



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Croydon College

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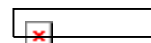
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Basic information about the college

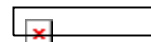


Name of college:	Croydon College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Mariane Cavalli
Address of college:	College Road Croydon CR9 1DX
Telephone number:	0208 686 5700
Fax number:	0208 760 5880
Chair of governors:	James Carter
Unique reference number:	130432
Name of reporting inspector:	David Martin
Dates of inspection:	9-13 May 2005

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Croydon College is a large general further education (FE) college, with a significant higher education (HE) provision, in the London Borough of Croydon. There are two main sites: Fairfield and the adjacent Higher Education Centre. The college is one of three colleges in the borough, together with Coulsdon and John Ruskin Colleges, which are sixth form colleges. There are many other colleges within easy travelling distance and 7 of the 23 local secondary schools have sixth forms. Just over 50% of the college's students are drawn from Croydon, with many coming from neighbouring London boroughs, but also from more distant London boroughs and from neighbouring county authorities.

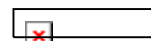
The college's courses range from entry level to HE. It offers programmes in 12 of the 14 Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) areas of learning. In 2003/04, there were 15,674 students, of whom 79% were adults, enrolled for around 28,000 qualifications. Some 76% of all students attended part time. The college offers work-based learning in a few curriculum areas and most significantly in construction and hairdressing and beauty. The college provides a range of services to local businesses. It is designated as a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for hospitality and catering.

Croydon is the largest London borough, with a population of around 335,000 and over 13,000 local businesses. It is the main or regional headquarters for over 20 blue chip companies and has substantial amounts of office and commercial development space. The main business sectors include: financial and business services, manufacturing and high-tech industries, retail, engineering and technology services, insurance, call centre and media and publishing. Although the unemployment rate in Croydon is relatively low, averaging at around 5% of the local population, there are pockets of relatively high deprivation and educational underachievement. A few electoral wards are amongst the most deprived in London. Of the college's main feeder schools, many have general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) points scores, based on the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades C or above in the GCSE, that are significantly below the England average.

The college has students and staff from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. It has more students (56%) from minority ethnic groups than the percentage represented in the population of the borough.

The college's mission statement is 'to be at the heart of Croydon's communities, stimulating demand for learning through inspirational and supportive teaching which respects all and transforms our futures.'

How effective is the college?



Education and training are good in hospitality and catering. They are satisfactory in nine curriculum areas: sciences and mathematics, construction, business, management and professional studies, information and communications technology (ICT), hairdressing and beauty, health, social care and early years, visual and performing arts and media, humanities and literacy, numeracy and English

listed below.

Key strengths

- clear and decisive leadership, leading to improvement

- successful initiatives to widen participation

- very good links with local schools

- an extensive programme of additional activities and courses to enrich students

- very good facilities for hospitality and catering and for hairdressing and beauty.

What should be improved

- students' retention and pass rates

- teaching and learning

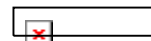
- provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- the quality of external provision in ESOL

- literacy and numeracy support for students.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Sciences and mathematics	Satisfactory. Contributory grade for mathematics is good . Retention rates are high in most subjects. Pass rates are high on mathematics and some biology courses, but low in general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A-level) physics and chemistry. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good for mathematics. Support for students is particularly effective. There is some poor attendance and lack of punctuality.
Construction	Satisfactory. Contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Pass and retention rates on most courses are high, although the achievement of apprenticeship frameworks, by work-based learners, is low. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Students acquire good practical skills. Learners receive good support at work, but support for literacy and numeracy in lessons is inadequate.
Business, management and professional studies	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on several higher level accounting, professional and management programmes, although they have been low on the majority of courses. Teaching is good. Students are supported well with very good target setting for students' improvement. Good management of quality improvement has achieved considerable progress in the area, but with issues still to be satisfactorily addressed.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high on courses at levels 1 and 2 and there are high pass rates at level 3. Teaching is largely satisfactory or better, but there are some dull and uninteresting revision lessons. Teaching resources are not used to best effect. Links with business are insufficient. The area is well managed.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Students' retention and pass rates are high. Teaching and learning are good, especially in practical lessons. Accommodation and associated resources are very good. There are instances of insufficient attention to meeting individual learning needs and internal verification is insufficiently thorough. Curriculum leadership and management are good.
Hairdressing and beauty	Satisfactory. Contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Pass rates are high at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing, but the retention rate is low at level 1. Achievement of the apprenticeship framework has been poor, but is improving. Students' training is well managed. Teaching is satisfactory or better and students show good professionalism, although there is some lack of planning to address individual needs. Resources are excellent.
Health, social care and early years	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on many courses are close to national averages, although pass rates were high in 2002/03 on several courses and low in health and social care at levels 1 and 2 and on the council for awards in children's care and education (CACHE) diploma. Teaching is largely satisfactory or better and assessment and support are satisfactory. Resources are good.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high at level 2 in performing arts and on many level 3 art and media courses, but low in other areas. Retention

	rates are high and improving, but some attendance is low and students are too often unpunctual. Teaching is stimulating in media and fine art and standards of practical work are high. Teaching in music technology is unsatisfactory. Aspects of quality assurance are ineffective.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Pass rates in sociology and on the modular access programme are high, but are below national averages in psychology and access to law. Much teaching is good, particularly for GCE A-level and advanced subsidiary level (AS-level) students. Revision lessons were not particularly effective. Support for students is good, although there was poor attendance during the inspection. Good curriculum leadership continues to improve the quality of provision.
Literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Contributory grade for external provision is unsatisfactory. College-based provision provides students with a wide range of courses, leading to good progression. Teaching is purposeful and effective in many lessons and students have good attainment of language skills. However, there is poor feedback to students on the use of their spoken language in lessons and insufficient support for students' literacy and numeracy needs. The external provision in this area is unsatisfactory.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Unsatisfactory. Students benefit from a large and successful work experience programme. Students with hearing impairments are well taught and supported to achieve successfully. For other students, there is lack of attention to individual learning needs, an over concentration on producing evidence for portfolios and the incomplete recording of their progress and achievements. These students do not learn effectively. Teaching for students with more severe learning difficulties is unsatisfactory.

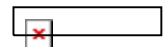
How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal provides clear and decisive leadership. Recently, strategies to improve students' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning have begun to have an impact. Overall, students' achievements are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is improving. The self-assessment report gives a broadly accurate picture of the quality of provision, and priorities for improvement are clearly identified. Quality assurance systems have improved, and teachers and managers are increasingly accountable for their performance. Curriculum management is satisfactory or good in most areas. The collection and use of data for planning have improved. Governors and senior managers set clear strategic priorities that have an appropriate focus on both improving the quality of provision and widening participation. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively throughout the college, although progress in meeting the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 has been slow. Financial management is sound and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

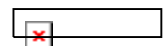
serves the needs of the local community, including significant numbers of short-term residents, such as asylum seekers and refugees. Partnerships with local schools are effective. Successful work with the community increases participation of those under-represented in learning. The proportion of students of black and minority ethnic origin is approximately double that of the local community. Since the previous inspection, the college has developed a strong emphasis on respect and tolerance. Students feel that the college provides a friendly and secure environment. Additional learning support needs of students are well identified, but literacy and numeracy support is insufficient. Senior managers and staff have recently given the promotion of equality and diversity a high priority. Although the college has a recent and adequate race relations policy and plan, there is insufficient analysis of the ethnic composition of staff. Accommodation has been assessed against the requirements of disability discrimination legislation, with staff training ongoing since 2003. The college has a Muslim prayer room and a multi-faith quiet room.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is satisfactory. Most pre-entry advice is accurate, helpful and effective. Good links with local schools and open events help prospective students to make well-informed choices. Students' induction is satisfactory. The literacy, numeracy and language needs of most students are assessed and recorded effectively, but the provision of support is insufficient. Arrangements for assessing and meeting the needs of students with specific learning needs and physical or sensory disabilities are good. Most group tutorials are satisfactory and a minority are good. All full-time students have a personal tutor and have timetabled tutorials in which their progress is systematically monitored. Most part-time students do not have a scheduled tutorial. Other aspects of support for students are generally good, including welfare, counselling, careers advice and financial support. The college has designated persons responsible for child protection matters and a child protection policy. Although training has been offered, very few staff have received training in child protection matters.

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

- good, supportive teachers

- feeling of safety in the college

- town centre location

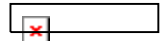
- good subject knowledge of teachers
- the college's positive approach to learning
- good facilities
- the wide range of additional activities and trips
- good language support
- the mix of students from many backgrounds and different countries.

What they feel could be improved

- reliability of swipe cards to gain entry to the college
- decoration and heating in rooms
- information when tutors are absent
- car parking
- toilets
- the slow Internet access
- key skills

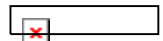
- support with written work
- advice of the time of enrolment.

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



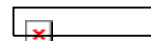
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & 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	60	33	7
19+ and WBL*	62	30	8
Learning 16-18	58	34	8
19+ and WBL*	60	32	8

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 reports. Judgements on achievements and standards for 2003/04 are based on data provided by the college, not finally validated at the time of the inspection.

2. Some 56% of students are from minority ethnic groups with Black African and Black Caribbean being the two largest groups comprising 16% and 12% of the student population respectively. Overall success rates for young people from minority ethnic groups improved in 2003/04 and are in line with the average for the same groups nationally. Success rates for adults from Black African and Black Caribbean groups also improved in 2003/04 and are at the national average for similar students at intermediate and advanced levels. At foundation level, performance of adults from these groups continues to be below average.

3. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory. Science students work safely and carefully during practical lessons and obtain results which they are able to discuss and explain. During theory lessons, students use scientific and mathematical terminology correctly and many students produce written work of a high standard. In construction, students develop their skills to good industrial standards and work-based learners are confident in their practical skills. Business, management and professional students develop good skills and grow in confidence. ICT students make good progress and are able to evaluate the quality of their own work. Many students have a creative flair in hospitality and catering and enjoy the practical aspects of their courses. Beauty therapy students conduct themselves in a professional manner during practical lessons and show particularly good interpersonal skills when greeting and working with clients. Most health and social care students produce work that is satisfactory or better. Standards of work are high in media and fine art. Sketchbooks show lively and often innovative exploration of colour, texture and tone. Humanities students readily participate in discussion and in group work. They willingly express opinions and enjoy arguments. Written work is generally at an appropriate standard for the course being taken. Many ESOL students develop good language skills and express themselves effectively. Literacy, language and numeracy students gain confidence in the use of language and some make exceptional progress in their language skills. Progression to other college courses and to employment is very good.

4. The standard of work produced by students with learning difficulties is variable. It is unsatisfactory when they are repeating activities they have already mastered or where it is clear that the activity is too difficult.

5. Overall attendance during the inspection was 76% which is in line with the national average for colleges of a similar type. Attendance was lowest in the humanities, hairdressing and beauty therapy. At 88%, attendance was highest in provision for students with learning difficulties. In business, management and professional, ICT and some programmes in the visual and performing arts and media, students are not punctual.

16 to 18 year olds

6. Overall, retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 are close to national averages. Rates at all levels improved in 2003/04 and are in line with the national averages for colleges of a similar type at foundation level and advanced level and above. Pass rates are satisfactory, having improved significantly since 2001/02 at foundation and intermediate levels. Although overall rates for intermediate level programmes are at the national average, they have declined overall since 2002/03. Pass rates on short courses have improved considerably since 2001/02 and are satisfactory with high rates of student retention.

