrated practical computing functions for almost an hour before students had the opportunity to try for themselves. In some lessons, students aged 16 to 18 are reluctant learners. They are unwilling to play a full part in lessons and achieve little.

82. The accommodation and equipment available for business students are good. The college has used its recent funding from the CoVE in accountancy and finance to provide a high-quality suite of training rooms equipped with new personal computers and modern office furniture. The rooms provide good access and space for students with mobility difficulties. Specialist teachers have been appointed to support the provision in the CoVE. Rooms used for teacher education classes are too small for the numbers of students and limit the range of practical teaching activities that can be utilised.

83. Assignment briefs are clear and identify opportunities for covering elements of key skills. The

recently devised assignments for key skills in the business area are particularly good, although they are too new to be able to judge what impact they may have on students' learning. Tasks set for students demand a range of skills that are appropriate for the level of their course. Written comments on students' work are often extensive and provide clear guidance on how they can improve their performance. The college's virtual learning environment is used to alert students to future activities in which they will be involved. However, on some courses, students' reluctance to produce and submit work is limiting the amount of assessment which can be effectively undertaken.

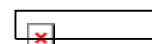
84. The college offers a comprehensive range of management and professional courses. In accountancy, students are able to progress from level 1 to professional level courses. The college is using its expertise in the area of finance to develop a wider range of programmes and has been instrumental in gaining accreditation for a national award in personal and business finance. Good links have been established with local industry and internships have been introduced for students on the national award. Administration students undertake two periods of work experience and have the opportunity to take a number of business-related IT qualifications. However, there is very little provision for full-time students at levels 1 and 2. There is no progression route at level 2 in business for students who successfully complete the GNVQ foundation course.

85. Students receive good help and support from personal tutors. Group and individual tutorials are effective, although students aged 16 to 18 do not always attend regularly. Individual learning plans are used on a number of courses to set 'smart' targets and review students' progress. Administration students and those on teacher training courses make particularly good use of these to plan their work and manage their time. There is a good scheme for helping national diploma students to plan for improvements and manage their own learning, but few make effective use of it.

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

86. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Planning for the CoVE is well advanced. Day-to-day curriculum management generally works effectively, although some good practices in the administration area are not replicated elsewhere. Quality assurance processes are ineffective. Programme reviews and the self-assessment report lack critical evaluation and fail to identify significant weaknesses. The capture and analysis of data are ineffective in informing the process and the grades awarded by the college for lesson observations are overgenerous. Staffing difficulties have resulted in some students falling behind their target dates for the completion of assignments.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good acquisition of vocational skills by adult students
  
  
- good teaching on college-based adult programmes
  
  
- very effective assessment practices

- good support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on part-time City and Guilds 7262 programmes
- low pass rates for ICT key skills at level 2
- unsatisfactory teaching in many theory lessons
- lack of co-ordination and direction in curriculum management.

### ***Scope of provision***

87. The college offers a range of courses from level 1 to level 4. For students aged 16 to 18, the provision is almost entirely full time and includes GNVQ foundation diploma in ICT skills, key skills at level 2, first diploma, national certificate and diploma for IT practitioners, AS-level and GCE A-level ICT. The provision for adults is mainly at levels 1 and 2 with limited progression to level 3 and courses are offered either in a town centre facility or at the main college campus. Courses include European computer driving licence (ECDL) and computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT). There are 1,268 enrolments on ICT courses in 2004/05, of whom 115 are students aged 16 to 18 and 1,153 are adults.

### ***Achievement and standards***

88. Retention rates on City and Guilds 7262 level 1 courses have declined and are low at 43%. Retention rates on other level 1 part-time courses have also declined to around the national averages, which are also low. Pass rates have risen and are now above the low national averages. The acquisition of vocational skills by adult students is good. Adults taking CLAIT and ECDL courses quickly gain competence and confidence and can transfer their skills fluently between applications software. These students enjoy their lessons and appreciate the support and encouragement they receive from their tutors.

89. Full-time students demonstrate competence in practical skills and understanding of computer packages. They use the college's computer system with confidence and students at all levels use the Internet for research. The pass rates for level 2 ICT key skills are low, at 2% in 2002/03 rising to 22% in 2003/04.

