



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## East Surrey College

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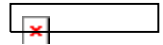
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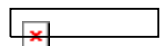
**Basic information about the college**



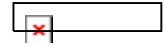
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|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of college:             | East Surrey College   |
| Type of college:             | General Further Education   |
| Principal:                   | Frances Wadsworth   |
| Address of college:          | East Surrey College<br>Claremont Road<br>Gatton Point, Redhill<br>Surrey, RH1 2JX |
| Telephone number:            | 01737 772611  |
| Fax number:                  | 01737 768641  |
| Chair of governors:          | Stephen Gutteridge  |
| Unique reference number:     | 130824  |
| Name of reporting inspector: | Michael John Davis  |
| Dates of inspection:         | 9-13 May 2005   |

**Part A: Summary**



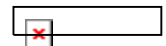
## Information about the college



East Surrey College is a medium-sized general further education (FE) college in Redhill, serving the local communities of Redhill and Reigate, and the wider area of South London and North Sussex. Most courses are provided at the main college site at Gatton Point but, in addition, there are five local small satellite sites. Adult and community learning programmes are offered at community venues throughout East Surrey. Courses are offered in all of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) areas of learning, although provision is very small in land-based subjects and in customer services, retailing and transportation. The substantial provision in art, design and media is offered in the purpose-built Reigate School of Art, Design and Media building. The college contracts directly with the Surrey LSC for work-based learning, which is mainly in construction and engineering. In 2003/04, there were 12,409 college students, most of whom were part time. For the same period, there were 21,876 enrolments for all qualifications. Around 16,802 of these were for students aged 19 and over.

The staying-on rates in post-16 education are high in the area and there is considerable competition with local schools and the many other local colleges. Unemployment in the area is low. There are few large enterprises in the area, although many multi-national companies have established their European head offices locally. Some 15% of the college's students are from a minority ethnic background, which is 10 percentage points higher than in the local population. The college's mission statement is to, 'provide inspirational, high quality education and training which meets the needs of our community'.

## How effective is the college?



Out of the eight areas inspected, inspectors judged that the provision is good in one curriculum area, satisfactory in six other areas and unsatisfactory in another. The contributory grade awarded for work-based learning in aeronautical engineering was good. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

### **Key strengths**

- significant improvements over the last year
  
- strong and effective leadership and governance
  
- clear strategic planning
  
- effective management of change

- good internal and external communications
- comprehensive quality assurance arrangements
- much improved management of resources
- high and improving success rates on adult courses at levels 2 and 3
- good support for students
- good provision in art, design and media and work-based learning aeronautical engineering.

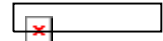
***What should be improved***

- retention and pass rates on many level 1 courses and generally for students aged 16 to 18
- students' punctuality to lessons and overall attendance
- key skills achievements
- proportion of good or better lessons
- use of information and learning technology (ILT)
- standard of teaching for students aged 16 to 18

- course reviews in some areas
  
- range of curriculum and employer links in some areas
  
- management of work-based learning in construction
  
- engineering provision.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

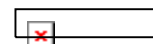


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

| Area                                   | Overall judgements about provision, and comment  |
|--|--|
| Construction                           | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on most courses, but low in trowel occupations. Retention rates are close to the national average, but low in electrical installation. Teaching is mostly satisfactory with much good teaching in craft and theory lessons. Students develop good practical skills and receive very good personal support, but attendance at college is poor. Target setting is inadequate for practical projects and bricklaying workspace is insufficient. The management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory. |
| Engineering                            | <b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The contributory grade for work-based learning is <b>good</b> . Pass and retention rates are mostly average, but very high on the aeronautical advanced apprenticeship programme. Teaching is mostly satisfactory, but is poor in some theory lessons. Students develop good practical skills in well-resourced workshops and in work placements. Actions to cover long-standing staff shortages are inadequate, the use of individual learning plans is poor and internal verification is insufficiently effective.    |
| Business administration and management | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates in bookkeeping and accounts are high, but retention rates are low on a number of courses. Teaching is mostly satisfactory, but there is insufficient challenge for the more able students. Students develop good communication skills. Work experience is very effective, but the range of courses is  |

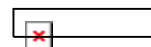
|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | restricted. Assessment practice and the monitoring of students' progress are good.  |
| Information and communications technology                  | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Students produce high standards of work and adults progress well between courses and levels. Much stimulating teaching is complemented by an imaginative use of assignments, but some lessons are inefficiently prepared. Students are well supported in lessons, but attendance and punctuality are poor on full-time courses. The curriculum is managed well, but the range of courses for adults is narrow.                           |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy                            | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are high on level 2 courses in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Much of the teaching is insufficiently stimulating, but students produce a high standard of work in their assignments. Support for students is good. However, attendance rates are low, and there are too few clients to enable students to develop their practical skills in a realistic setting.   |
| Art, design and media studies                              | <b>Good.</b> Students produce high standards of work on the majority of courses. Retention and pass rates are average, but low on a minority of courses. Much teaching is good and takes place in spacious and well- equipped workshops and studios. Curriculum leadership and management are effective. The assessment and evaluation processes are rigorous.  |
| Modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Most courses have high pass rates but a minority, although improving, are below or only approaching national averages. Students' oral skills have improved substantially and are now well developed. Teaching is satisfactory or better, but there is insufficient use of ILT. Curriculum organisation is both efficient and effective, but there is little sharing of good practice.  |
| Literacy and numeracy                                      | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are high on most courses, although pass rates in key skills are very low. Teaching on literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses is good. Teachers make very good use of diagnostic assessment and provide high levels of individual support in lessons. Leadership and management are improving, but lines of communication and the monitoring of action plans remain weak. |