7. Retention rates of students on the GCE A-level, AS-level and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses at all levels have improved and are at the national average. Pass rates are at, or just below, the national average for GCE A-level, AS-level and GNVQ

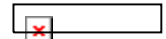
foundation and advanced level courses. Only GNVQ intermediate courses were significantly below the national average in 2003/04. Retention rates on GNVQ precursor courses at intermediate and advanced levels have improved and were well above national averages in 2003/04 accompanied by average pass rates. Although retention rates have improved and are at the national average for NVQ courses, pass rates have been more variable and were below in 2003/04. Retention rates of students on other courses lasting 24 weeks or more have improved during the two years prior to the inspection, but pass rates are consistently low. Students following key skills programmes do not perform well and pass rates are low.

Adult learners

8. Retention rates of adults on foundation level courses are low and pass rates are well below the national average for similar colleges. Overall, retention rates on intermediate and advanced level courses are satisfactory and rates have improved significantly since 2002/03. Pass rates at both these levels are at the national average having shown steady improvement over the three years prior to the inspection. Pass rates for adults following short courses have improved, but were still well below the national average for students attending similar colleges in 2003/04.

9. Retention rates on GCE A-level and AS-level courses have improved and pass rates are at the national average. Numbers of adults following GNVQ courses are low, but overall success rates are in line with national averages. Overall retention and pass rates for GNVQ precursor courses have improved and only at intermediate level were success rates below the national averages in 2003/04. Pass and retention rates for adults following NVQ courses have not shown a consistent pattern of improvement during the three years prior to the inspection. Success rates were at the national average in 2003/04 at levels 2 and 3, but well below at level 1.

Quality of education and training



10. Teaching was graded in 247 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 61% of lessons, satisfactory in 32% and less than satisfactory in 7%. This is close to the national average for similar colleges. It is also similar to the profile of teaching grades awarded at the time of the last inspection, conducted by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors observed less teaching and learning that was better than good when compared to the national average. Teaching and learning were judged to be excellent in only two lessons. There is little difference in the quality of teaching for students aged 16 to 18 and that for adults.

11. There are some significant variations between curriculum areas in the amounts of teaching and learning that are better than satisfactory. For example, hospitality and catering and business, management and professional studies have high percentages of teaching and learning judged to be better than satisfactory, whereas in provision for students with learning difficulties, only one third of the teaching and learning observed was good or very good. Most other areas have much the same range of quality of teaching as the national averages.

12. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching and learning between the various levels of courses. During the inspection, students on level 4 courses, such as those studying on professional and management programmes, benefited from by far the largest amount of teaching that was better than satisfactory (75%). The amounts of teaching which were judged to be better than satisfactory at levels 1, 2 and 3 were 53%, 62% and 68% respectively. The smallest amount of teaching which was better than satisfactory was at entry level, at 48%. At level 3, GCE A-level and national diploma students received the best teaching and it was only for these courses that any teaching was considered to be excellent.

At level 1, the best teaching was for students on NVQ and GCSE courses.

13. The most effective lessons are the product of careful planning, with teachers readily adapting their plans in the light of developments during lessons. Teachers think carefully about their schemes of work, examination objectives, those of their students and of individual students' specific needs. Schemes of work are good in the humanities. In hospitality and catering, students' individual needs and experiences are fully taken into account in lessons. Teaching is most successful when teachers are clear about what they want their students to achieve by the end of the lesson and when they share their objectives with students, as in hospitality and catering and mathematics.

14. Accomplished teachers use a broad range of appropriate teaching techniques to stimulate, engage, involve and challenge students. In business, management and professional studies, in AS-level and GCE A-level subjects in humanities, and in mathematics, for example, teachers make good use of work in pairs and groups to develop and sustain students' interest. Teachers are suitably demanding of students in the best lessons, as on media, fine art and pre-degree foundation art and design courses. The links between students' practical tasks and theory lessons are particularly good in this area, in construction and in health and social care.

15. Teaching and learning in practical lessons for hospitality and catering are good. Teachers provide good one-to-one coaching and make highly effective use of questioning to check students' understanding and progress. In the best lessons in hairdressing and beauty therapy, students' learning is suitably challenged and they complete practical tasks to commercial timings. Work-based learners' practical skills are developed effectively and safely, often in close collaboration with employers, who provide good opportunities for additional training at work.

16. In too many lessons, teachers do not apply the basic principles of sound teaching. The less successful lessons are insufficiently planned, lack structure and move at too slow a pace. Students' individual learning plans are poorly used to inform teaching. For example, in provision for students with learning difficulties, individual learning needs are inadequately determined and teaching does not take account of students' needs. In literacy, numeracy and ESOL, there is insufficient focus on individual learning needs and much teaching is for the whole class. For example, students are given too few opportunities to contribute to the lesson and become bored and restless. In ICT, for example, there is a lack of student participation and some lessons are dull and uninteresting. In many lessons, there is little use of information and learning technology (ILT) to stimulate and help learning. Many lessons observed by inspectors were revision lessons, just prior to students' examinations. Teachers' approaches to these were often unimaginative and students were not adequately motivated to revise.

17. There are now satisfactory arrangements for the management and development of students' key skills. However, key skills teaching is insufficiently related to students' own core studies.

18. Teachers have appropriate qualifications and vocational or professional experience. Just over 97% of full-time and fractional teachers hold recognised teaching qualifications or are working towards them. Many teachers of practical subjects have good practitioner or vocational experience. Some teachers of learning difficulties are under-qualified and insufficiently experienced when appointed. At external locations, teachers of ESOL are often poorly qualified. The college provides good staff development. More than 4% of the annual payroll resource is allocated to development, which is significantly above the sector average of 1%. A very wide range of external and internal courses has been organised for staff during the past year. Seven advanced practitioners provide good support to teachers.

19. College buildings are well maintained. Work on the recently begun major programme of works has so far provided a new college entrance and very good facilities for hospitality and catering and hairdressing and beauty therapy. In contrast, some teaching areas are drab

and poorly decorated, with few displays of students' work. Many construction rooms are too small for the classes using them and few contain ICT equipment. Some computing laboratories are poorly ventilated and noisy, and ILT resources are positioned badly. Teaching rooms for visual and performing arts are widely dispersed. It is planned to address this in the second phase of redevelopment. All parts of the main college building, except one small corridor, are now accessible to wheelchair users and students with restricted mobility. The smaller HE building is fully accessible. The student common room is adequate to meet the needs of students.

20. Library and study centre facilities are good with a wide range of up-to-date books and periodicals. In some curriculum areas, which have HE programmes, the stock is of a very high standard. Learning resources staff are well regarded by staff and students. There are 19 ILT champions to support teachers. Overall, the college is making good progress to equip teaching rooms with a high level of ILT equipment. There is a good and accessible supply of modern computers for students and staff.

21. Assessment and internal verification are generally well planned and managed, although in hospitality and catering, there are some unsatisfactory assessment practices, not identified by internal verification. In most areas, a good range of appropriate assessment methods is used. On most courses, students receive prompt and constructive written and verbal feedback, effectively helping them to improve their performance. However, on a significant number of courses, submission deadlines are not systematically enforced and the return of work is not timely. For most students, assessment briefs are well written and follow awarding body guidelines.

22. Initial and diagnostic assessments identify the additional support needs of students effectively, the outcomes of which are readily available to teachers. Students are well informed about their progress and performance. Progress is monitored effectively at regular tutorials. Monitoring and recording of progress are good in most areas. Particularly effective systems are used in ICT. In most curriculum areas, individual learning plans are up to date and contain detailed information on achievements and enrichment activities. However, in science and mathematics, hospitality and catering and in provision for students with learning difficulties, they are not well used by teachers.

23. Parents and employers are appropriately informed about the progress of students.

24. A broad range of courses, with different attendance options, meet the needs and interests of most students. Provision is extensive in foundation studies and there are particularly good course combinations and additional courses in business, ICT, hospitality and catering, and the visual and performing arts. Some good progression routes have been established within subject areas. Just over 65% of students at entry level progress to other college courses, and 45% of those at level 1 progress to level 2. A large proportion progress from level 3 to a range of HE courses. There is a good range of enrichment activities for students, and additional qualifications and courses are offered to students in some curriculum areas.

25. Good initiatives widen participation and encourage inclusion. There are, for example, non-selective level 1 and level 2 programmes in a number of subjects, and first certificate courses for students aged 14 to 19. In some areas, there is a limited course offer, for example, in drama, dance and film there is no academic pathway for students. In health and social care, there is a limited offer at levels 1 and 2. Flexible timetabling is used effectively in some areas to encourage adult students to return to education.

26. Links with employers are generally satisfactory. They are good in construction and health and social care, where staff are helpful and responsive to employers, and students benefit from the additional vocational and professional expertise. In some areas, especially ICT and business, links are underdeveloped. The work experience programme for students with learning difficulties is particularly good. The very good links with local schools are used effectively to promote inclusion and around 400 school pupils, years 10 and 11, attend

college for one or two days a week.

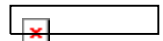
27. Information, advice and guidance for prospective students are impartial, accurate and helpful. The college is developing a computer-based interactive prospectus. Good links with local schools and a regular series of open days and taster events also help prospective students. Students' induction is satisfactory, helping them to settle into their courses and the college. During induction, most full-time students complete further diagnostic assessments, including their preferred learning styles, and detailed student profiles are available to tutors and teachers.

28. The literacy and numeracy needs of full-time students and of those on substantial part-time courses are assessed effectively, but those of a significant proportion of other part-time students are not. Students and their personal tutors are promptly informed of the detailed results of initial assessments and necessary support, normally through additional lessons, is arranged. Support can also be through the specialist drop-in study centre. However, a significant number of students do not take up the arranged support in literacy and numeracy and teachers do not use sufficiently the information they have to plan their teaching. Procedures for assessing students with specific learning needs and physical or sensory disabilities are good. Support for students with profound hearing difficulties is very good.

29. Tutorial support for full-time students, substantive part-time students and work-based learners is mostly effective. The frequency of individual tutorials varies from weekly to termly. Formal tutorials are supplemented by good informal support outside lessons. This is particularly good in science and mathematics. Tutorial support for part-time students is provided mainly by subject teachers and is satisfactory.

30. Other aspects of support for students are generally good, including advice and guidance for careers and progression to HE, access to Connexions staff, financial support, and welfare and counselling services. Particularly effective links with external agencies, for example, social services, help the college to support students with specific problems. The college has a procedure for dealing with child protection issues and two staff are designated to lead on child protection matters. However, very few staff have attended the awareness training organised and there is a limited understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection.

Leadership and management



31. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, senior managers and governors have successfully identified and addressed many of the difficult challenges faced by the college over the last few years. The college has been transformed gradually to ensure that students' achievements, and the quality of teaching and learning, are given priority by staff, at all levels. Although change has been slow, within the last two years tangible improvements have been made to the quality of provision. Students' achievements have improved recently and are now satisfactory overall, although on too many courses, performance remains poor. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are beginning to have an effect. Provision in all but one curriculum area is satisfactory or better. Since the previous inspection in 2000, good progress has been made in addressing some significant weaknesses, notably those concerning weak quality assurance systems and the unreliability of data used to assess the quality of provision. Inspectors agreed with most of the college's self-assessment reports' judgements of the quality of provision in both curriculum and service areas.

32. Governors set a clear strategy for the college, translated into a series of appropriate priorities and objectives by senior managers. The strategy focuses on developing an

appropriate curriculum, raising achievement rates, developing staff, improving teaching, learning and support for students, and ensuring financial viability. Priorities are communicated effectively to staff, who are well informed and value the approachability of senior managers. The principal provides decisive and determined leadership, and has been successful in persuading staff of the need for change. However, frequent changes within the senior management team have hampered progress in some aspects of the strategy. Delegation of key priorities to senior managers has not always been successful, and governors and the principal have been slow to develop appropriate procedures to react quickly when progress has been slow. Senior managers have not always been effective in ensuring that strategies to improve provision have been implemented fully.

33. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Heads of department and programme managers take increasing responsibility for ensuring that teachers are well supported in focusing their efforts on improving students' outcomes. In some areas, for example, hospitality and catering, business, ICT, and humanities, leadership is good. In many curriculum areas, improvements in management have yet to have a full impact on the quality of provision. Management of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and of additional learning support, is weak.

34. Systems for assuring the quality of provision have improved significantly over the last year. College-wide processes to evaluate and improve provision are beginning to have a positive impact in many areas. The performance of courses, and of individual students, is monitored much more rigorously than previously. In many cases, appropriate action is taken to remedy weaknesses. The quality of courses is reviewed monthly, and progress towards meeting targets for attendance, and retention and pass rates, are evaluated carefully. Increasingly, teachers are both more accountable and take more responsibility for the performance of their students. However, a failure to share good practice results in inconsistencies in the effectiveness of methods used to raise performance.

35. Self-assessment involves all staff. Most course reviews are self-critical and use data accurately to assess the quality of provision. In a minority of curriculum areas, self-evaluation is superficial and lacks rigour, and plans for improvement are unclear. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching are increasingly effective. Lesson observations provide a realistic picture of the quality of teaching. Teachers who receive unsatisfactory grades are well supported by their managers and by advanced practitioners to improve their pedagogical skills. The college spends a generous budget to support individual staff development activities, arising from appraisal, and on generic training, such as improving teaching and learning, and raising awareness of equality and diversity.

36. Management information systems to support quality improvement have been much improved recently, although the college recognises that its systems do not yet contain enough information to constitute a powerful management tool. Data to inform decision making are generally accurate. Both managers and teachers have increased confidence in the reliability of data on students' attendance and retention rates and, as a consequence, use it to plan improvements. Data on students' attendance at lessons have been used to bring about some improvement in overall attendance, from a previously unsatisfactory level.

37. The college's links with local schools are now good, due partly to an extensive partnership providing courses for pupils aged 14 to 16. The college has successfully raised its profile in the local community, and widened participation, through its development of a broader, more inclusive curriculum. There are strong strategic partnerships with local voluntary and statutory agencies. Links with employers are good in some curriculum areas.

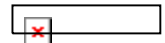
38. Equality and diversity are actively promoted throughout the college. Since the previous inspection, poor behaviour of students has been successfully challenged. A high profile campaign, based on the slogan 'Respect for All', has been effective in encouraging students and staff to consider individual and group differences as a strength rather than a threat. Despite this, the college has been less successful in systematically evaluating its policies and procedures to ensure that equal opportunities are embedded in all aspects of its work.

The college has been slow in meeting its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. A race equality policy and associated action plan have only recently been produced, and specific training on this has yet to take place. There has been insufficient analysis of the ethnic composition of staff at different levels of the organisation to inform personnel practices and procedures.

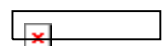
39. The governing body reflects the diversity of the college and its community, and provides a good range of expertise and local knowledge. Governors are closely involved in setting the strategic direction of the college. They hold senior managers to account for setting and fulfilling the priorities laid down by the strategy. Both the corporation as a whole and its committees monitor the financial performance of the college carefully, and are increasingly diligent in scrutinising its academic performance. Governors are responsible for ensuring that procedures to deal with personnel issues are clear and effective, but they have not always been discharged efficiently. On occasions, governors have not been informed sufficiently quickly of important issues facing the college.

40. Financial management is sound. The college is currently in the LSC's category A for financial health. An ambitious accommodation strategy underpins the college's targets for growth in student numbers and expansion of the curriculum. However, targets for recruitment of students have not been met in each of the last two years, and the college faces a potential £1.5million downward adjustment to its LSC funding in 2004/05. The college recognises the serious risk posed to its strategy if enrolments do not rise. On the basis of its financial management, and the recent improvement in the proportion of students who complete their courses successfully, the college currently provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Sciences and mathematics



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

Contributory grade for mathematics is good (grade 2)

Strengths

- high pass rates in mathematics

- high retention rates on most courses

- innovative and effective support for students

- good teaching in mathematics.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for GCE A-level physics and chemistry
- low attendance and poor punctuality on some courses.

Scope of provision

41. GCSE mathematics courses, at foundation or intermediate level, are followed by 200 students, half of whom are adults, during the day or evening. A further 130 students follow AS-level or GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. There are around 100 adults on access to HE courses in science, health studies or nursing preparation and over 50 full-time students, mainly aged 16 to 18, study vocational science courses leading to Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses at intermediate or advanced levels. About 20 mathematics and 10 science students follow home-based, open-learning programmes each year.

Achievement and standards

42. Retention rates are high on most courses and are particularly high in some mathematics and biology courses. At the time of the inspection, college data showed retention rates on the national diploma in applied science have improved, having been low in 2004. Pass rates for GCSE mathematics courses are consistently above national averages. In 2004, pass rates for GCE A-level biology and mathematics were over 90% and all students completing the national diploma in science were successful. Pass rates for GCE A-level physics, although improving, have been below national averages for the three years prior to the inspection and the pass rate for GCE A-level chemistry was low in 2004. There are no significant differences in the performance of students of different ages or from different minority ethnic backgrounds.

43. The standard of most students' work is at least satisfactory. During theory lessons, students use scientific and mathematical terminology correctly and many students produce written work of a high standard. Students work safely and carefully during practical lessons and obtain results which they are able to discuss and explain. Although all teachers admonish latecomers, there is poor punctuality on some courses. Attendance on full-time courses is good, but below average for many evening courses.

44. About 60% of GCE A-level students and most students following access programmes progress to HE, with a significant proportion progressing to science-related courses, including medicine, pharmacy and a range of pure and applied sciences.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	932	237	141
		% retention	79	71	71

		% pass rate	45	52	64
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	75	36	67
		% retention	75	69	82
		% pass rate	66	64	65
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	108	54	50
		% retention	63	70	84
		% pass rate	40	63	62
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	23	*	19
		% retention	91	*	100
		% pass rate	81	*	74
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	90	32	17
		% retention	84	88	100
		% pass rate	66	93	94
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	19	8	16
		% retention	84	88	94
		% pass rate	56	71	73

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

45. Teaching and learning are good or better in the majority of lessons. Inspectors observed no unsatisfactory teaching or learning. Mathematics lessons are particularly effective. Teachers know their students well and most use a variety of teaching methods which take account of their abilities and learning needs well. In the best lessons, teachers make effective use of videos, computers and group and field work to motivate and stimulate students. In mathematics lessons, exercises carefully designed to meet the needs of students of differing abilities enable more able students to progress to more challenging work quickly. Teachers place particular emphasis on developing students' key skills. Students benefit from working with each other and are encouraged to share ideas. They develop problem-solving skills, support each other through group work and participate fully in group discussions. Teachers plan practical work well to develop students' understanding of theoretical topics and their practical skills.

46. In order to plan and make best use of revision lessons, some teachers seek feedback from students to identify why they may have found some topics difficult. Others, however, do not focus sufficiently on the learning needs of individual students. In a small number of lessons, teachers do not check students' understanding sufficiently and do not always give students sufficient opportunity to explore topics for themselves and come to their own conclusions.

47. Students' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are clearly identified through initial assessment. Although the results are used to place students on appropriate mathematics courses, insufficient use is made of diagnostic testing to prepare learning plans for individual students. Homework is set and marked regularly. Feedback is clear and helps students improve their performance. Teachers monitor and record the progress students make carefully and provide them with monthly achievement grades. Internal verification procedures are robust.

48. Teachers and technicians are well qualified and have good industrial experience, which they use effectively to enliven teaching. Staff of different ethnic and occupational backgrounds are good role models for students. Technicians provide excellent support. A number of teachers are external examiners and use this experience to help students in their studies. Laboratories and classrooms are adequate with many illustrative wall displays and models. All laboratories have computers, which are used regularly. Most accommodation is easily accessible to students with restricted mobility. A portable adjustable science bench is used for students who use wheelchairs. Students make regular use of the library and study centre outside timetabled lessons.

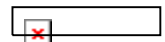
49. Tutorial support is effective. Personal tutors meet with students regularly to review their progress and set targets for improvement. Specialist study centre tutors and individual teachers provide effective additional support for students outside lesson periods. This includes revision lessons in holiday periods and specialist tutor support through a drop-in study centre. Many students choose to attend a weekly science club to extend their learning. They undertake experiments of their own choosing or research aspects of theory which particularly interest them.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Quality assurance procedures are implemented carefully, course reviews are self-critical and all staff participate in annual self-assessment. The report for 2004 correctly identifies most weaknesses. Actions to improve attendance, retention and pass rates on some courses performing poorly were beginning to have an impact at the time of the inspection. Although teachers have started to share good practice through observations of each other, there is insufficient sharing of good practice across subject areas and the departments in which science and mathematics courses are taught. There is no formal co-ordination of development activities across these departments.

51. Staff are provided with good training and development opportunities, and support for improving teaching and learning is beginning to have an impact. At the time of the inspection, most teachers had recently undertaken training in the use of ICT, which was being introduced effectively into lessons.

Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high retention rates

- very high retention and pass rates on electrical installation courses

- good acquisition of practical skills

- good support for learners in their workplaces.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient regular use of ICT in the classroom
- poor accommodation for theory teaching
- inadequate development of students' literacy and numeracy skills.

Scope of provision

52. Courses from foundation to advanced levels are offered, including NVQs in wood occupations, plumbing, heating and ventilating and electrical installation. Professional courses include the national certificate in building services. The area caters mainly for part-time students, but there is full-time provision for level 1 basic woodworking students. There are currently 507 students, of whom 200 are work-based learners. Just over 40% of these were advanced apprentices. Overall, 15 students attend full time and the remainder part time. Some 60% of students, including those attending full time, are aged 16 to 18. In addition, there are 64 school pupils aged 14 to 16 on school links programmes.

Achievement and standards

53. Pass rates on many courses are high and in some cases are improving, but on a few they are declining. For example, in 2004, the pass rate in electrical engineering was 92%, after being 75% the previous year. In mechanical services, the pass rate was 100% compared to 75% the previous year. However, for the NVQ level 2 in wood occupations, the pass rate declined to 70% in 2004 compared to 96% in 2003.

54. Retention rates on most courses are very high, with some considerably above national averages. On electrical installation courses, both pass and retention rates are very high and well above national averages.

55. In work-based learning, retention rates are high for both apprentices and advanced apprentices. Achievement of apprentices who started in 2001 is low, at 37%, but high, at 71%, for the smaller number of advanced apprentices. Progress and attainment of current work-based learners are satisfactory.

56. Students work well, particularly in practical lessons. They develop their skills to high industrial standards. Work-based learners are confident in their practical skills. For example, one second-year learner on site was installing a sink unit with hot and cold supply and a

capped external tap and washing machine connection. He worked quickly and completed the task unsupervised and to an acceptable industrial standard in a difficult working environment. Students are enthusiastic to discuss their work.

57. Work-based learners often make good progress within their companies. Some are in senior positions having completed their college studies.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Foundation construction award	1	No. of starts	*	53	45
		% retention	*	75	91
		% pass rate	*	35	98
City and Guilds 6135 basic wood working	1	No. of starts	*	88	45
		% retention	*	77	91
		% pass rate	*	74	66
NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing)	2	No. of starts	89	102	35
		% retention	37	24	71
		% pass rate	94	75	100
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installation	2	No. of starts	37	68	27
		% retention	86	82	93
		% pass rate	28	75	92
National certificate in building services	3	No. of starts	65	68	42
		% retention	34	31	74
		% pass rate	91	100	90

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

*** course did not run**

Quality of education and training

58. Most lessons are well planned and the expected learning outcomes are shared and discussed with students. In the best lessons, teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods. They seek to integrate theory and practice in many lessons. They refer to current building legislation and codes of practice and draw on students' own industrial experiences to promote discussion and illustrate key points. Insufficiently regular use is made of ICT for teaching and learning. Digital projection equipment is located in some classrooms, but inspectors did not observe this being used. Students make little use of the Internet in lessons to exploit useful resources and their use of helpful software packages is too limited.