### ***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    | 16   | 15   | 14   |

|  |   |               |     |     |      |
|--|---|---------------|-----|-----|------|
|  |   | % retention   | 81  | 80  | 77   |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 100 | 33  | 94   |
| City and Guilds 7262 certificate in computer awareness | 1 | No. of starts | 96  | 411 | 1111 |
|  |   | % retention   | 88  | 61  | 43   |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 32  | 59  | 73   |
| Key skills IT  | 2 | No. of starts | 128 | 126 | 425  |
|  |   | % retention   | 71  | 74  | 87   |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 14  | 2   | 22   |
| GNVQ intermediate IT                                   | 2 | No. of starts | 47  | 50  | 22*  |
|  |   | % retention   | 85  | 84  | 77*  |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 65  | 86  | 94*  |
| AS-level ICT   | 3 | No. of starts | 53  | 27  | 53   |
|  |   | % retention   | 64  | 81  | 70   |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 56  | 64  | 54   |
| AVCE (double award) in ICT                             | 3 | No. of starts | 58  | 63  | 39   |
|  |   | % retention   | 53  | 49  | 41   |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 94  | 81  | 100  |

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

\*GNVQ intermediate in IT replaced with Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma

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

90. Teaching for adults on college-based courses is good. Students are well supported, tutors use appropriate language and lessons are well structured and planned. Tutors are sensitive to the needs of students and make appropriate use of praise to celebrate the achievements of individuals. Tutors are well aware of the progress and levels of activity of individual students. They ensure that individuals work at an appropriate pace and are set achievable, but challenging targets. In the better lessons, teachers plan to meet the needs of all students.

91. However, in many theory lessons, particularly for students aged 16 to 18, teaching methods lack variety and fail to meet the needs of individuals. Planning does not include measuring students' progress, nor the setting of short-term targets and learning goals. Teachers talk for too long and fail to motivate students to achieve their full potential. Students who complete assigned tasks in lessons are not given further activities and they become bored and inattentive.

92. Teachers are suitably qualified and some have wide vocational experience which they use well to enhance their lessons. Resources in ICT classrooms are generally good. All ICT rooms have data projectors and sufficient computers. Several rooms have interactive whiteboards, but few teachers use these effectively. The layout of some rooms makes it difficult for students to see the whiteboards and for teachers to move around to check students' work. The department has begun to develop a virtual learning environment. Access to computers and specialist software outside timetabled lessons is limited. The community site in the town centre is well equipped. However, it is often overcrowded and inaccessible by students and others using wheelchairs.

93. Assessment practices are highly effective. Students' progress is well monitored, and records kept indicate what further work students need to do. Feedback to students is clear, comprehensive and informative. Tutors provide good guidance on assessment criteria and what students need to do to improve their grades. Rules for the submission of assignments are clear and understood by

students. The internal verification process is robust, well planned and thorough and internal verifiers provide clear feedback to assessors.

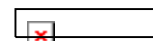
94. Support for students is good. Advice and guidance are effective and all students receive appropriate information to help them to make informed choices. Students' progress is monitored and recorded as part of the tutorial process. Tutorial records provide teachers with a comprehensive profile of their students and indicate where additional support may be needed.

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

95. Management of the curriculum at course level is satisfactory, however, there is a lack of co-ordination and strategic direction of the ICT provision. Management of the curriculum, including key skills, is spread across more than one team in the college and there is little sharing of good practice. Teachers meet regularly and fractional part-time teachers who are unable to attend regularly receive minutes of the key issues.

96. Teachers are involved in the production of the self-assessment report. However, the report failed to recognise several key issues identified by inspectors. The lesson observation scheme overstates the quality of teaching and weaknesses in teaching have not been identified and addressed by managers. Staff development is good and provides a wide range of training, including personal training, activities for individual teachers.

### **Hospitality, travel, tourism and sports**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on most full-time courses
- good practical teaching and learning in travel and sport (golf) programmes
- very effective use of work experience and industry links in travel and sport (golf)
- excellent range of vocational resources in travel and sport (golf).

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates in travel, leisure and tourism level 2 and level 3 sport (golf)

- poor attendance and lack of punctuality in travel and sport (golf) programmes
- insufficient monitoring of individual learning in theory lessons
- ineffective use of target setting to support students' progression and achievements.

### ***Scope of provision***

97. The area offers a good range of courses in hospitality and travel and tourism for full-time and part-time students. There are also specialist sport courses in golf. Full-time courses range from NVQ at levels 1 to 3 in hospitality, to diploma level 3 in hospitality and levels 2 and 3 in travel and tourism and sport (golf). Students also take additional part-time courses leading to qualifications such as food hygiene, national licensees and airline ticketing. There are a small number of work-based learners following programmes in food preparation and cookery. Currently, there are 682 students of whom 35% are on hospitality, 45% on travel and 20% on sport (golf) courses. Around 215 students are taking full-time courses. Over 450 students study on part-time courses. The area of learning operates a CoVE in travel and tourism.