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



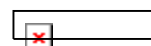
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The work of the college has improved since the last inspection and significantly in the last year. The new principal, senior management team and governing body provide strong leadership. Strategic and curriculum planning are effective. Few lessons are unsatisfactory, but the proportion of very good and outstanding lessons is low. More students are achieving, but 16 to 18 success rates remain mostly below the national average. The standard of students' work has improved. Areas that were unsatisfactory at the last inspection are much better, but engineering is weak. New approaches to quality assurance are effective. The self-assessment report is mostly objective and rigorous. Some aspects of the management of work-based learning are poor. Curriculum management is not yet of a consistent standard. Most students do not achieve their qualifications in key skills. Whilst there are strong links with some employers, this is not the case in all curriculum areas. In some curriculum areas the range of courses is narrow. Financial management systems have improved and the college is beginning to provide satisfactory value for money.

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



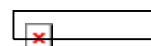
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college promotes equality of opportunity and is committed to tackling discrimination. The prevailing ethos is harmonious and inclusive. Relevant policies and protocols have been updated. There are imaginative initiatives such as cultural and disability awareness weeks. The college recognises the need to improve the gender balance on some courses. Generally, males achieve less well than females by approximately 10 percentage points. Students aged 16 to 18 underachieve when compared to similar colleges. Religious diversity is respected and celebrated. Students have access to a nursery on the main site. The student body reflects the local demography. The analysis of students' performance by ethnicity, learning difficulty and/or disability and gender are good. However, this approach is very recent and is not yet undertaken at course level. Plans of action are embryonic. Most parts of the college are fully accessible to people with restricted mobility. The college meets its obligations under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Adaptive technologies and specialist equipment are available, but underutilised. Links with referral units and specialist schools are good.

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



Guidance and support for students are good. Pre-entry information and advice are fair and thorough. Vocational teachers work closely with student services staff to ensure that students are placed on the right course. The initial assessment of students' learning needs is comprehensive. Individual learning plans are regularly monitored and updated. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own progress and identify actions to improve. Specialist support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Professional counselling, careers and welfare services are freely available to all students. Students' views are heard and responded to. Tutorials are generally effective in motivating and monitoring students' progress. However, some group activities are not managed well and students' attendance rates remain low. A member of the senior management team has nominated responsibility for child protection issues. The welfare of vulnerable young people is promoted actively to the whole college community.

## 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***

- how much the whole college has improved since last year
  
- improvements to resource centre, library and other equipment

- good teaching by friendly staff
- personal commitment and support from tutors
- interesting visits and guest speakers
- communication between teachers and students
- speed and courtesy of college's response to enquiries
- computing facilities
- college nursery
- flexible approach to individual timetabling
- nature and range of additional help available.

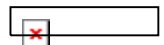
***What they feel could be improved***

- quality of food, canteen facilities and opening times
- punctuality of some students
- some assignment scheduling



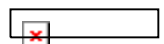
- resources for English as a foreign language students
  
- sports and recreational facilities
  
- social spaces, both inside and outside
  
- cultural and educational outings
  
- organisation of induction
  
- organisation of key skills lessons
  
- car parking
  
- financial support for adults.

### **Other information**



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

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



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

| Aspect and learner type | Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) % | Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) % | Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) % |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Teaching 16-18          | 45                                      | 48                              | 7   |
| 19+ and WBL*            | 65                                      | 29                              | 6   |
| Learning 16-18          | 40                                      | 53                              | 7   |
| 19+ and WBL*            | 63                                      | 33                              | 4   |

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. At the end of the three-year period starting 2002 and ending 2004, most retention and pass rates improved, many to around the national averages. However, the proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who successfully passed qualifications compared to those who started (success rate) was consistently below the national averages. At level 1, the success rates were below national averages for all age groups. At levels 2 and 3, success rates for adult students exceeded the national averages. Success rates for short courses have improved steadily for all age groups and are now high. Student data for 2001, 2002 and 2003 were produced by the LSC, but the college's 2004 data have yet to be validated fully.

2. Direct comparisons with 2003 data would not be meaningful if the large number of students who enrolled on long distance learning programmes were included. Most of the 3,278 students who started these programmes were adults. No students were retained and there were no achievements. By agreement with the Surrey LSC, the contract was cancelled early. The setting up and termination of this unsound arrangement took place before the present senior management team was in post. Therefore, these data were not included for trend analysis.

3. In 2004, of the 21,876 qualification enrolments, 67% were at level 1, 18% were at level 2, 8% were at level 3, 1% at level 4, and 6% were to other (level undefined) courses. Approximately 77% of all individual qualifications followed were by students aged 19 and over. High numbers of students follow qualifications in information and communications technology (ICT), visual and performing arts, engineering, languages and foundation programmes. Some 63% of students were female and 5% of students were from black minority ethnic groups. In 2004, the female success rate was about 10 percentage points higher than males.