59. Individual learning plans for apprentices have recently improved and now reflect individual progress. Unit accreditation is recorded, and the plans identify timescales for achievement of individual units.

60. Teaching resources are satisfactory, but classrooms for theory teaching are poor. Some rooms are too small for the number of students. The rooms are dull and uninspiring; none are specifically dedicated to the teaching of construction, some are cold and others have poor acoustics. Practical workshops are spacious and well equipped. Teachers have relevant vocational qualifications and possess, or are working towards, assessor and verifier

awards. Students work in a safe and healthy environment. Work-based learners have a satisfactory or good understanding of health and safety issues, and good health and safety practices are promoted strongly in workplaces. Employers are monitored and health and safety is part of every review. The college has recently employed four vocationally competent workplace assessors who also undertake learner reviews.

61. Assessment arrangements are generally satisfactory. Students' progress is monitored carefully. Assessment on technician courses is well planned, although the quality of assessors' written feedback is inconsistent across courses. Some is detailed and helps students to improve their work, but some is too brief. Work-based learners have good access to assessment at work. Recently appointed assessors, working towards their assessment qualifications, have their judgements satisfactorily verified. Learners' portfolios contain a good range of work-based evidence, including direct assessment, site documentation and photographs. Assessment is fair and judgements are communicated satisfactorily to learners and employers although, in plumbing, judgements are not sufficiently related to national criteria.

62. Courses meet the needs and interests of students and employers well. There is a good range of short courses. Links with schools are effective. Employers receive regular updates of learners' progress and work well with the work-based learning unit to help learners. Opportunities for students' progression are good.

63. All students take an initial assessment, followed by a diagnostic test, to identify their additional learning support needs. However, although their support needs are clear, some students do not attend support lessons and they have insufficiently developed their literacy and numeracy skills.

64. Support for learners in their workplaces is good. All work-based learners are assessed for literacy, numeracy and some elements of vocational aptitude prior to starting their course. Those without jobs are helped to find suitable employers. Assessors and reviewers work closely with learners outside of the formal review process. Contact is regular and effective. Employers are routinely informed on the same day of any absences, and poor attendance is dealt with promptly. Formal reviews are timely, with effective involvement from all partners, although they do not adequately record short-term and long-term targets and the targets that are set are not sufficiently focused.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Targets are set for retention and pass rates, and these are monitored closely. Course files are comprehensive and well organised. Inspectors agree with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report. However, some of the strengths have been overstated. The development plan is satisfactory.

66. Management of work-based learning is satisfactory. The area has been reorganised and the recruitment of new staff has improved its effectiveness significantly. Staff meet regularly with employers and the progress of learners is tracked effectively. The co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training is satisfactory.

67. Quality assurance systems have improved in all areas and are now satisfactory. The progress of these improvements has been hindered by staff changes in plumbing. The promotion of equal opportunities has had little impact to date. For example, only 1% of work-based learners is female.

Business, management and professional studies



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

Strengths

- high pass rates for NVQ level 4 accounting and the professional development award in management studies

- good teaching

- very good support for students

- particularly effective target setting for students

- good management of quality improvement.

Weaknesses

- historically low pass rates across a majority of courses

- poor punctuality in many lessons

- insufficient use of ILT

- poor links with businesses and schools.

Scope of provision

68. There are 498 full-time students aged 16 to 18, 624 part-time adult students and 4 apprentices. Courses range from a level 1 introductory diploma in secretarial and administration studies to professional qualifications in marketing, management and accounting. There are two introductory diplomas for people returning to work in secretarial and administration, with specialist programmes for students who have English as a second language. Full-time courses comprise AS level and GCE A levels in business, economics

and accounting, a first and a national diploma in business studies, a diploma in secretarial administration and a private secretary's diploma. Part-time courses are NVQ accounting, levels 3 and 4, introductory management courses, certificates in personnel practice, team leading and a certificate in marketing. There is a distance learning programme in personal effectiveness with 113 students from across the country. The college offers NVQs in the workplace in administration with 62 students currently in learning.

Achievement and standards

69. Pass rates are high and significantly above the national averages in NVQ level 4 accounting and in the professional development award in management studies. For the former, they have risen from 34% in 2002 and 26% in 2003 to 81% in 2004; well above the national average of 52%. All students passed the professional development award in management studies in 2002 and 94% in 2004. Pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course have improved over the last three years and are now at the national average.

70. Across the majority of courses, however, pass rates have been low and have sometimes declined over the last three years. For example, in NVQ accounting at level 2 they declined from 69% in 2002 to 36% in 2004, against a national average of 76%. Retention rates are satisfactory overall and are above national averages for NVQ levels 2 and 3 in accounting and in the professional development award in management studies.

71. Data for 2004/05 show significant improvement for the first diploma in business with a retention rate of 91% and potential for a pass rate of up to 75%. In the introductory diploma in business, the retention rate is 93% with a potential for up to 86% pass rate. These are all well above targets set by the college.

72. Standards of students' class work, homework, assignments and projects are high. They develop good skills and grow in confidence.

73. Students are not punctual in many lessons and, during the inspection, around a third of lessons observed had less than 75% attendance. The college has a range of good strategies for improving retention rates, attendance, performance, behaviour, participation and helpfulness in lessons. In addition to disciplinary procedures, there are competitions based on the assessment of students' performance against some of these criteria, as judged by their fellow students. Prizes include a laptop computer, and shopping and cinema vouchers.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Diploma in administration	1	No. of starts	*	58	48
		% retention	*	67	75
		% pass rate	*	56	69
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	18	33	41
		% retention	89	73	68
		% pass rate	44	75	82
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	80	84	111
		% retention	65	82	71
		% pass rate	52	80	57
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	64	96	80

		% retention	84	70	90
		% pass rate	69	78	36
AS-level business / management/office studies	3	No. of starts	117	103	89
		% retention	66	75	80
		% pass rate	84	64	89
Advanced vocational certificate of education business and finance (double award)	3	No. of starts	83	62	68
		% retention	49	65	62
		% pass rate	80	63	67
Professional development award in management studies	3	No. of starts	36	35	20
		% retention	64	77	90
		% pass rate	100	100	94
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	53	47	46
		% retention	83	66	80
		% pass rate	34	26	81

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

***course did not run**

Quality of education and training

74. Teaching and learning are good. During the inspection, the percentage of lessons judged to be better than satisfactory was much better than the national average. Teachers make good use of learning styles, initial assessment results and their awareness of culture and diversity. They set a variety of tasks which engage, promote and challenge students' learning. Assignments and assessments are used effectively to monitor students' progress. There is good awareness through one-to-one tutorials of students' rates of progress. Sound control is evident in most lessons. Good use is made of topical examples, including the recent television programme, *The Apprentice*, to illustrate aspects of team management. Students are well prepared for examinations, with practical hints and tips.

75. In the small minority of poorer lessons, students' learning is unchallenged and some teachers read text from overhead projector transparencies and textbooks.

76. Teachers are well qualified and technically competent, although there has been limited commercial updating. Learning resources produced by staff are of a very high standard. However, too little use is made of ILT. Most students make no use of the Internet in their lessons and the virtual learning environment is yet to be set up. Students can access the college's website from their homes, including access to schemes of work for the diploma and certificate in management studies, lesson plans and course materials and assessments. However, these resources are not yet interactive and are presented only in a document format. Computers are readily available to students in the open access and library areas and in many course base rooms.

77. Insufficient use is made of local businesses, public sector organisations and schools to provide vocational context and experience for students. Few vocational students have external work experience. Students on NVQs in accounting, who are not employed, struggle to fulfil portfolio requirements and pass their examinations. Insufficient use is made of external speakers and visits. There is a good system of mentoring. Ministry of Defence and the Home Office staff are mentors for secretarial diploma students.

78. Support for full-time and part-time students is particularly good. All full-time students receive comprehensive initial and diagnostic assessment, leading to a learning support plan. Results from the students' learning styles survey are used in lessons and on courses are adapted in response to students' feedback. Teachers are very knowledgeable about the support their students receive and there is regular communication between learning support tutors, personal tutors and teachers. Support for students with ESOL and additional learning needs is particularly effective, including two specific courses for students with needs below level 1. Students with visual and hearing impairments and Asperger's syndrome have specialist equipment and pre-prepared materials.

79. The tutorial system works well. It monitors students' attendance, punctuality, attainment, work ethics, outstanding assignments and personal issues. A college retention officer contacts GCE A-level students or their parents by telephone, e-mail, letter and text message. Tutors review underperforming students regularly and refer them for extra support with individual action plans. Discipline within the department is very good. The tutorial system for adults does not use individual learning plans effectively and, in work-based learning there is little differentiation between a progress review and an assessment.

80. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory and there is a very good internal verification handbook. However, there is no evidence of any dates in the internal verification of assignment briefs. Internal verifiers observe neither teaching nor assessors in the workplace.

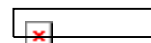
Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management are good. Programme managers make good use of data in target setting, planning and monitoring in order to make improvements. Monthly quality meetings review attendance, punctuality and progress against targets, with effective action plans. Programme managers meet monthly and the head of department reports on performance and quality at a monthly college-wide meeting. Course reviews reflect a self-critical and constructive approach and actions plans are drawn up. Development plans are monitored, although not all actions identified as necessary are carried through.

82. Staff development is very good, although teaching commitments constrain the amount of external training. Equality of opportunity is promoted adequately, but there is no active analysis of student data to plan better promotion.

83. At the time of the inspection, the self-assessment report was a year out of date. It does not appropriately reflect the considerable improvements made in the area of work, and noted by inspectors, over the previous year. It contains little information on work-based learning or on further education NVQs. Most of the report is appropriately self-critical and rigorous. However, the quality files presented for inspection had many gaps and data did not always relate to the area of learning. The college's internal lesson observation grade profile for 2004/05 is close to the inspection observation grades.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 2

- high pass rates on level 3 courses

- well-managed provision.

Weaknesses

- too much dull teaching in revision lessons

- inhibiting effect on teaching of poor layout in some computer rooms

- insufficient links with industry.

Scope of provision

84. The ICT provision is managed by the department of business and information technology (IT). The area currently has 389 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 289 full-time adult students. Courses range from the certificate in IT at level 1 to the level 3 AVCE double award in ICT. Nearly 1,700 students follow part-time courses, nearly all of whom are adults. Part-time courses range from web design to national certificate courses. The provision includes flexible courses at a local training centre which recruits over 1200 students a year and IT instruction at a migrant centre for over 50 students. The department arranges courses for part-time students at the four community centres and supports a small number of students taking IT courses by distance learning.

Achievement and standards

85. Retention rates are improving on all courses. They are high on most level 1 and level 2 courses; often above national averages. Retention rates on the certificate for IT users are significantly higher than national averages, but are still low in comparison to other courses. This is partly due to many students leaving once they have completed the module that interests them. Retention rates on level 3 courses are satisfactory overall, but high on the AVCE double award in ICT. Pass rates on most courses are improving and are now satisfactory on those at levels 1 and 2. They are high on level 3 courses, especially for the AVCE double award. Achievement of key skills at level 2 is very poor.