### ***Achievement and standards***

98. Retention rates on most full-time courses are high and some are significantly above the national averages. Pass rates in travel, leisure and tourism at level 2 and level 3 sport are low. Overall achievement in key skills is only 11% and apprenticeship framework completion rates within hospitality are low. Progression in golf is good from level 2 to level 4 and into employment. The majority of students' portfolios are well maintained and most students are predicted to complete by their expected end date. Students demonstrate good skills in practical lessons. For example, most golf students reduce their handicap significantly during the course. Food service students have good customer care and service skills. Part-time food production students work effectively and demonstrate good craft skills. In the travel shop, students are confident in using technology to find out information for customers. Students' attendance and punctuality in travel and sport are unsatisfactory and there were late arrivals in a large proportion of travel lessons.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, travel, tourism and sports, 2002 to 2004***

| Qualification                | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ food preparation         | 2     | No. of starts    | 39   | 46   | 22   |
|                              |       | % retention      | 41   | 57   | 55   |
|                              |       | % pass rate      | 75   | 54   | 92   |
| NVQ food service             | 2     | No. of starts    | 29   | 12   | 18   |
|                              |       | % retention      | 17   | 58   | 78   |
|                              |       | % pass rate      | 100  | 100  | 79   |
| Certificate in travel agency | 2     | No. of starts    | 38   | 48   | 51   |
|                              |       | % retention      | 74   | 83   | 88   |
|                              |       | % pass rate      | 57   | 58   | 44   |

|  |   |               |    |    |     |
|--|---|---------------|----|----|-----|
| GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism  | 2 | No. of starts | 24 | 5  | 30  |
|  |   | % retention   | 83 | 20 | 85  |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 85 | 0  | 66  |
| AVCE (double award) travel and tourism | 3 | No. of starts | 30 | 19 | 12  |
|  |   | % retention   | 73 | 84 | 100 |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 95 | 94 | 92  |
| National certificate sport (golf)      | 3 | No. of starts | *  | 40 | 37  |
|  |   | % retention   | *  | 78 | 97  |
|  |   | % pass rate   | *  | 90 | 53  |

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

\* course did not run

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

99. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. The better lessons are well planned and students work purposefully. Teaching is good in practical lessons in travel and sport. For example, in a travel lesson focusing on organising an event, students were clear on what they needed to achieve. They produced an event organisation chart and logged tasks that had been completed. A volunteer British Airways tutor provided effective additional support to a number of students and helped them to produce advertisements for the event. In a golf session, students collectively analysed their skills and were encouraged by the teacher to critique each other's performance. In weaker lessons, activities are not well planned and students are not wholly attentive and involved. Questions are directed to the most able students. Students are not kept actively engaged and little monitoring of individual learning takes place. Teachers talk for too long and learning is not sufficiently checked. ILT is not used effectively to enhance learning.

100. There is an excellent range of resources in travel and sport. CoVE funding has provided travel and tourism students with access to realistic working environments such as an industry-standard suite with related reservation software, a 'live' travel suite with computer online reservations and a 'mock-up' air cabin. Golf students use an 18-hole golf course and software to monitor performance. Hospitality students have access to adequate facilities with two training kitchens and a realistic working environment for food production and service. The food service outlet includes a computerized food ordering system, but the overall appearance is dated. The kitchens are well maintained and functional, but are in need of updating to provide standards that reflect current industrial standards. Most teachers are qualified or working towards a recognized teaching qualification. The majority have very good industrial experience and use this for the benefit of the students. There is good access to ILT and the learning resources centre has a wide range of appropriate books, journals and periodicals. There is good access for students with mobility difficulties.

101. Assessment processes and practices meet awarding body requirements. The quality of feedback to students is variable. Teachers give extensive oral feedback to individual students, but written feedback does not always provide sufficient information to help students improve their work.

102. Effective use is made of work experience and industry links in travel and sport. The college has developed a wide range of links with local firms in sectors such as, travel agencies, travel insurance and golf clubs. Recruitment in travel has increased significantly at level 3 with a new national diploma in travel, and a new 'ticket to travel' programme has been arranged for mature students. There are good progression opportunities to level 4 provided within the college. Students in hospitality and travel have the opportunity to study additional qualifications that are recognised in the industry such as air fares and ticketing, and food hygiene.