4. At the last inspection in May 2003, the overall attendance rate in lessons was low, at 71%. Although slightly improved to 73%, poor attendance remains a problem. In some curriculum areas, students' lack of punctuality is noted as a weakness. In-year retention rates have improved, but there is no data for direct comparisons. In 2004, 23% of all college students followed a subsequent course at the college. In vocational areas such as construction and hairdressing, the rates exceed 40%. A large proportion of art and design students progress to higher education (HE).

5. The use of value added data to compare students' achievements with their prior attainment is not well established. The college does not know whether it adds value. Plans are in place to obtain prior attainment data on entry from 2005/06 and then use this data for target setting. As a preparation for this approach, the college is standardising the use of individual learning plans and the setting of achievement milestones.

6. In 2004, key skills achievements improved slightly, but were very poor. Of the 1,475 enrolments on qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3, only 12% were successful. The better achievements were at level 3, but the numbers were small. At level 2, with the largest number of enrolments, the pass rate was very low at 9%. There were no significant differences in the results for application of number, communications and ICT. A very small proportion of students submitted portfolios. Retention rates have improved steadily and in 2004 were over 90%. The college recognised the weaknesses in key skills provision and in 2005 changed its approach. It is not possible to judge the overall effectiveness of these new arrangements.

7. At the previous inspection student attainment was low. Whilst the proportion of students with good or better attainment has improved for all age groups, that for adult students, at 61%, is the biggest increase. In art and design, students produce work of a high standard and many use industrial-standard software with confidence. Business students have a good understanding of business terminology and concepts. At all levels, they display good communication skills, with above average grammar and spelling. Adult students in painting and decorating have a clear understanding of project planning. Work-based learners generally have good placements and develop good practical skills. Aeronautical work-based apprentices experience progressive and continuous skill development. In hairdressing, students have a strong commitment to health and safety and customer service. In ICT, adult students are enthusiastic and quickly acquire useful skills.

### ***16 to 18 year olds***

8. In 2004, about 37% of the students were aged 16 to 18. Most followed full-time courses. Some 35% of enrolments were at entry level and level 1, 47% at level 2 and 16% were at level 3. Over the four-year period ending in 2004, the number of students following level 2 qualifications increased whilst at level 3 enrolments declined. The college is phasing out advanced subsidiary level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A-level) qualifications and will in future focus on vocational courses. From 2001 to 2004, retention rates at level 1 remained consistently below the national averages, but improved to 72% in the fourth year. At level 2, after a drop in 2003 to 60%, the retention rate improved in 2004 to the national average. At level 3, over the same four-year period, retention rates were consistently at least six percentage points below the average when compared to similar colleges. Pass rates are generally low. At level 1, pass rates remained very low from 2001 to 2003 dipping to 40% in 2003, but rising to the national average in 2004. Level 2 has a similar profile, improving significantly in 2004, but remaining three percentage points below the national average. In 2002, pass rates at level 3 rose to well above the national average but, in 2003 and 2004, declined to four percentage points below the average. On short courses, achievements improved steadily and are now good.

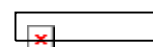
9. The college offers work-based learning apprenticeship programmes in construction, aeronautical engineering, and hairdressing. Over the three-year period ending in 2004, 74 learners started an advanced programme and 53 are still in learning. The majority followed the aeronautical engineering programme where the achievement of frameworks is good. For example, 67% of learners who started in 2002 were successful. Retention rates are high. However, over the last seven years, no learner on an advanced construction programme has achieved. From 2001 to 2004, 62 learners followed an apprenticeship programme, with the majority in construction. Retention rates are satisfactory, but the achievement of full frameworks is low. For example, of the group that started in 2003, 24% were successful. In the same year, framework achievements in hairdressing were good, at 60%, but the group was very small.

### ***Adult learners***

10. In 2004, most students were adults with the majority following part-time courses. Some 77% of enrolments were at entry level and level 1, 9% at level 2 and 5% were at level 3. The remaining 9%

of enrolments were at level 4 or unassigned. Retention rates are mostly high. Over the four-year period ending in 2004, the number of students following level 1 qualifications increased dramatically. At level 2, the numbers stayed relatively constant, but at level 3 enrolments declined. Retention rates at level 1 were low in 2003, but improved to five percentage points above the national average in 2004. Since 2002, retention rates at level 2 have improved steadily and in 2004 were high. At level 3, in 2003 and 2004, the retention rate remained seven percentage points above the national average. Pass rates are low except at level 2. At level 1, pass rates have remained below the national averages for the period 2001 to 2004, and were 11 percentage points below in 2004. Over the four-year period, pass rates at level 2 have remained around the average, rising to well above in 2004. At level 3, pass rates improved in 2004, but were still below the national averages. On short courses, achievements improved steadily and are now good.

## Quality of education and training



11. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors graded teaching, learning and attainment in 125 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 54%, satisfactory in 40% and less than satisfactory in 6% of lessons. The good or better teaching was 11 percentage points below the national average, at 65%, for all colleges inspected between September 2001 and June 2002. Some 50% of the learning grades were good or better, also below the national average. The percentage of teaching that was very good or excellent, at 19%, was 6 percentage points below the national average for similar colleges. Teaching and learning of adult students are generally better than teaching and learning of students aged 16 to 18. Overall, the proportion of good or better teaching was some 21 percentage points higher. The best teaching was at entry level, where 83% of lessons were good or better. The weakest teaching was at level 1 which was 24 percentage points below the national average. Overall, the proportion of less than satisfactory teaching was slightly better than the national average and significantly better than at the last inspection in May 2003. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in hairdressing and beauty therapy, art design and media, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language. The largest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was in engineering, ICT and literacy and numeracy. Generally, the teaching in lessons where theory and practical activities were combined was significantly better than when these were taught separately. The proportion of good or better practical teaching was low at 31%. The teaching standards of full-time teachers was slightly lower than that of part-time and agency teachers.