86. The standard of students' work and their attainments are satisfactory. Students make significant progress towards achieving their own potential. They acquire good skills in analysis and evaluation of their own and other students' work. There is satisfactory progression to further courses at all levels and good progression to HE. Attendance is satisfactory, but some students are not punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate for IT users	1	No. of starts	*	543	522
		% retention	*	54	52
		% pass rate	*	49	59
European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)	2	No. of starts	90	111	104
		% retention	80	83	73
		% pass rate	86	91	68
First diploma IT practitioner	2	No. of starts	*	61	118
		% retention	*	59	84
		% pass rate	*	83	85
GCE A-level IT	3	No. of starts	44	30	40
		% retention	70	97	90
		% pass rate	61	59	97
AS-level IT	3	No. of starts	111	83	87
		% retention	80	72	75
		% pass rate	44	63	85
AVCE IT (double award)	3	No. of starts	67	90	75
		% retention	66	61	73
		% pass rate	36	85	95

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

* *course did not run*

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and there is little that is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods and adjust their teaching according to the needs of students. Teachers are clear and concise with instructions and use well-presented teaching materials, assignments and handouts. For example, in a lesson on networking, the teacher took great care to explain the local area network with the help of detailed and helpful printed notes. Teachers provide well-planned opportunities to consolidate learning and check understanding, and use question and answer techniques effectively. In the best lessons, students are encouraged to use their imagination and extend their technical knowledge. They participate fully in lessons, especially in discussions, analysis of their work and self-evaluation.

88. Many revision lessons are dull and do not challenge students' learning. Teachers do not adjust their teaching for the particular needs of students or for the context of revision. They provide little opportunity to evaluate and revise the subject in sufficient depth and teaching is not always related to learning goals, but mainly to tasks. There is insufficient reference to current industrial practice, poor use of visual aids and a lack of student participation. In too many cases, teachers focus questions on a small number of students, leaving the remaining students to lose interest.

89. The range of IT equipment available to teachers is satisfactory. Learning centres are well equipped with an appropriate range of resources to meet the needs of students. The library has a good range of IT textbooks and magazines. Software is of current industrial standard. Manuals and handouts are of a high standard and are available on the intranet

and students' work can be submitted online. Teachers and staff supporting them are appropriately qualified.

90. The layout of the specialist computer rooms hinders teaching and learning. Some students have difficulty in seeing presentations. In several rooms, the data projector is at the front of the classroom whilst the controlling computer is at the back of the room or to one side. Teachers frequently have to move about the classroom to use the equipment. Some computer equipment is old and needs upgrading. Internet connectivity is slow, taking too long to access websites. Network log on is also slow at certain times of the day. Some computer rooms are noisy with no air conditioning and whiteboards are not strategically placed.

91. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements. Coursework contains suggestions from the verifiers on how to improve the standard and quality of marking. All marked work is returned quickly to students and contains constructive comments and encouragement. Assignment schedules are planned carefully to regulate students' workload.

92. Links with industry are insufficient. There is no industrial experience for students on vocational courses and no organised opportunities for staff secondments to industry to update current knowledge. There is no effective ICT employer advisory group to help facilitate contact and no work placement officer. Some guest speakers visit the college to talk to vocational students about the world of work.

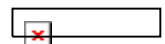
93. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Students find the initial advice and guidance they receive useful in selecting the most appropriate course. Their numeracy and literacy needs are clearly identified during induction. Take up of support is satisfactory. Full-time and part-time students discuss progress with their tutors in regular individual tutorials where challenging targets are set and monitored effectively, using individual learning plans. Timely tutorials help students with life skills. Students with a range of physical and learning disabilities are provided with effective learning support. Well-planned additional ICT courses are offered to students when required, often arranged out of normal hours and during holidays. A wide range of enrichment activities is available throughout the academic year.

Leadership and management

94. Curriculum management is good. The quality of the provision has improved significantly over the past three years. Achievement on some programmes has risen from below 40% to well above national averages. There is effective sharing of good practice. Comprehensive monitoring of students' progress identifies students making good progress and those at risk. Annual course reviews are effective and result in improvements being made. Course targets are effectively set, monitored and evaluated as part of quality control. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, although the report was insufficiently detailed.

95. Area of learning meetings are held regularly and actions are agreed and implemented quickly. Course teams meet weekly and informal communication is good. Staff are encouraged to pursue appropriate staff development have good access to a wide range of courses. The area promotes equality and diversity; any form of oppressive behaviour is dealt with promptly. Many students are drawn from minority ethnic communities.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates

- good teaching of practical catering

- good resources to promote learning

- highly effective links with business

- good curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low key skills pass rates

- insufficient attention to meeting students' literacy and numeracy support needs

- insufficiently thorough internal verification.

Scope of provision

96. There are 61 full-time and 43 part-time students on hospitality and catering courses. Approximately half the students are aged 16 to 18. Courses include NVQ food preparation and NVQ food services at levels 1 to 3 and the BTEC national diploma and certificate in hospitality supervision. The latter replaced the AVCE in 2003. The area offers NVQ level 1 food preparation for around 20 school pupils, aged 14 to 16, through the partnership with local schools. A range of additional courses, such as certificates in food hygiene and qualifications for licensees, are offered. All full-time students work towards key skills. Many full-time students also work towards NVQs in food service and food preparation. The college has had CoVE status for hospitality and catering since 2002.

Achievement and standards

97. Retention and pass rates are high on all full-time and substantial part-time hospitality

courses. Pass rates on NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking have been at, or near, 100% for the last three years. The level 2 pass rate in 2003 was 58%, which represents an improvement over the past year-year course. There has been significant improvement in retention rates on most courses and many are above the national average.

98. Students have good practical skills, showing manual dexterity. Many have a creative flair and have good finishing skills. In one production lesson, students decorated plated desserts for a function using piping and drizzling techniques and created visually pleasing dishes using a range of garnishes, including strawberries and mint. Students use their skills well to prepare a range of dough and pastry products, including complex dishes such as a white chocolate and strawberry mousse with a sponge base, and use a range of preparation and cooking techniques. All students enjoy the practical parts of their courses and recognise the skills they have gained since starting the course. In the restaurant, students have good silver service and interpersonal skills and have confidence when speaking with customers. In particular, students working towards hospitality supervision and NVQ level 3 qualifications have good organisation and communication skills and lead the restaurant team well.

99. Pass rates in key skills tests are low. Over the last two years, pass rates in each of ICT, application of number and communication have not exceeded 32% and were sometimes much lower. The college has recognised the low pass rates and has appointed a key skills manager, key skills co-ordinators and has reduced the number of key skills that students work towards.

100. Attendance at lessons is improving and was 74% in lessons observed. Teachers follow-up punctuality and attendance issues quickly, and reasons for lateness or unauthorised absence are sought. Students who are persistently absent without authorisation or are habitually late receive a letter from the programme leader. Attendance and punctuality are discussed at tutorials.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ food preparation (one year)	1	No. of starts	36	58	49
		% retention	78	84	92
		% pass rate	100	96	100
NVQ food preparation (one year)	2	No. of starts	24	23	42
		% retention	71	87	90
		% pass rate	88	50	58
NVQ food preparation (two years)	2	No. of starts	32	32	
		% retention	53	50	
		% pass rate	94	100	
NVQ food service	1	No. of starts	62	57	28
		% retention	79	86	96
		% pass rate	84	94	85
NVQ food service (one year)	2	No. of starts	35	23	25
		% retention	83	87	88
		% pass rate	81	80	64

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

101. Teaching and learning are good. In particular, the teaching of practical catering is consistently good. Lessons are well planned to differentiate the work so that it takes account of the differing needs of students. Aims and objectives are routinely shared with the students. In practical areas, there is good one-to-one- coaching and teachers make good use of oral questioning to check students' understanding and extend their knowledge. In one lesson, the teacher used good coaching techniques to help a student prepare a salmon and sea bass dish and showed the student how to make best use of a fillet of salmon while retaining portion size. Teachers encourage students to identify solutions to problems and to think of alternative preparation and presentation methods. Good use is made of the production kitchen and of demonstration techniques. Lessons engage and motivate students effectively. Students make good use of the library and hospitality resource room to research new dish presentation ideas and new cocktails using the Internet, texts and journals.

102. In key skills lessons, the work is not vocationally related and students fail to see the relevance of attending lessons or working towards key skills. Key skills are not integrated with the work in lessons.

103. Good resources promote learning. There are well-equipped kitchens and restaurant and bar areas. The practical skills kitchens have recently been refurbished to a high standard and a new production kitchen has recently been opened. All kitchens contain a suitable range of industrial-standard equipment. Restaurant and bar areas are of contemporary design and reflect current restaurant practice. Students working in the restaurant use a touch screen system for placing food and drink orders. Draught beers are dispensed in the bar. Hospitality students use a dedicated hospitality resource room located near the kitchens. This has recently opened and students have use of computers with Internet access and a selection of appropriate trade journals. Students like this facility and make good use of it when preparing written work and researching recipe ideas. There is an adequate range of books, although they are insufficient to support level 3 food preparation and cooking students. A good range of self-study packs helps students on these courses at levels 1 and 2.

104. There are good links with employers and schools, many of which have been enhanced through the CoVE. Students and staff benefit considerably from extensive links with industry. All teachers have recently spent short periods of time in a range of establishments including the armed services, hospital catering and luxury hotels and restaurants. Many teachers have updated their knowledge and skills through attendance at external training events, including cellar management.

105. Support for students is satisfactory. All students have a tutor and meet as a group or individually throughout the year. Students review their progress and agree targets with their teacher in individual tutorials. In some cases, targets are vague and are not sufficiently challenging. One teacher has designed, and is piloting, a system for recording and monitoring students' catering skills development. The information is used to help plan practical lessons and assessments. It is intended that all practical cookery teachers will adopt this system from September 2005. Students obtain careers advice and guidance through their tutor and the Connexions service.

106. Students' literacy and numeracy support needs are insufficiently addressed. Whilst all students take diagnostic tests, the results are not recorded on the individual learning plan and many students are not referred to learning support despite requiring it. Some students are studying for the wrong level of key skills. There is little specialist support for students in practical lessons to help them with written work and particularly with their evidence diaries at the end of the lesson. A few students regularly attend special learning support sessions. Teachers receive brief written reports on topics covered, but these often do not relate to the student's vocational programme.

107. There are sufficient assessors and internal verifiers, but internal verification is

insufficiently thorough. Internal verification plans have not ensured consistently rigorous ongoing internal verification, and aspects of assessment weakness, such as insufficient evidence range and failure to correct spelling and grammatical errors in portfolios, have not been noted.

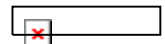
Leadership and management

108. Curriculum leadership and management are good. Managers set a clear direction and have improved the quality of provision. Most of the original CoVE objectives have been met, including the improvement of retention and pass rates.

109. Managers and staff work well and highly effectively together. Frequent, regular meetings ensure good communication and opportunities to share good practice. Good course quality review records are used to inform curriculum planning and quality improvements. The internal scheme of teaching observations leads to action plans and further observations where grades are unsatisfactory. There is a complementary system of observation of teachers by each other. Teachers value the observations. Inspectors agree with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, although it lacks detail and omits some strengths and weaknesses.

110. Promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Students have a reasonable understanding of equality of opportunity.

Hairdressing and beauty



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

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

Strengths

- high and improving pass rates on one year NVQ level 2 and level 3 hairdressing courses

- students' good professional conduct in practical contexts

- excellent hair and beauty accommodation

- good work experience programme

- effective action to improve work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates on the one-year NVQ at level 1 in hairdressing

- low pass rates on the apprenticeship framework

- insufficient attention to students' individual learning needs in practical lessons

- too few clients in most college-based practical lessons.

Scope of provision

111. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time NVQ courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy at levels 1 to 3, a BTEC national diploma in beauty therapy, a certificate in understanding personal therapies, and hairdressing courses for students whose first language is not English. Half of the 508 students are aged 16 to 18 and three quarters attend college on a full-time basis. Only 11 are male. Additionally, there are 48 foundation apprentices following 25-month work-based learning programmes.

Achievement and standards

112. Pass rates are high on the one year NVQ level 2 and level 3 hairdressing courses. Pass rates on the apprenticeship framework were low in 2002 and 2003, mainly due to poor key skills achievement, but are improving and trainees still in learning at the time of the inspection were on target to achieve. Although retention rates on the one year NVQ at level 1 in hairdressing are low and have declined up to 2004, college data indicate that retention rates in 2005 have improved and are above the national average for colleges of a similar type.