103. Support for students is satisfactory. There are good induction programmes. Individual students'

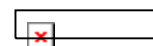


needs are effectively diagnosed and good in-class support is provided for students. Students with disability and specific learning needs are well supported. Targets are not always used effectively in one-to-one reviews with students. For example, in an individual tutorial, poor performance was discussed, but no effective action plan was produced or techniques investigated to address the student's poor time management.

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

104. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular area and course meetings take place and actions are addressed promptly. Communications within the curriculum area are good. Weak teaching practice has been effectively identified and support offered to staff in a variety of ways such as mentorship and staff development sessions. Previous weaknesses in the lesson observation scheme have been addressed, but it is still too early to determine what impact this may have on teaching. The self-assessment report does not identify key weaknesses in attendance, punctuality and the quality of students' work. Course reviews are overgenerous in their assessment and the judgements do not make effective use of performance data. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between course teams. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. There is good access for students with mobility difficulties and students with disability and specific learning needs are well supported.

### **Health, social care and early years**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most level 1 and level 2 courses
- high pass rates on level 3 health studies and access to nursing
- good teaching and learning on many courses
- very broad range of courses and good progression routes
- very good support for learners with additional needs.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention and pass rates on NVQ level 3 early years and on national diploma in public services

- ineffective quality assurance.

### ***Scope of provision***

105. The college offers a wide range of courses in early years, health and social care, including cleaning and support services, counselling and public services, from level 1 to level 4. There are just over 260 part-time adults on care and health courses, over 170 on counselling courses and 43 in child care. There are 23 full-time adult students, the majority of whom are enrolled to health courses. There are over 80 students aged 16 to 18 taking courses in childcare, health and public services. A wide range of short courses is designed to widen participation and meet the needs of local employers, such as health and safety, food hygiene and first aid certificates. There are over 4,000 enrolments on these courses in 2004/05.

### ***Achievement and standards***

106. Pass rates are high on most level 1 and level 2 courses. Recent retention and pass rates for NVQ in cleaning and support services have been outstanding. Pass rates for level 3 health studies and access to nursing courses have been consistently high. The standard of students' work in lessons is generally satisfactory or better. Most students demonstrate good skills of working together productively particularly in public services courses. Many students progress through from level 1 qualifications to level 4 and into HE.

107. Retention and pass rates on the national diploma in public services at level 3 are low. Improved advice and guidance has recently been introduced to make students aware of the high academic and fitness levels required to complete the public services programme. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 3 early years are low, but rising.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and early years, 2002 to 2004***

| <b>Qualification</b>                   | <b>Level</b> | <b>Completion year:</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| NVQ cleaning and support services      | 1<br>(short) | No. of starts           | *           | 226         | 107         |
|  |              | % retention             | *           | 79          | 96          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | *           | 73          | 99          |
| Certificate in childcare and education | 2            | No. of starts           | 21          | 32          | 20          |
|  |              | % retention             | 76          | 75          | 95          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 81          | 92          | 95          |
| NVQ early years care and education     | 3            | No. of starts           | 30          | 40          | 21          |
|  |              | % retention             | 10          | 38          | 43          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 33          | 13          | 67          |
| BTEC national public services          | 3            | No. of starts           | 18          | 18          | 26          |
|  |              | % retention             | 61          | 61          | 50          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 100         | 91          | 46          |
| Access to nursing                      | 3            | No. of starts           | 26          | 11          | 27          |
|  |              | % retention             | 81          | 64          | 81          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 95          | 43          | 91          |

|                     |   |               |    |    |     |
|---------------------|---|---------------|----|----|-----|
| Counselling diploma | 4 | No. of starts | 25 | 53 | 30  |
|                     |   | % retention   | 32 | 53 | 47  |
|                     |   | % pass rate   | 75 | 89 | 100 |

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

\* course did not run

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

108. Teaching and learning on many courses are good. The better lessons are very well planned with tasks of increasing complexity, good resources to enhance learning and encouragement by teachers for students to link theory with experience at work or on placement. Lesson planning in public services, health and care programmes is very good. Teachers on all courses demonstrate good management of lessons with clear direction, time limits for activities set, reinforcement of expected behaviour and prompt challenging of inappropriate behaviour. Students are focused and attentive in all lessons. Students on public services courses demonstrate particularly good teamwork, purposeful activity and collaboration. Teachers demonstrate appropriate equality and diversity awareness and reflect good practice in their lesson content and teaching. In weaker lessons, there is poor identification of learning goals, particularly in some early years lesson plans and teaching is dull.