12. The best teaching is in art, design and media, and modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language. However, all curriculum areas have varying proportions of good or better teaching. The best lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Teachers make good use of probing and challenging questions to improve learning. In ESOL, lessons are taught at a level and a pace that meet individual students' needs. In modern foreign language lessons students develop good oral skills. There are highly effective examples of work in pairs and groups. In most curriculum areas, good student and teacher relationships enhance learning. Individual one-to-one support in the classroom is often good. In hairdressing, teachers raise students' confidence and social and practical skills. Most students with identified learning support needs receive good additional classroom support. Generally, work-based learning portfolios are well organised. A few lessons are lively and stimulating. Teachers use students' experience of work to good effect. The teaching of key skills is good in lessons where there is vocational relevance.

13. Whilst the college has successfully reduced the high number of unsatisfactory lessons, too few lessons are good or better. In the weakest lessons, teaching does not challenge or stimulate students' learning. In business, the learning of more able students is not stretched. Teachers ask questions, but do not sufficiently explore students' responses. In these lessons, teachers fail to ensure that all students participate and the teaching and learning lose momentum. In engineering, a replacement teacher did not have a scheme of work or lesson plan. Too many lessons are disrupted by poor attendance or lateness. Opportunities to use ILT in teaching and learning are often missed. Some learning materials are dull. In ICT, some handouts and overhead projector slides are poorly

produced and difficult to read. In construction lessons, teachers do not monitor students' progress routinely in the workshop.

14. Teachers are generally well qualified and benefit from recent extensive training and development opportunities. Some 92% of full-time or fractional teachers hold relevant teaching qualifications or are working towards one. Most full-time and fractional teachers were appraised during the last year. Work objectives are set and performance is monitored. Some curriculum areas, such as engineering, find it difficult to recruit staff. The division of basic skills and ESOL has a very large proportion of part-time teachers.

15. The college's accommodation and surrounding grounds are maintained to a high standard. Since the last inspection in May 2003, there have been a number of improvements. A property strategy and costed maintenance plan are in place and a substantial refurbishment programme is now nearing completion. Improvements include teaching accommodation; access for people with disabilities; a new learning resource centre; student services area; college shop; and students union. Some teaching accommodation, for example, the single-storey huts, remain in poor condition. Most specialist subject areas have good resources and appropriate teaching spaces. The exception is in construction where some students work in cramped work areas. Classrooms with good displays of students' work often provide stimulating learning environments. Study areas have been developed; some with an extensive range of learning materials. The art, design and media, motor vehicle and aeronautical engineering areas are very well resourced. Students respect the newly refurbished areas and feel secure within the college. The college has a good range of lifts and ramps. Most areas are accessible to students with restricted mobility, but in two centres in the community access is restricted. On-site sport facilities are limited to a sports field. Generally, there are insufficient recreational facilities. Refectories and snack bars are adequate, but opening times are restricted to the morning and early afternoon.

16. Since the last inspection, the college has developed a comprehensive ILT strategy and made a significant investment in computer facilities. Many classrooms are now fitted with digital projection facilities. Computers in the learning resource centre are of a good specification. The ratio of students to accessible computers has improved and is now good. The college has an intranet site for staff and students, but this is at a very early stage of development. The learning resource centre, although small, is used extensively. It provides a good range of appropriate textbooks and access to online learning resources. The learning centre promotes subject-focused displays, information on useful websites and provides a good range of periodicals and journals. The ICT facilities at community centres receive good technical support.

17. At the start of a full-time or substantial part-time course, students' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed thoroughly. The results are analysed carefully and used for individual learning plans and for targeting learning support activities. At an early stage, students are interviewed by both subject specialists and staff from the student services unit. There is good, sustained dialogue between teachers, tutors and learning support staff throughout a student's time at college. The formal systems for monitoring students' progress are well designed. This is enhanced by the high level of staff commitment.

18. Assessment schedules are planned carefully. They are mostly successful in spreading students' workload evenly across a programme of work. Most students' progress is checked and recorded against dated milestones. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for structuring and organising their own work schedules. The setting of individual targets, to enable students to develop specific skills or identify precise short-term actions, is applied inconsistently. In business, however, teachers set very clear targets and students' progress is monitored effectively. The setting of target grades based on students' attainment at school has only just started.

19. Marking is mostly regular, accurate and fair. The oral and written feedback given to students is detailed and clear. It helps students understand what they need to do to improve. In art, design and media, students' critical reflection and mature evaluation of each other's work is well established. The processes for the internal verification and moderation of assignments and students' work are well documented and implemented. However, in engineering and construction there is a shortage of trained assessors. This has impaired the planned assessment schedule and restricted students'

opportunity to be assessed as and when they are ready. During 2004/05, not all of the external validating bodies' requirements were met. However, the college's actions in response to these criticisms were prompt and effective. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are invited to attend subject review evenings and receive reports on their progress.