113. The standard of students' practical work is satisfactory and, in some cases, high. For example, level 1 hairdressing students highlight and colour hair well, and beauty therapy students use electrical massage equipment confidently when providing treatments. The standard of students' written work is mostly satisfactory and some is high. Beauty therapy students produce well-presented, word-processed work that contains well-researched material on facial and massage techniques.

114. Students conduct themselves in a professional manner during practical lessons. They adopt the dress code specified by the college, show particularly good interpersonal skills when greeting and working with clients and adhere to good health and safety practices.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ hairdressing (one	1	No. of starts	48	77	58

year)		% retention	75	66	64
		% pass rate	75	96	100
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	2	No. of starts	31	30	*
		% retention	71	77	*
		% pass rate	86	96	*
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	49	38	59
		% retention	35	34	58
		% pass rate	94	85	90
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	2	No. of starts	40	30	30
		% retention	63	77	70
		% pass rate	84	93	95
NVQ beauty therapy (two year)	2	No. of starts	35	30	33
		% retention	49	57	58
		% pass rate	88	88	84
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	17	24	33
		% retention	88	83	82
		% pass rate	40	80	63
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	3	No. of starts	38	16	*
		% retention	84	88	*
		% pass rate	81	100	*

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)
fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

115. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is too little that is better than satisfactory. In the best lessons, students are given challenging practical tasks to complete to commercial timescales in conditions that emulate working environments. A variety of learning strategies are used successfully to motivate students. In less effective lessons, tasks fail to reflect industrial practice, there are too few clients for students and teachers make too little use of interactive teaching aids. Teachers are beginning to integrate the teaching of key skills with vocational lessons and the teaching of key skills is satisfactory.

116. Teachers pay insufficient attention to the needs of individual students in practical lessons. Lessons are influenced by the requirements of clients rather than planned to accommodate students' needs to complete their programmes. Schemes of work and lesson plans are often generic with insufficient account taken of the different learning needs of students.

117. The college recognises that there are insufficient clients for students to work on and has instigated an extensive advertising campaign, which was beginning to have an impact at the time of the inspection.

118. College-based students, especially those at level 1, benefit from a well-organised work experience programme. It provides significant additional opportunities for students to develop and consolidate their skills, with good additional assessment opportunities. It is evaluated by employers and students. Work-based learners' placements provide them with

good opportunities to work on a range of clients and gain valuable experience. Students have satisfactory enrichment opportunities and are able to attend specialist demonstrations, exhibitions and manufacturers training courses.

119. Verification systems are satisfactory and fulfil awarding body requirements. Some teachers provide good written and oral feedback to students following assessment. Newly established systems for monitoring the progress of work-based learners are beginning to impact positively on achievements.

120. Accommodation is excellent. Hairdressing and beauty salons have recently been refurbished and compare well with the best industrial standards. They are well positioned at the college entrance, with good access for those with restricted mobility. Salons are fitted with the latest equipment, including interactive whiteboards, and there is a plentiful supply of high-quality products for students to work with. Classrooms used for background knowledge and key skills teaching are satisfactory. Staff are highly motivated and have appropriate vocational qualifications and experience. The supply of textbooks, videos and periodicals in the college library is satisfactory.

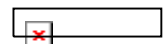
121. Students are supported appropriately to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. Support needs are identified through initial screening undertaken at induction. Learning support tutors provide help in vocational lessons and in separate sessions, but resources they use are not always vocationally relevant. Vocational teachers provide support and advice to students experiencing problems and create a supportive, friendly learning environment, enabling students to develop their skills with confidence. Students feel that staff are approachable. Students whose first language is not English receive good language support in lessons.

Leadership and management

122. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New quality assurance arrangements have been introduced that are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of college-based provision. The self-assessment report is brief, but inspectors agree with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified. Staff meetings are regular and effective. Formal meetings take place every week and curriculum weaknesses are identified and addressed. Staff are well supported and well informed of management decisions. Appraisals are clearly linked to performance, and staff development needs are identified and responded to. There is appropriate promotion and understanding of equal opportunities by staff and students.

123. Effective action has been taken to improve the quality and outcomes of work-based learning provision. New quality systems have been implemented, salons have a good commitment to training and the quality of work-based training is high. A new strategy to improve framework achievements is beginning to have a positive effect.

Health, social care and early years



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in 2003/04 for the AVCE, the certificate in childcare education and the NVQ in early years

- good resources that support learning

- good pastoral support.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on health and social care courses at levels 1 and 2

- poor and declining achievement on the diploma in childcare and education.

Scope of provision

124. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 in both health and social care and early years care and education. Most of the 316 full-time students are aged 16 to 18, although there are 35 adults on the diploma in childcare and education and 34 on the London Open College Network (LOCN) access to nursing course. There are 17 part-time students studying the level 4 Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) advanced diploma in childcare, 146 enrolled on the NVQ in early years at levels 2 and 3 and a further 188 following the NVQ in care at levels 2 and 3. Some 178 students study distance learning courses in health and safety and infection control. There are 13 school pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend as part of the increased flexibility (IF) project.

Achievement and standards

125. Retention rates are often satisfactory, especially for level 3 courses. On courses at levels 1 and 2, they are largely improving to around national averages. Pass rates are also often satisfactory. They were high in 2003/04 for the AVCE in health and social care, the certificate in childcare education and the NVQ in early years. In contrast, they were low at levels 1 and 2 in health and social care and on the diploma in childcare and education courses. Achievement on the NVQs in care and early years improved dramatically in 2003/04 from very low retention and pass rates to significantly above national averages, with the exception of retention rates at level 3 in early years. NVQ completion is slow. Access to nursing students have consistently achieved well over the last three years, with pass and retention rates averaging around 90%. The pass rate for key skills communication at level 2 is 30%.

126. The standard of students' work in lessons and of their additional written work is often satisfactory or better. Some students progress through courses within college and some to HE. For example, one has progressed from the certificate in childcare, to the diploma, to a Higher National Diploma (HND) and on to a degree. Early years students have progressed to teacher training and care students to higher education to study midwifery, counselling, social policy, occupational therapy, nursing and social work.

127. Attendance during the inspection week was below the national average, at 73%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation health and social care / introductory diploma in health and social care	1	No. of starts	15	19	17
		% retention	60	69	76
		% pass rate	44	76	77
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	29	24	20
		% retention	97	63	75
		% pass rate	61	80	100
GNVQ intermediate health and social care / first diploma in caring	2	No. of starts	36	40	38
		% retention	81	70	84
		% pass rate	45	75	53
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	50	33	49
		% retention	58	73	71
		% pass rate	55	54	91
National diploma in childhood studies (nursery nursing)	3	No. of starts	26	33	32
		% retention	81	79	63
		% pass rate	86	77	80
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	15	54	70
		% retention	100	52	46
		% pass rate	80	61	44
NVQ in care	2	No. of starts	*	210	161
		% retention	*	25	86
		% pass rate	*	4	77
NVQ in early years	3	No. of starts	161	64	90
		% retention	1	45	39
		% pass rate	100	93	89

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

128. Teaching is satisfactory or better. In the best lessons, theory and practice are appropriately linked and a good variety of activities engage students. For example, a lively debate on the politics of health developed communication skills as well as reinforcing knowledge. Many students successfully manage their own learning, taking responsibility for planning and research. Presentations are made with confidence and students contribute freely to class discussions. Vocationally qualified tutors draw not only on their own experience, but successfully incorporate students' work experience ensuring relevant application of theory. Lesson plans are detailed and identify individual needs, although strategies to meet specific requirements are not always applied fully. For example, there is insufficient adaptation of language for ESOL students. Most lessons are at an appropriate level for the students. In a few lessons, students are allowed to drift from the task.

129. Resources are good. Teachers are well qualified with academic, vocational teaching and assessor qualifications appropriate to the area, for example, nursing, midwifery, teaching and social work experience. A range of resources is used in lessons for learning,

such as videoing of role play, play activities including sand, water and soil, and craft and design materials. ICT is fully integrated into lessons, with computers used to research and present work. A wide range of high-quality placements includes hospitals, care homes, pre-schools, nurseries and schools. The support of placement officers ensures effective use of these facilities.

130. Assessment is satisfactory. Initial assessment is used effectively to diagnose support needs and to place students on appropriate courses. Students' progress is assessed regularly and those at risk are identified. Marking is regular and full feedback gives clear guidelines for improvement, leading to higher grades. Sound workplace assessment is by occupationally competent assessors who maintain high standards of practice, although there is over reliance on written work. Standardisation and internal verification are appropriate. Portfolios are well organised and have an appropriate range of evidence.

131. Students participate in a good range of enrichment activities such as sign language, deaf awareness, first-aid and citizenship awards. Key skills in communication are offered to all full-time students and are integrated through the selection of course assignments to provide evidence. Key skills in IT and application of number are being introduced. Contacts with employers are maintained through work placements and membership of the local early years partnership. There are strong links with Kingston University for progression to nurse education.

132. Pastoral support for students is good with regular group and individual tutorials. Individual learning plans are used effectively to monitor students' progress and set targets. Students feel motivated by staff and encouraged in their studies. Support for those with additional needs is not fully developed. Some students are expected to leave lessons to access support and teachers do not always give the necessary support for language within their lessons.

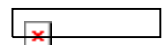
Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management at course level is effective. Teachers meet regularly and productively to discuss curriculum development and the progress of individual students. However, the two NVQ awards are managed separately and there is no sharing of good practice. Both areas recognise recent poor performance and have introduced closer monitoring, including risk assessment of slow achievement or withdrawal. NVQ data are of variable quality and managers were unable to produce robust data for 2004/05.

134. Quality assurance of teaching and learning is adequate, with yearly lesson observations and follow up of action points. In addition, there is a system of annual observation of teachers by each other, teachers are mentored and new teachers have a special scheme of observations. Self-assessment lacks critical analysis and inspectors identified additional weaknesses and strengths, although the action plan identifies some appropriate actions. For example, there are strategies for improving retention and pass rates that are beginning to make an impact.

135. Promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Classroom displays reflect diversity through positive images although there is little reference to multicultural issues in lessons. There is a wide range of staff development activities, including two days a year for all staff focused on teaching and learning and training such as equal opportunities and health and safety.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level art and media courses, the national diploma in fashion and clothing and level 2 performing arts

- high and improving retention rates on several courses

- high standard of practical work in media and fine art

- stimulating teaching in media and fine art

- good additional activities for students, promoting learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on several courses in 2004

- poor punctuality and attendance on three courses

- unsatisfactory teaching of music technology

- ineffective aspects of quality assurance.

Scope of provision

136. There are 744 students enrolled on courses in visual, performing arts and media, about a third of whom are adults. Of the 550 full-time students, 427 are aged 16 to 18 and of the 194 attending part time, 162 are adults. In visual arts, there are GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate level and BTEC national diplomas in graphic design, three-dimensional design, fine art and fashion and clothing. There is a pre-degree foundation course and an access course to art and design. Students are able to study a wide range of additional qualifications, including life drawing, mixed media, photography, pattern cutting and tailoring,

and Open College Network (OCN) creative skills in printmaking. The college offers a BTEC first diploma and national diploma in performing arts and national diplomas in media studies and music technology. There are GCE A levels in art, media and photography. There are 14 to 16 first certificate courses in performing arts and art and design.

Achievement and standards

137. Pass rates are high on level 2 performing arts courses, AS-level and GCE A-level art and media studies courses and the national diploma in fashion and clothing. In contrast, in 2004, pass rates which had been high fell back to below national averages on the GNVQ intermediate art and design, AVCE in performing arts, the national diploma in graphic design and on the foundation diploma in art and design. Retention rates are satisfactory overall. They are high and improving for level 1 art and design, level 2 performing arts and for the national diplomas in fashion and clothing and graphic design.