109. Resources are satisfactory. Teachers are appropriately qualified and undertake continuing professional development with relevant short courses. Classrooms are adequate and accommodate a variety of activities and resources. Most subject areas have dedicated teaching space. The suite of rooms for counselling courses is particularly suitable with both large classrooms and smaller rooms for confidential group work. Links between teaching and learning resource staff are good, the range of textbooks and journals is satisfactory and access to online and intranet information is good. Tutors use overhead projectors and handouts satisfactorily to support students' learning and arrange a good variety of resources and equipment for practical sessions such as cooking and creative workshops in early years. Monitoring of work placements and employers' premises are satisfactory, with appropriate health and safety checks and clear adherence to equality of opportunity and the values and principles of the college.

110. Assessment practice is generally satisfactory. Grading of assignments against criteria is appropriate and students receive written feedback. However, some feedback describes what students have achieved, but does not explain how grades have been awarded. Not all assessors provide sufficient evidence of candidates' skills in observation reports for NVQ level 3 in early years and there is an over reliance on written evidence in NVQ level 2 in care.

111. The area of learning offers a very broad range of courses to meet the needs and interests of students and employers and clear progression routes are available from pre-entry courses for young people aged 14 to 16 on to E2E programmes, from levels 1 to 4 and on to HE. Many students take advantage of these progression routes.

112. Confidential and flexible support for students with additional needs is particularly good. Well-planned support by additional tutors is available. Key skills are well integrated with health studies courses and literacy, numeracy and key skills support provided by the college's greenhouse provision is very effective. The tutorial system identifies achievements and sets realistic targets for further success. Careful and sensitive support from teachers helps students to work independently in lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

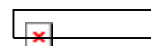
113. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers share and understand the college's mission and priorities. Programme leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss course delivery and content. Members of staff willingly share their experiences and knowledge to improve learning for students and develop new courses. Foundation level courses have recently been introduced into

the health and social care area to provide improved progression opportunities for students. Observations of lessons effectively lead into annual appraisal and staff development.

114. Quality assurance is insufficiently robust. The most recent self-assessment report concentrates on process issues and does not accurately reflect weaknesses in retention and pass rates. Inappropriate assessment practice was not identified through the internal verification system. The lesson observation scheme grades are overgenerous and the comments made on feedback forms lack detail and do not accurately reflect the grades awarded. The format of schemes of work is consistent, but the quality of their content is variable. They do not always identify a range of tasks and activities for students or have a sufficient focus on learning

115. Equal opportunities are satisfactory. Procedures are implemented to protect students from bullying and harassment and students have good, respectful relationships with each other and with teachers.

### Visual and performing arts and media



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on performing arts and media programmes
- high retention rates on full-time courses
- excellent resources at the Academy of Contemporary Music
- wide range of subject choices.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- much dull and unexciting teaching
- insufficient use of ILT to stimulate learning
- ineffective use of tutorials.

### **Scope of provision**

116. The college offers a wide choice of subjects for full-time students in performing and visual arts and media studies. Most of the provision is at level 3. There are very good progression opportunities to HE or into employment. Partnership and franchise arrangements are good between the college, the academy for contemporary music and the Guildford School of Acting where there is some sharing of staff and accommodation. Educational visits to exhibitions, shows, related businesses and trips abroad provide enhancement and enrichment opportunities. At the time of the inspection, there were 581 full-time students' of whom 132 were adults, 171, mainly adult, students were on part-time courses and 4 students aged 14 to 16.

### **Achievement and standards**

117. There are high pass rates on performing arts and media full-time courses, and high retention rates on full-time courses across visual and creative arts and media. Students achieve high grades in intermediate media, national diploma and AS-level drama and theatre studies. Progression is good. Over 50% of students go to university and around 30% obtain employment in the music and performance industry. Attainment is mostly satisfactory. The more able students have good research and analytical skills, demonstrate effective performance and practice techniques and write and express themselves coherently. However, less able students make slower progress and some find it difficult to work effectively in pairs and groups and to sustain concentration and effort. Attendance rates were low at 69% during the week of inspection.