20. The college provides a satisfactory range of provision from pre-entry level to level 3. Most are vocational courses and cater for school leavers and adults. A strategic decision to rationalise the offer during the period of recovery following the previous inspection has led to some gaps in provision. For example, there is no college-based level 1 provision in art and design and a very narrow breadth of provision in business. The college aims to establish itself primarily as a provider of vocational courses and will not be offering AS-level and GCE A-level courses in the future. Student progression is generally satisfactory. Community provision is offered in four centres. Courses include art and design, basic skills, ICT and language lessons. There is also an extensive adult and community offer subcontracted from the local education authority (LEA). Work-based provision is relatively small and is offered in engineering, construction and hairdressing.

21. Students have few opportunities to gain additional qualifications. Where offered, they are relevant and useful, but most are occupationally specific. Many students participate in a good range of extension activities that are related to their courses. Curriculum teams arrange a wide variety of vocational and research trips, especially in hairdressing and art, design and media. Cross-college sport or social enrichment activities are not well established and are organised primarily by the student union. A room is available in college for private reflection, prayer and meditation for students and staff of any faith.

22. Since the last inspection, the college has reorganised the management and teaching of key skills. Curriculum teams now manage and teach key skills in a vocational context and are supported by a central team of specialists. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these measures. The overall retention rate of students on the key skills programmes is high, but historic pass rates are very low.

23. The college has good links with schools. Some 400 pupils aged 14 to 16 from 10 local schools are following a vocational provision. These include programmes in engineering, motor vehicle, hairdressing, hospitality, construction and art. At the start of September 2004, 24% of pupils who followed this Increased Flexibility (IF) programme progressed to full-time courses at the college. The college offers a good variety of taster days to help school pupils make informed vocational choices. The college works collaboratively with a wide range of organisations. For example, it now co-presents with other local colleges on the full range of provision available locally.

24. Students receive fair and thorough advice before they consider enrolling on a college course. Vocational teachers work closely with student services staff and now interview and advise applicants. Considerable attention is paid to ensuring that students are placed on the most appropriate course. Students with learning and personal needs are provided with classroom assistance and, if necessary, support sessions. However, there are not enough trained basic skills teachers or assistants to meet the demand for individual support. Teachers and support staff work closely together. Learning plans, reviews and progress reports mostly reflect the potential and development needs of each individual. Adult students are particularly appreciative of the level of support they receive. A college programme known as 'next steps' offers a good range of specific advice and guidance specifically for adults.

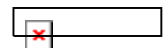
25. The college successfully maintains a learning environment where school pupils, students aged 16 to 18 and adults coexist harmoniously together. Students are respected and valued in a way that encourages their contributions in lessons. The college actively seeks students' views and acts on their concerns. The student council and the student union are active. Students who are parents are helped to continue their studies through access to childcare in the college nursery.

26. All students have good access to specialist advice and assistance. Those identified with learning difficulties or impairments that require specific help are well supported. However, little use is made of some adaptive equipment and specialist materials. A confidential counselling service provided by an outside agency meets students' needs. The requirement for religious observance or guidance is met.

Satisfactory careers guidance is provided by a Connexions personal adviser, in liaison with tutors. The educational maintenance allowance is well promoted and managed. A member of the senior management team has responsibility for child protection issues. The welfare of vulnerable young people is promoted actively. Tutors have been trained in basic child protection procedures, although most do not have a full understanding of these.

27. The new tutorial curriculum and the approach taken by tutors are good. A comprehensive 'toolkit' has been developed that is a rich and flexible resource. Tutors share ideas generously and learn from each other's practice. Group and individual tutorials are usually well integrated, but some group work is not effective. Tutors have responded positively to poor student attendance and some imaginative strategies have been introduced. However, although in-year attendance rates have improved, retention rates in 2004 for students aged 16 to 18 remained low.

## Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The work of the college has improved since the last inspection and significantly in the last year. The new principal and senior management team, with the active support of the governing body, have demonstrated strong leadership. Most measures of performance show an overall improvement. Few lessons are unsatisfactory, more students are completing their courses successfully and the standard of students' work has improved significantly. Areas of provision that were unsatisfactory have improved and are at least satisfactory. Financial management systems are good. The college's management system produces mostly accurate and timely student data. New approaches to quality assurance are clearly focused on improving teaching and students' progress. The self-assessment report is mostly objective and rigorous.

29. However, there are areas where further improvement is still required. Some unsatisfactory teaching remains and not enough teaching is good or better. Too much teaching is only just satisfactory. Some aspects of the management of work-based learning are poor. Curriculum management is not of a consistent standard. For example, the quality of some course reviews and the effective use of data to plan and monitor activities. Retention and pass rates on a significant number of courses, especially those for students aged 16 to 18, mostly remain below the national average. Most students do not achieve their qualifications in key skills. While there are strong links with some employers, this is not the case for the whole curriculum. In some curriculum areas the range of courses is narrow.

30. Governors are well informed and provide good leadership. Since the last inspection in May 2003, 11 new members have joined the board. These include two former college principals and a local head teacher. Collectively, they provide much needed educational experience. Governors are well supported by the clerk. The committee structure and membership now reflects the skills and interests of individual governors effectively. The reports and data that governors receive are clear and concise. The committee that monitors the academic performance of the college is effective. For example, they discuss in detail reports on the outcomes from the lesson observation programme.