138. Standards of work are high in media and fine art. Students use ILT effectively to produce films, with sophisticated point of view angles and competent editing. In fine art, life drawing and pre-degree foundation studies, they use drawing well to develop personal research. Sketchbooks have lively sequential developments of drawing exploring colour, texture and tone. Work is often innovative. For example, one foundation student was working on the politics of the health service and used bandages to make a zipped and riveted white jacket. In printmaking, students combine digital images with traditional printmaking techniques.

139. During the inspection, students' attendance for music technology, the first diploma in performing arts and for AS-level media was poor and they were not punctual.

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 foundation art and design	1	No. of starts	18	21	20
		% retention	78	81	90
		% pass rate	79	88	83
GNVQ intermediate performing arts	2	No. of starts	29	27	17
		% retention	83	81	88
		% pass rate	71	82	73
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	90	68	82
		% retention	82	65	74
		% pass rate	92	93	92
National diploma in fashion and clothing	3	No. of starts	22	29	34
		% retention	86	69	79
		% pass rate	95	100	96
Diploma in foundation studies art and design (one year)	3	No. of starts	59	56	37
		% retention	86	96	92
		% pass rate	90	96	88
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	39	23	27
		% retention	77	96	85
		% pass rate	93	91	100

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

Quality of education and training

140. Teaching is good for fine art, pre-degree foundation, art and design and media students. There are high expectations from students in lessons. They are taught to work collaboratively and independently. In pre-degree foundation studies, students are challenged to evaluate theory, materials and process. One student working on a recycling theme had covered a chair in minute rolls of yellow paper from a telephone directory and was encouraged to analyse the concept of concealed information. In national diploma in fine art lessons, students are encouraged to analyse relevant artists and theory is incorporated into practical lessons. The photographs of Sean Scully had inspired one student to take photographs of the urban landscape and the paintings of Goya had informed a series of dark graphite drawings concealing digital photographs.

141. In one media lesson, the teaching was forceful and demanding. The selected viewing of Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* actively engaged and stimulated students and they were required to analyse the mise-en-scene of the documentary. The teacher played the role of director and insisted that each student had to ask him a searching question about the film's intentions and target audience.

142. In less successful lessons, including those for music technology, the identified needs of all students are not met. Lessons move at a slow pace and there is often poor classroom management. In music technology, the lack of ICT and its use seriously undermines learning and the accommodation is inappropriate for the activities. In one fashion drawing lesson, not all students were able to see the model and they had no access to drawing boards or easels.

143. Resources are satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and many are current practitioners. Most have teaching qualifications or are working towards attaining them. Classrooms are well maintained, although little thought has been given to arranging subjects in adjacent rooms. The visual arts classrooms are crowded, but teachers make effective use of the limited space and students' work fills the walls. Foundation and fine art students have individual workspaces. Graphics students have good computer facilities and fashion students use industrial-standard resources. Art and design students have access to the excellent printmaking workshops. Media classrooms have essential viewing and ILT access to help learning; the main media room combines editing, theory and viewing facilities very effectively. Whilst the theatre is a suitable performance space and has good dance facilities, the house lights system is inadequate and the main generator located next door is hugely distracting and severely restricts the impact of public performance.

144. Assessment methods and standards are good. Students' work is marked promptly and returned with helpful advice on how to improve. Overall progress is monitored through regular tutorials. Media studies students use a well-designed template for peer assessment to give articulate and perceptive feedback. Performing arts students received exhaustive written feedback on their audition work for a forthcoming production.

145. Students have good opportunities to enrich their studies with additional activities. Research visits are made to exhibitions, galleries and theatres, complementing studio work. There are links with Tate Britain, local and visiting theatre companies and students have worked as film extras for Channel 4 films. Graphic design students design logos, posters and tee shirts for the college. The department has an annual 'Festival of Creativity' celebrating students' work.

146. Students are well supported. Individual learning needs are identified at induction. Students are on the correct course. Appropriate additional support is offered but, in some cases, students' needs are not met in lessons, particularly where students require literacy

support in writing diaries and evaluations.

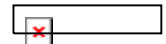
Leadership and management

147. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a recently appointed acting head of department. Many of the 15 team leaders are appointed to proportional posts. In spite of this, management arrangements are clear, although the managers of HE provision are not clear about the agendas of their FE colleagues. Staff are positive and are well supported in professional development activities.

148. Aspects of quality assurance are ineffective. Course teams complete course reviews, but the overall self-assessment report lacks rigour. The self-assessment report provides a superficial overview of the area. Inspectors agreed with some of its judgements, but weaknesses in teaching and attainment are not identified and the varying strengths and weaknesses of different courses are not recognised. Careful monitoring of retention and pass rates takes place regularly by course teams, but communication between teams is not always effective. Good practice is not shared across the area and there is a significant disparity between the quality of provision for various courses.

149. Promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Projects use a variety of cultural backgrounds for research. However, there is little systematic analysis of students' enrolments and achievements to help plan the further development of strategies to improve inclusion.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level sociology courses and on the modular access course

- much good teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses

- good formal and informal support for students on courses

- good curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level psychology and history and on access to law courses

- poor students' attendance on access courses during the inspection

- teaching which fails to involve students in revision sessions in access to law lessons

- failure to provide an AS-level psychology course in 2004/05.

Scope of provision

150. There are 244 students on courses in this curriculum area, but enrolments have declined on AS-level and GCE A-level courses in the last two years. The range of access to HE courses is good with access to social sciences offered through a wide range of modules, available both in the daytime and evenings. Access to law is available over one or two years and both in the daytime and evenings. Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) courses are running at levels 3 and 4. There are AS-level and GCE A-level courses in history, government and politics, law, sociology and general studies. At present, psychology is being run only at GCE A level. As a result of staffing problems in September 2004, AS-level psychology could not be offered.

Achievement and standards

151. Pass rates on the modular access, AS-level and GCE A-level sociology courses are well above the national averages in 2004. However, pass rates on access to law, AS-level and GCE A-level psychology, and AS-level history are below national averages. All other courses are at, or near, national averages. Retention rates on the entire range of courses are at, or near, national average figures, except on the modular access course, which is well above. In-year retention rates for 2004/05 indicate improvement generally. Progression to HE from all courses is good.

152. Students' oral work is good. Students readily participate in lesson discussion and in group work. They willingly express opinions and enjoy arguments. They listen to each other and to their teachers. Written work is generally at an appropriate standard for the course being taken. At GCE A level particularly, there were a number of interesting and successful pieces of coursework: in philosophy, long essays on Mill's *Considerations of Freedom* were impressive and indicated mature judgement, and an assignment in sociology on religiosity and gender was the result of effective research and good analysis. An access to law student writing in detail on marriage and the rights within relationships, researched her topic well, showed a very good understanding of the law and expressed herself with clarity. Much attention has been given in the curriculum area to improving students' attendance and punctuality. This has proved successful with AS-level and GCE A-level students, but attendance in the access lessons observed during the inspection was below 65%. Students are generally punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	63	76	72
		% retention	75	67	74

		% pass rate	83	71	74
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	124	97	71
		% retention	73	59	76
		% pass rate	71	75	56
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	95	83	92
		% retention	74	67	80
		% pass rate	90	86	84
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	55	46	23
		% retention	78	74	83
		% pass rate	95	71	42
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	60	40	25
		% retention	77	82	80
		% pass rate	65	79	85
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	47	29	31
		% retention	94	79	100
		% pass rate	87	91	97
Access to law	3	No. of starts	50	55	39
		% retention	90	64	59
		% pass rate	31	66	61
Modular access	3	No. of starts	130	205	201
		% retention	62	64	73
		% pass rate	68	67	88

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

Quality of education and training

153. There is much good teaching, particularly in AS-level and GCE A-level sociology, law and philosophy. The majority of lessons are well prepared and resourced, and backed by well-developed schemes of work. In the most successful lessons, a variety of teaching strategies are used effectively. Work in pairs and groups is often well employed in AS-level and GCE A-level lessons, with clear and focused aims and realistic timescales which sustain students' interest. An AS-level sociology lesson used group work effectively on glossaries of media terms in preparation for the compiling of a series of quizzes which led to successful revision of this topic. In a lesson on 'judge made law', the teacher sustained students' interest by careful consideration of legal terminology and close analysis of its meaning in effective contexts.

154. Efforts are made in lessons with small numbers of students to operate with high levels of student involvement. This was particularly successful in an outstanding philosophy lesson dealing with power and authority. Individual students were given time to express their ideas at length and challenged to substantiate them. Modular access students studying theories of social policy and poverty were challenged individually to comment and argue, and readily learned through discussion and debate.

155. In less effective lessons, teachers tend to dominate and fail to involve students or check their understanding sufficiently. In some lessons, opportunities to make revision a

lively demonstration of what students know are lost in the rush to get on with teacher-led review. At times, work for pairs or groups goes on too long and students' interest is lost. One or two lessons observed were worthy, but rather dull. However, all teachers give appropriate emphasis to examinations in their teaching. Effective lunchtime and early evening revision sessions and workshops have been provided as the examinations approach.

156. Students receive effective pre-entry advice and guidance, and effective help with progression to HE or work. Formal and informal support are good. Staff give their free time readily to help students with their work or personal problems. Students meet frequently with their tutors. Tutorials are well prepared and focus effectively on key skill acquisition. Support to access students is particularly effective. Essays and assignments are marked carefully and in a timely fashion, but an overall marking policy for the GCE humanities subjects is not yet fully established. However, in this area, the well-established target minimum grade system provides an effective structure for monitoring individual students' progress.

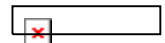
157. There are many opportunities for students to enrich their college course through trips to museums, conferences, the law courts and parliament. Visiting speakers often bring into the college evidence to enhance topics and show where study of the humanities may lead.

Leadership and management

158. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Clear targets are set, in terms of improvement, over a range of issues in a comprehensive action plan. These are monitored systematically and progress is carefully evaluated. The quality of teaching and learning is carefully monitored and improvement sought. Managers teach and lead from the front. A well-established cycle of team meetings discuss improvements in course delivery. There have been initiatives where good practice has been explicitly shared, but this is not systematic. AS-level and GCE A-level teachers tend to work separately from access teachers.

159. Self-assessment is systematic and accurate. The teaching observation system grades are overly generous, but weaknesses in teaching are identified. A focused and dynamic teaching improvement programme is not yet fully developed through appraisal, but teachers' observations of each other are leading to a climate where improvement is becoming a priority. Systems to measure students' performance in subjects against their prior performance have been developed and are used to identify strengths or weaknesses. The promotion of equality and the positive enjoyment of the ethnic diversity of students and staff are clear and successful aims of this curriculum area.

Literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Contributory grade for external provision is unsatisfactory (grade 4)

Strengths

- students' very good progression to a wider range of courses

- good attainment of language skills

- purposeful and effective teaching in many lessons
- extensive course provision, meeting students' needs and interests.

Weaknesses

- poor feedback on students' use of spoken language in ESOL lessons
- insufficient literacy, numeracy and language support for vocational students
- unsatisfactory external provision for ESOL.

Scope of provision

160. Entry level to level 3 courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are offered to full-time and part-time students at the main college and at two external centres, during the day and evening. The provision offers clear progression routes for students on to GCSE, access to HE and vocational courses. A full-time entry level courses for students aged 16 to 18 prepares them for foundation level vocational courses. Some 500 students enrol on ESOL courses at the main college and a further 350 at external centres. GCSE English and 'Brush up your English' courses are taken by 148 students, and 87 students are enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses. Additionally, 750 students receive literacy, numeracy and language support, mostly in small groups, whilst following their main programmes of study. There is a good range of additional activities, enriching students' experiences, including football, citizenship awards, keyboarding, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and Bollywood dancing.