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

| Qualification                             | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| GNVQ intermediate art and design (1 year) | 2     | No. of starts    | 15   | 19   | 18   |
|   |       | % retention      | 93   | 53   | 72   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 79   | 80   | 62   |
| GNVQ intermediate media (1 year)          | 2     | No. of starts    | 15   | 25   | 22   |
|   |       | % retention      | 93   | 96   | 82   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 93   | 63   | 94   |
| AS-level art and design (1 year)          | 3     | No. of starts    | 53   | 61   | 115  |
|   |       | % retention      | 75   | 82   | 75   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 93   | 84   | 81   |
| National diploma design (2 year)          | 3     | No. of starts    | 25   | 42   | 26   |
|   |       | % retention      | 84   | 69   | 77   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 86   | 79   | 85   |
| National diploma drama (2 year)           | 3     | No. of starts    | 12   | 19   | 23   |
|   |       | % retention      | 83   | 74   | 74   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 100  | 93   | 88   |
| AS-level media studies (1 year)           | 3     | No. of starts    | 61   | 94   | 76   |
|   |       | % retention      | 72   | 84   | 82   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 97   | 87   | 87   |

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

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

118. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but fails to motivate students to achieve their full potential. Teachers have good specialist knowledge. In the better lessons, there is a range of focused activities with clearly expressed learning outcomes. For example, in a very effective drum lesson, students were expertly coached in the importance of developing practice schedules and were encouraged to analyse the way in which they allocated their practice time. Improvisation techniques were developed and individual students had an opportunity to perform a series of fill in bars to the class. Lesson plans clearly express aims and learning outcomes, but these are not well communicated to students and there is some confusion about the purpose of lesson activities.

119. In less successful lessons, teachers take too long to introduce topics and some students find it difficult to maintain concentration. The pace of learning is generally slow. Explanation at the start of lessons is not sufficiently clear. Lessons have no clear conclusion and students do not know if they have achieved the lesson objectives or how they can improve. Teachers check learning by questions to students, but a few students dominate the responses and it is not clear that others have understood. In many lessons, teachers rely on whiteboards as their key additional resource and there is little use of ILT.

120. Resources overall are satisfactory, but resources at the Academy of Contemporary Music are excellent with designated areas for DJ skills, drum tuition and sound production and recording. There is a commercial recording studio with extensive opening hours. Teachers have current industrial knowledge and relevant vocational experience and either have or are working towards a teaching qualification. Visual arts studios are well lit and there are good photographic dark rooms. In graphics and design, students have access to high-quality computers with appropriate and up-to-date software. Performing arts accommodation at the college is satisfactory. There is good technical support across the area of learning.

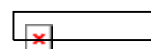
121. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory. Students are clear about what they have to do. Marking of work is thorough. Feedback to students is constructive, gives praise for effort and good work and indicates improvements that need to be made. Verbal feedback is supportive. Students appreciate this support and individual direction. Practical performance and standards of work are of a good standard. The internal verification process is well documented. Where actions are required these are followed through.

122. Support for students is satisfactory. Initial assessment and diagnostic tests identify students' needs for additional support, which is put in place very quickly. In-class additional support and individual support for students with difficulties or disabilities is good and helps students to play a full part in lessons. Group and individual tutorials are ineffective. In the better tutorials, students agree specific targets to improve their performance, but in others the time is used to catch up on coursework and provide individual coaching.

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

123. Leadership and management of visual and performing arts and media are satisfactory. The two partnership arrangements are individually and effectively managed, but with different practices to manage issues common to both. There is little sharing of good practice between all sites and quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory overall, but variable in the way they are applied between sites. The self-assessment report recognised some of the weaknesses identified in the inspection.

### **Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages**



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

**Strengths**

- high retention rates in literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- high pass rates in ESOL
- much good teaching
- flexible and responsive provision
- good support for students with additional learning needs.

**Weaknesses**

- low pass rates in key skills
- insufficient use of diagnostic assessment to plan learning in discrete provision
- insufficiently precise targets for students in literacy and numeracy
- underdeveloped quality improvement measures.

**Scope of provision**

124. The college offers a wide range of part-time literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses at 11 community venues and at the college's main site. The majority of the 718 students enrolled on discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL course are aged 19 and over. There are 152 college-based ESOL students. ESOL provision is available at all levels and lessons take place during the day, in the evening and at the weekends. Some 109 employees receive literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills training at 16 local employers' premises. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 on E2E and foundation vocational courses in IT, care and construction are also aiming to achieve entry level or level 1 literacy and numeracy qualifications. Additional support is offered individually, on all level 1 and some level 2 courses where need is identified.