31. The new senior management team provides strong and effective leadership to staff. The team is focused primarily on improving the standards of teaching and learning and stabilising the college's finances. They have succeeded in these aims by hard work and utilising expertise from outside the college. For example, from Beacon colleges and other colleges who have undergone a recovery process. The mentoring and support provided to new managers and other staff undertaking new roles are very successful. Communication has improved considerably and is effective. For example, there are now whole-college staff meetings with the principal, regular team meetings and regular newsletters. The senior management team formally consults with staff at regular meetings. Teachers have played a greater part in planning their curriculum. Staff, students and external partners report that the college is now more vibrant than in the past.

32. The college has developed an effective approach to strategic and curriculum planning. Plans approved by the governors clearly identify priorities for the future. For example, the decision to expand level 1 work, sustain a steady growth in basic skills courses for adults and withdraw from much of the AS-level and GCE A-level provision. To support this process, each curriculum area has produced a curriculum map that shows gaps in provision and priority areas for development. A curriculum and financial plan for the period 2005 to 2007 is in place. A new strategic plan is being prepared for July 2005. The college has very close and productive links with some employers. However, they are not in place to address the needs of some curriculum areas or to ensure that local needs are identified.

33. A new approach to quality assurance was introduced in September 2004. The process is well managed and includes a comprehensive framework that covers all aspects of the college's work. Good use is made of performance indicators, targets and national benchmarking data. Staff have begun to carefully analyse their area of work performance. There is a clear focus on improving the standards of teaching and learning. Lesson observations are now carried out regularly by a trained team of observers that includes the head teacher from a local school. Lessons are graded and teachers receive detailed feedback. Any unsatisfactory teaching results in support for the teacher and a further observation of their work. Lesson observations form an important element of the appraisal process. The standards of teaching are rising and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is being reduced. However, too much of the teaching is still only satisfactory: not enough is good or better. Staff development is well managed and effective. Staff are appraised regularly and a good range of staff development opportunities is available. Managers, many of whom are new to their roles, are well supported by a management training programme. Very useful resource packs known as toolkits, for example, for improving teaching and learning, have been developed. These are effective in supporting teachers, managers and governors in their work.

34. As part of the framework, managers are required to review their courses and complete a course review form. These are then reviewed by senior managers. However, some reviews are insufficiently evaluative and some poorly completed. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the college self-assessment report. In particular, there was a close match in the assessment of teaching standards and the grading of curriculum areas. However, inspectors found the standards of students' work in lessons, although improved, were lower than the college's own expectations.

35. Overall curriculum management is satisfactory. In some areas, for example, in ICT and art, design and media, it is good. In other curriculum areas, although the curriculum is organised effectively, there is some weak practice. For instance, in sharing good practice and using data to inform decision making. Areas such as ESOL, literacy and numeracy are too reliant on part-time staff which makes effective communication difficult. The college has developed strategies to tackle these issues, but has not yet had sufficient time to prove their worth. Some aspects of the management of work-based learning are unsatisfactory. For example, in construction, learners do not have their progress monitored closely enough. The links between training of learners in the workplace and at college are not always clear.

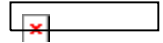
36. The college meets its commitments under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and is making good progress. Historic data are poor, but it has undertaken a very effective analysis of the latest data and developed a well thought out plan of action. Over the last year, the college has had a major focus on equality and diversity. Policies have been reviewed and updated. Equal opportunities data on staff and students are now collected and carefully analysed. In particular, the college has addressed recruitment and management issues as well as the performance of different groups of students. The cultural awareness week was very successful. The college has expanded its curriculum offer in ESOL to reflect demand from a variety of groups in the local community. An equality forum has been created that comprises of staff and students. Regular reports from this group are sent to governors.

37. A new management information system has been introduced. The system can produce timely and accurate data. These are accessible to teachers and managers online. The monitoring of students' attendance and progress has improved significantly. However, despite a campaign to improve students' attendance and punctuality, overall attendance remains much lower than the national average and has not greatly improved since the last inspection. Financial management has

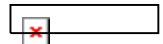


improved. New systems have been introduced including the ability to cost courses in detail. Middle managers and other staff are gaining familiarity with the approach and its implications. The general awareness of financial issues is growing and staff utilisation has improved. Heads of school receive monthly statements of expenditure and meet regularly with the head of finance to discuss their financial position. The college has begun to reduce its significant financial deficit and is beginning to provide satisfactory value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Construction



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- good development of practical skills for most students
  
- much good teaching in craft theory and technician lessons
  
- very good personal support for students
  
- good procedures to monitor and improve teaching and learning.

#### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates on electrical installation courses
  
- low pass rates on trowel occupations

- poor attendance
  
- inadequate target setting on practical projects
  
- insufficient work space for bricklaying learners
  
- poor management of work-based learning.

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

38. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses in construction at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Craft qualifications are offered in bricklaying, painting and decorating and wood occupations, and electrical installation and construction technician qualifications are offered at advanced level. There are currently 507 students following construction programmes; 146 are full time and 344 part time. There are 4 advanced apprentices and 13 apprentices following work-based learning programmes. The college provides an introductory construction qualification for 16 year 11 pupils from one local school and mixed entry level qualifications for three other schools.