Achievement and standards

161. Pass rates for GCSE English are above national averages at both intermediate and advanced levels. However, pass rates for numeracy, and some literacy, courses are low and some entry level students are enrolled on courses inappropriate to their needs. Pass rates for ESOL qualifications are average. Many ESOL students develop good language skills, enabling them to express themselves effectively. Students develop good study skills and are able to work independently. Literacy, language and numeracy students gain confidence in the use of language and some make exceptional progress in their language skills. Progression to other college courses and to employment is very good.

Quality of education and training

162. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In many lessons, largely at the main college, teaching is purposeful and teachers use a good range of activities to reinforce students' acquired skills and develop new ones. In these good and very good lessons,

teaching materials reflect the lives and interests of students, who participate confidently in different activities.

163. In lessons which are no better than satisfactory, students' individual learning needs are insufficiently addressed. In literacy and numeracy, much teaching is directed to the whole class and is examination orientated. This failure to fully meet the individual needs of students was identified in the previous inspection.

164. Teaching and learning in the external provision are often unsatisfactory. Lessons are poorly structured. Teachers do not have sufficient understanding of how students develop language skills and inappropriate teaching methods are used. Teachers often do not give clear instructions about how activities are to be completed and students are confused. There is an too much dependence on the use of printed notes, where students are required to complete gaps in the text.

165. In most ESOL lessons, students do not receive adequate feedback to help them develop their spoken English. In the majority, pronunciation, word order and intonation are not corrected and teachers provide insufficient examples of good use of language to help students improve. In a few lessons for adults, poor attendance and punctuality seriously impede the progress of the students who arrive on time. Contrastingly, ESOL lessons for students aged 16 to 18 are well attended and late arrivals are challenged effectively.

166. Resources are satisfactory at the main college site, but are poor for external provision. At the former, there are appropriate reference and other books. Audio and video tapes are available for use in classrooms. A variety of Skills for Life materials and resources are used in conjunction with language books. ICT is used to enhance students' experiences in many ESOL lessons, but some literacy and numeracy students have limited access to ICT and there is over reliance on teacher-produced worksheets. Some of the latter are ambiguous and inaccurate. At external venues, teaching materials are often dull, poorly photocopied and inappropriate for the students' ages.

167. Teachers at the main college are well qualified. Most have teaching and specialist qualifications. They are appropriately trained to support the introduction of the specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL curriculum. Most teachers at external venues are inexperienced and inadequately qualified. Training to help vocational teachers improve students' literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills, within the context of their vocational areas, is insufficient.

168. Many students receive good academic and pastoral support from tutors, counselling, welfare and guidance staff. Effective guidance and induction enables many students to make good progress. Initial assessment is satisfactory. However, there is no clear link between the outcomes of diagnostic assessment and the setting of targets in students' individual learning plans. Targets are vague and students' progress is not recorded systematically. Overall, literacy, numeracy and language support is insufficient for vocational students. At level 1, in particular, students receive support through separate lessons. The teaching is inadequately focused on their individual needs and is insufficiently related to their vocational interests.

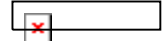
Leadership and management

169. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but the management of external ESOL provision is unsatisfactory. Managers support teachers well at the main college site and internal communication is good. The college has acknowledged the weaknesses in the external provision and has prepared an improvement plan. However, the plan does not address weaknesses in teaching and learning. Targets for improvement in the external provision are not being achieved against the proposed timescale, quality assurance procedures, introduced recently, are yet to make an impact and teachers do not attend staff meetings or training sessions at the main college site.

170. The college has prepared, and has started to implement, a Skills for Life strategy, but it does not yet provide an integrated and coherent approach to raising students' literacy, numeracy and language skills across the college.

171. A high value is attached to the promotion of equality and diversity in this area and the potential to develop, using the wide range of backgrounds and experiences of students, is fully exploited.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- successful work experience programme
- very good support for students with hearing impairments.

Weaknesses

- lack of a system to record students' overall progress and achievements
- insufficient attention to individual learning needs in planning and teaching
- inappropriate focus on students completing worksheets rather than developing skills
- unsatisfactory teaching of students with more severe learning difficulties.

Scope of provision

172. This area has expanded over the last five years and the college now makes provision for some 150 students with learning difficulties. There are 19 younger students, with more severe learning difficulties, enrolled on the independent living skills course and 40 with less severe difficulties on the work preparation skills course. Both courses are run over four days each week for two years. Eight adults are preparing for employment on the Workright programme and 10 with severe learning difficulties take part in the Essential Skills for Adults course, both of which are run over three days each week. On one day each week 37 adults come to college on Skills Link and 31 pupils from local special schools experience the

college environment and sample full-time course activities. A summer school, for some eight students with severe learning difficulties, aims to accustom them to the college environment. Applicants who would find it difficult to cope in a large environment with minimal supervision are advised to apply to one of the smaller neighbouring colleges.

Achievement and standards

173. Many students' achievements are satisfactory and when students are taught through practical activities achievements are sometimes good. In a cookery lesson, Independent Living Skills students confidently prepared Spanish omelettes and salad, and cleared up competently without prompting. In a literacy lesson, a student for whom English is his second language glowed with delight when, after many weeks of practising, he achieved his target of being able to write his address correctly. However, in over a quarter of lessons observed, achievements were unsatisfactory, particularly those for students with more severe learning difficulties. Activities were too difficult for them or they were obliged to copy out words they could not read and did not understand.

174. The standard of students' work is variable. It is unsatisfactory when students achieve less than they could have done because they are repeating skills already mastered, in order to evidence these skills in their worksheets for portfolios. It is also unsatisfactory in lessons where students require so much help that it is clear that the activity is too difficult for them. However, in an art lesson, students successfully painted designs on shoes in the style of either Picasso or Hockney and were able to identify some similarities and differences in the style and subject matter of the two painters.

175. Students' achievements on their work placements are good. The extensive programme allows them to have a placement that is appropriate for them. Honest feedback from employers enables students to improve their performance. A number of students each year obtain paid or voluntary work through their work placements.

176. Although systems are improving, and teachers can often describe students' progress, the college cannot effectively evidence students' overall achievements, or accurately measure their progress. All students have an individual learning plan, but they are not yet sufficiently developed to be used successfully in the measurement of progress or achievement. Targets are often couched in terms that are too vague and general to be used as accurate measures of progress and achievement, or too limited to measure the full extent of students' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential. There are few links between students' long-term goals, their assessments, the targets on their individual learning plans and the teaching they receive. Progress against targets is rarely monitored or recorded in lessons.

Quality of education and training

177. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Inspectors observed far less good or better teaching and learning, and significantly more that was unsatisfactory, than the national average for similar colleges. Lesson plans are insufficiently related to students' learning goals and their individual learning plans. Much teaching is not stimulating and students often work on the same activity, with overuse of worksheets, with the same planned learning goals, regardless of any differing skills and abilities. In such lessons, the learning of the most able students is not challenged sufficiently and the least able cannot succeed in their learning. The adult core curricula for literacy and numeracy are taught as a syllabus, although this is not how they are designed to be used. This results in some students being taught skills they already know because the group has to go through the syllabus.

178. However, teaching is sometimes good when teachers use practical activities or work to individual targets for students to achieve in their lesson. In an active numeracy lesson, students gained a good understanding of the comparative weights of objects, and the

language used to compare weight. They worked enthusiastically in small groups, moving around to compare the weight of items in their hands and describing the differences.

179. The teaching and support of students with hearing impairments by facilitators are very good. Students with hearing impairments have individual facilitators in their lessons as well as for student meetings and other activities. A student with a hearing impairment and with physical disabilities who has made very good progress sometimes has both a facilitator and a general support worker to enable him to learn effectively. In lessons, students with hearing impairments demonstrate very good subject knowledge and are appropriately included in the group while receiving the support they need from skilled facilitators. In one lesson, an able student with a hearing impairment who has little knowledge of English and who did not sign on her arrival at college, worked with her facilitator to improve her communication skills and understanding, with obvious pleasure at her own success.

180. Classrooms are generally satisfactory with most having good access to computers and projection equipment. However, rooms used for art lessons do not have a water supply. The numbers of staff and support workers are appropriate for group sizes. However, many teachers are insufficiently qualified and experienced in the teaching of students with learning difficulties in FE when they are appointed. Only 15% of current teachers have any specialist qualifications in teaching students with learning difficulties and only 20% had any experience of teaching students with learning difficulties in further education on appointment. They often learn their teaching skills as classroom assistants and becoming part-time and then full-time teachers. They receive insufficient training on the impact of intellectual impairments on learning and on teaching methods and concepts that are not current in the college. Learning support staff are present in many lessons, but are often not used effectively because students are taught as a whole by the teacher.

181. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are thoroughly assessed on entry to the college, and there is an initial period during which their social skills are assessed, but the outcomes of assessment are not used effectively to shape students' individual learning plans or to plan teaching. Students' progress and achievements are monitored inadequately and many achievements are not recorded because there is no system in place.

182. The range of courses is satisfactory with provision for students with a wide range of learning difficulties of all ages. Essential skills, a new course for adults with severe learning difficulties, was added in September 2004. This course aims to provide substantial new educational opportunities for adults who may never have received any education or who have not been in education for many years.

Leadership and management

183. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Managers have expanded the provision and have begun to develop the provision but, as yet, this has not yet resulted in a satisfactory quality of provision. A self-assessment report for foundation studies overall includes the strengths and weaknesses for this area of work, but most of the judgements in the report relate to literacy, numeracy or ESOL. The significant weaknesses in provision for students with learning difficulties are not identified. Staff are able to attend courses of their choice, but they have received too little training in cognitive impairment and its impact on learning, current good practice in provision for students with learning difficulties in education or the planning of class activities to meet the individual needs of students.

Part D: College data

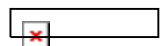


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	30	41
2	23	25
3	27	15
4/5	1	8
Other	19	11
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2005

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,323	523	6
Land-based provision	0	5	0
Construction	112	507	2
Engineering, technology and manufacture	327	439	3
Business administration, management and professional	621	2,331	10
Information and communication technology	955	3,612	16
Retailing, customer service and transportation	29	179	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	445	1,152	6
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	244	292	2
Health, social care and public services	387	1,029	5
Visual and performing arts and media	701	620	5
Humanities	2,147	1,431	13
English, languages and communication	1,297	723	7
Foundation programmes	1,930	4,803	24
Unknown area of learning	46	252	1

Total	10,564	17,898	101*
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Source: provided by the college in 2005

* figures have been rounded and do not total 100%

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
		1	Starters excluding transfers	907	1,159	1,135	1,200
	Retention rate %	78	73	78	68	55	58
	National average %	74	75	75	74	71	71
	Pass rate %	60	69	71	55	61	62
	National average %	68	73	73	68	76	76
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,642	1,417	1,094	2,699	2,168	1,529
	Retention rate %	77	69	77	72	54	75
	National average %	70	70	70	69	68	68
	Pass rate %	59	78	73	66	72	75
	National average %	68	73	73	69	73	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,989	1,948	1,800	2,249	1,724	1,750
	Retention rate %	76	70	76	61	64	70
	National average %	75	75	75	69	67	67
	Pass rate %	74	77	78	67	74	75
	National average %	73	76	76	69	73	73
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	0	0	0	460	493	325
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	62	77	82
	National average %	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	36	29	49
	National average %	*	*	*	*	*	*

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.

2. College rates for 2001/2002 to 2003/04: College ISR.

* data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	68	26	6	103
Level 2 (intermediate)	62	31	7	55
Level 1 (foundation)	53	42	5	36
Level E (Entry)	48	36	16	44
Other sessions	75	25	0	9
Totals	61	32	7	247

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