**Achievement and standards**

125. Retention rates are high on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses. Students on discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses are highly motivated and a significant number make good progress. Pass rates in ESOL are high. Pass rates on non-accredited courses, where students are working towards targets mapped to the core curriculum, are well above the national averages. ESOL examination pass rates are also significantly above the national averages. Achievements in literacy and numeracy for students not aiming for qualifications are unclear because many individual learning plans do not set clear targets by which progress can be measured. Students' attendance is good.

126. Pass rates at level 1 in key skills are very low. In 2002/03, 13% achieved their qualification in application of number and 34% achieved in 2003/04. In communication, the pass rate was 30% and 27%, respectively. The appointment of a key skills manager and a team of key skills champions to identify improvements in each school is already beginning to have an effect on actual and predicted achievement of qualifications.

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

| Qualification                             | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Basic ESOL course level 1 (long)          | entry | No. of starts    | 124  | 265  | 514  |
|   |       | % retention      | 88   | 79   | 87   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 99   | 100  | 98   |
| Preliminary English test (PET)            | entry | No. of starts    | 33   | 25   | 32   |
|   |       | % retention      | 94   | 100  | 100  |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 48   | 76   | 84   |
| First certificate English test            | 1     | No. of starts    | 50   | 59   | 14   |
|   |       | % retention      | 98   | 100  | 86   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 57   | 56   | 83   |
| Key skills numeracy level 1 (1 year)      | 1     | No. of starts    | 170  | 212  | 343  |
|   |       | % retention      | 62   | 74   | 83   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 40   | 25   | 36   |
| Key skills communication level 1 (1 year) | 1     | No. of starts    | 168  | 148  | 274  |
|   |       | % retention      | 76   | 62   | 82   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 43   | 18   | 24   |

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

***Quality of education and training***

127. Much teaching is good. In the best lessons, there is a good variety of appropriate teaching methods, which stimulate and maintain students' interest. In the weaker lessons, teachers use a limited range of learning activities, teaching is uninspiring and there is little attempt to meet the needs of all students. Target setting and record keeping are not used effectively to motivate students. In some lessons, there is an over reliance on worksheets with few checks on learning and in others students are not given the opportunity to improve their confidence in speaking and listening skills.

128. Resources are satisfactory. Teachers are experienced and well qualified. Volunteer tutors are used effectively in the multi-level community classes. The community venues are well maintained. One in particular is exceptionally well resourced and offers a haven for the community it serves.



Accommodation is conducive to learning. Rooms are resourced with audio-visual equipment and in some there are computers. However, ILT is not used sufficiently.

129. Procedures to assess the literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills of all college students are well organised and systematic. Computer-based assessments are analysed to identify students who may benefit from extra help with mathematics or English and used to place students in graded classes on the main college site ESOL courses. In community venues, initial assessment is used to generate both the long, medium and short-term learning targets on individual learning plans. In the best learning plans, students' progress is carefully assessed and reviewed against clear short-term targets. However, the quality of learning plans varies and some learning targets are not specific enough to be useful. Homework is set regularly and marked with positive feedback to help students to improve their skills. There is insufficient use of diagnostic assessment on part-time courses in the community.

130. Provision is particularly flexible and responsive to the needs of local communities. The college is working with a wide range of employers to deliver Skills for Life in the workplace. The college has established some productive partnerships with local voluntary and community groups and these help to recruit students who would otherwise be unlikely to enrol on courses. Students appreciate the closeness of many community venues and are able to build a flexible programme of learning around their individual circumstances.

131. Support for students is satisfactory. Volunteers provide good support to students in lessons. Personal tutors are skilled in providing pastoral support. Advice and guidance sessions are held regularly for prospective students. There is no formal tutorial system for part-time students, but tutors are allocated some hours each term to review students' progress. This process is variable in both quality and application. Tutors monitor students' attendance rigorously. Students benefit from an enrichment programme of visits to places of cultural interest.

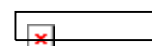
132. The support for students with additional learning needs is good. Support tutors are well managed and support is integrated with the curriculum in the best lessons. Students with specific learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly well supported. Management information is insufficiently used to measure the impact of support on progression and pass rates.

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

133. The day-to-day management of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, the strategic direction for Skills for Life is unclear and data for the Skills for Life provision are insufficiently collated and used to inform future planning and development. Managers have successfully supervised and supported staff in mapping all documentation to the core curricula for consistency in paperwork. Low retention and pass rates are being addressed through regular user group meetings to improve the quality of the curriculum. However, the findings of these meetings are not routinely shared with teachers. Access to staff training and development is good and mentors support teachers who are judged unsatisfactory when observed as part of the college quality assurance system. Team meetings are held regularly, but not all part-time teachers attend meetings and staff development events.