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

39. Pass rates are high on most qualifications. The foundation construction award, for example, that includes the three areas of painting and decorating, wood occupations and brickwork has high pass and retention rates. However, on trowel occupations at level 2, pass rates are low. For example, in 2003, the 29% pass rate resulted from a very low retention rate. Some retention rates improved in 2004, but generally they were low. For instance, in 2004, the retention rate on electrical installation qualifications was 21%. Generally in-year retention rates for 2005 indicate a significant improvement. Over a four-year period from 2001 to 2005, of the 15 learners who started an advanced apprenticeship, 4 are still on programme. There have been no full framework achievements. On the apprenticeship programme, over the same period of time, 15 of the 54 that started are still on programme. Only six leavers achieved the apprenticeship framework.

40. Most college-based students develop good practical skills. Adult students in painting and decorating can describe their project work plans and give clear explanations of the methods and processes involved. A group of carpentry students aged 16 to 18 were able to select components from commercial catalogues and produce an estimate for the work indicated on a building drawing. Work-based learners develop good practical skills in the workplace and are involved in a wide variety of construction activities. They are well supported by qualified staff, experienced in the building trade. Learners are involved in a good variety of commercial and domestic construction projects. Employers expect the learners to produce work of high quality and they are seen as valuable members of their building team. Some learners develop additional skills such as dry lining. Attendance at lessons is poor. During the week of the inspection, attendance at lessons was low at 69%, well below the national average.

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

| Qualification  | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Intermediate construction award                          | 2     | No. of starts    | *    | 18   | 17   |
|  |       | % retention      | *    | 61   | 47   |
|  |       | % pass rate      | *    | 45   | 88   |
| National vocational qualification (NVQ) wood occupations | 2     | No. of starts    | 27   | **   | 26   |
|  |       | % retention      | 37   | **   | 58   |
|  |       | % pass rate      | 90   | **   | 73   |
| NVQ trowel occupations                                   | 2     | No. of starts    | 17   | 24   | **   |
|  |       | % retention      | 47   | 29   | **   |
|  |       | % pass rate      | 100  | 29   | **   |
| City and Guilds 2360-06 electrical installation part 1   | 2     | No. of starts    | 41   | 31   | 47   |
|  |       | % retention      | 55   | 68   | 21   |
|  |       | % pass rate      | 62   | 48   | 90   |

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

\*course did not run

\*\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

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

41. Teaching and learning in theory lessons are good. Lessons are well planned and teachers encourage students' participation with an appropriate variety of learner-centred activities. Most theory lessons have clearly defined learning outcomes that are monitored. Some aspects of practical teaching are unsatisfactory. For example, target setting for long practical projects is inadequate. Most practical activities are based around projects that only have final assessment criteria. Individual students' attainment and progress during individual sessions are not monitored routinely. Students do not receive regular assessment and feedback on their progress. In most practical lessons, students work safely and wear appropriate protective equipment. However, in one lesson, bricklaying students cut bricks without suitable eye protection. In a carpentry workshop, a student used a 240-volt power tool which does not conform to construction industry requirements.

42. Resources, including specialist equipment, tools and construction materials, are satisfactory and teachers are appropriately experienced. However, there is insufficient workspace in the workshop used by evening only and day-release bricklaying students. In one lesson, with only 65% attendance, the workspace was very cramped. Students work in tight spaces, often very close to each other or to other groups' practice walls. The painting and decorating provision was recently moved to different accommodation. Although an improvement, it is only just satisfactory with students having to work on mobile rigs. The college plans to extend the workspace.

43. Assessment of students' practical work in college is satisfactory. Course files contain up-to-date information on a student's overall progress, but developmental feedback is often minimal. There is insufficient work-based assessment. Internal verification is satisfactory.

44. The range of provision in building crafts and electrical installation at level 2 is satisfactory. However, the provision at level 3 is small. The teaching of key skills has improved since the last inspection in May 2003. Key skills are now taught and assessed by construction teachers and are relevant to students' training programmes. However, teachers fail to make use of naturally occurring key skills evidence. Enrichment activities are not planned effectively.

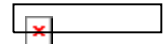
45. Support for students is good. Adult students in particular are appreciative of the way tutors flexibly adjust learning programmes to make allowances for work and family commitments. Students in general are aware that many aspects of the college have improved and are continuing to do so.

Students who are in need of additional learning support receive it during lessons. Individual tutorials are regular. However, the process often lacks confidentiality and is disrupted continually by the tutor having to support and guide the rest of the group. Reviews for work-based learners are poor. They are infrequent and often fail to meet the contractual requirement of being carried out every 12 weeks. The reviews lack input from employers and work related, short-term targets. Target setting is often limited to completing assignments and projects. Reviews do not sufficiently test or reinforce learners' knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities and diversity issues in the workplace.

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

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Team meetings are regular. Teaching and learning are improving and new teachers are well supported. New and recently appointed members of staff have a mentor. Staff appraisals and training take account of lesson observation outcomes. Good practice is shared effectively and many new teachers are undertaking teaching qualifications. The self-assessment report is self-critical and identifies most key issues affecting the provision. Action plans identify measures for improvement, but have few measurable targets or review dates. However, the poor management of work-based learning is not identified clearly. The co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job learning and the monitoring of health and safety or equality of opportunity in the workplace are inadequate. The construction department has few links with local industry.