134. Quality improvement measures are underdeveloped. Internal verification is satisfactory in the non-accredited ESOL provision, but weak in literacy and numeracy where the target setting on individual learning plans is variable. The monitoring of the quality of individual learning plans is not sufficiently frequent to ensure progress is measured appropriately against targets. Sharing of good practice across the provision is not systematic. The self-assessment report recognised a number of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection, but is insufficiently evaluative.

## **Part D: College data**



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

| Level | 16-18 % | 19+ % |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 1     | 19      | 46    |
| 2     | 36      | 15    |
| 3     | 23      | 11    |
| 4/5   | 0       | 2     |
| Other | 22      | 26    |
| Total | 100     | 100   |

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

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

| Curriculum area   | 16-18<br>No. | 19+<br>No. | Total<br>Enrolments (%) |
|---|--------------|------------|-------------------------|
| Science and mathematics                                 | 1,358        | 1,799      | 9                       |
| Land-based provision                                    | 348          | 1,381      | 5                       |
| Construction  | 286          | 1,938      | 6                       |
| Engineering, technology and<br>manufacture              | 115          | 208        | 1                       |
| Business administration,<br>management and professional | 427          | 1,600      | 6                       |
| Information and communication<br>technology             | 753          | 1,845      | 7                       |
| Retailing, customer service and<br>transportation       | 36           | 295        | 1                       |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel                 | 484          | 799        | 3                       |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy                         | 284          | 517        | 2                       |
| Health, social care and public<br>services              | 941          | 8,287      | 24                      |
| Visual and performing arts and<br>media                 | 2,858        | 1,792      | 12                      |
| Humanities  | 459          | 199        | 2                       |
| English, languages and<br>communication                 | 2,327        | 1,532      | 11                      |
| Foundation programmes                                   | 1,259        | 1,997      | 9                       |

|              |               |               |            |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Unknown AOL  | 91            | 531           | 2          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>12,026</b> | <b>24,720</b> | <b>100</b> |

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  |
|                      |                              |                 |       |       |       |       |       |
| <b>1</b>             | Starters excluding transfers | 730             | 643   | 462   | 1,762 | 2,668 | 2,999 |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 57              | 63    | 78    | 68    | 72    | 67    |
|                      | National average %           | 76              | 76    | 76    | 71    | 71    | 71    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 42              | 65    | 71    | 63    | 70    | 83    |
|                      | National average %           | 69              | 73    | 73    | 70    | 77    | 77    |
| <b>2</b>             | Starters excluding transfers | 1,511           | 1,715 | 1,344 | 1,894 | 1,644 | 1,421 |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 64              | 65    | 72    | 66    | 70    | 69    |
|                      | National average %           | 71              | 71    | 71    | 68    | 67    | 67    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 71              | 65    | 77    | 66    | 69    | 78    |
|                      | National average %           | 70              | 73    | 73    | 71    | 73    | 73    |
| <b>3</b>             | Starters excluding transfers | 1,874           | 1,876 | 1,804 | 1,858 | 1,692 | 1,614 |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 70              | 69    | 76    | 63    | 71    | 75    |
|                      | National average %           | 77              | 77    | 77    | 70    | 69    | 69    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 78              | 76    | 76    | 64    | 63    | 73    |
|                      | National average %           | 77              | 80    | 80    | 71    | 74    | 74    |
| <b>4/5</b>           | Starters excluding transfers | 6               | 10    | 4     | 480   | 529   | 440   |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 67              | 60    | 100   | 63    | 75    | 84    |
|                      | National average %           | 71              | 74    | 74    | 68    | 69    | 69    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 25              | 83    | 100   | 32    | 31    | 41    |
|                      | National average %           | 57              | 68    | 68    | 54    | 58    | 58    |

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges). 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 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

2. College rates for 2001/02 to 2003/04: *College ISR*

\* Merrist Wood merged with Guildford in August 2003. Therefore, 2001/02 and 2002/03 data excludes Merrist Wood.

**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)     | 61                     | 30             | 9                        | 102                     |
| Level 2 (intermediate) | 68                     | 27             | 5                        | 62                      |
| Level 1 (foundation)   | 61                     | 35             | 4                        | 26                      |
| Other sessions         | 69                     | 28             | 3                        | 29                      |
| <b>Totals</b>          | <b>64</b>              | <b>30</b>      | <b>6</b>                 | <b>219</b>              |

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