### **Engineering**



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

#### ***Strengths***

- very high achievement of the aeronautical advanced framework
  
- good practical skills development through projects
  
- well-resourced workshops equipped to current industrial standards
  
- productive and effective links with employers.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low framework completions in vehicle engineering

- declining pass rate on the vehicle engineering national diploma
  
- unsatisfactory teaching in a few theory lessons
  
- ineffective actions to cover staff shortages
  
- incomplete and poor use of individual learning plans
  
- insufficient internal verification.

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

47. Courses are offered in mechanical, manufacture, aviation, electronic and vehicle engineering. There are currently 86 full-time and 24 part-time students aged 16 to 18 following engineering courses. Adults account for a further 23 full-time and 38 part-time enrolments. In motor vehicle, there are 74 full-time and 13 part-time students aged 16 to 18, and 14 full-time and 14 part-time adult students. The overall offer ranges from entry level to level 3. The college offers engineering and motor vehicle courses to 75 pupils from local schools. The work-based learning advanced offer includes aeronautical engineering (41 learners), engineering maintenance (2 learners) and railway engineering, with 7 learners. Five learners are following a foundation railway engineering programme. Very few learners are female.

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

48. Framework achievements in work-based aeronautical engineering are very high, at 90% or above. Most other pass rates are low. For example, the pass rates on the vehicle engineering national diploma have declined steadily, and fell in 2004 to only 40%. The apprenticeship framework completion rate for vehicle engineering was so low that the provision has now been transferred to another provider. Pass rates on the computer-aided design course are low and declined to 30% in 2004. At levels 1 and 2, pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have remained below the national average. For all adult programmes and at level 3 for younger students, pass rates are around the national average. Most retention rates are close to the average and at level 3 are at, or above, national averages. Students' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Most successful workplace learners meet key skills requirements by prior attainment and exemption. Key skills pass rates for most other students are very low. For students that succeed, there are satisfactory opportunities to progress.

49. The standard of learners' work in the workplace is high and in college it is satisfactory. Aeronautical engineering learners have excellent work placements, and on-the-job training is very good. Learners experience progressive and continuous skills development. Most are employed by international airlines and work on servicing and maintaining commercial aircraft. Their skills are highly developed and most progress well. Work-based learners' portfolios are neat, well organised and well presented. There are some good examples of advanced level projects and assignments.

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

| Qualification                                 | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Progression award in auto vehicle 1 year      | 1     | No. of starts    | 15   | 19   | 46   |
|   |       | % retention      | 60   | 79   | 74   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 67   | 33   | 91   |
| Performing engineering operations             | 1     | No. of starts    | *    | 27   | 15   |
|   |       | % retention      | *    | 19   | 55   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | *    | 40   | 88   |
| NVQ in vehicle maintenance                    | 2     | No. of starts    | 16   | 23   | 29   |
|   |       | % retention      | 63   | 57   | 62   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 30   | 8    | 33   |
| City and Guilds 4351-07 computer-aided design | 2     | No. of starts    | *    | 22   | 18   |
|   |       | % retention      | *    | 86   | 78   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | *    | 58   | 93   |
| National diploma in vehicle repair            | 3     | No. of starts    | 17   | **   | 24   |
|   |       | % retention      | 76   | 1**  | 42   |
|   |       | % pass rate      | 100  | **   | 40   |

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

\*course did not run

\*\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

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

50. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory, but some theory lessons are unsatisfactory. Theory lessons are often linked appropriately to practical activities. In the best lessons, teachers use effective question and answer techniques to establish existing knowledge and progressively develop students' skills. In practical lessons, early finishers are often given extension activities. In one practical lesson, for instance, students who had completed a practical unit were encouraged to manufacture parts of a miniature steam engine. Students following the national motor sports diploma manufacture a racing car which they eventually get to drive. Key skills are now taught in context by vocational staff.

51. However, many lessons are in part dull and uninspiring. Teachers rarely use any ILT. For example, overhead projectors are used only to display lesson objectives. In some practical lessons, students often do not have sufficient components to complete the set tasks. Teachers often talk too much in lessons and do not involve the students enough. In aircraft systems courses, some essential specialist topics are not covered. For some unsatisfactory lessons, there are no schemes of work or lesson plans, and handouts are of low quality.

52. Teachers are appropriately qualified, but staff shortages have led to some lessons being cancelled over an 18 month period. During this time, some assignments were lost and not assessed. Physical resources are good in all areas. The vehicle engineering section is sponsored by a major vehicle engineering company. The engineering workshops are well equipped with a range of computerised machine tools. The recently opened Polymer centre has industrial-standard specialist machines, but it is underused. Facilities for teaching aeronautical engineering at the college are satisfactory. Resources in some classrooms are of a low standard and require refurbishment. General housekeeping in some areas is poor.

53. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are mostly satisfactory. However, in the workplace there is little observational assessment. Skill competencies are often assessed by

simulation based on job cards and witness testimonies. Too much assessment on most vehicle engineering programmes takes place at the end of a programme. Individual learning plans have only recently been introduced and they are not yet used effectively by all teachers and learners.

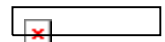
54. The college offers a satisfactory range of programmes, including school links, apprenticeships, national awards, national diplomas and industry-lead body qualifications. Currently, there are no evening classes and some provision is being phased out. Enrichment activities are good. For example, there have been talks by guest speakers from local industry and aircraft test pilots. The national diploma motor sports students' college race team attend various motor race tracks with their own race car.

55. Full-time students have a tutorial once a week and meet with their tutor individually. Initial assessment is comprehensive, but some vehicle engineering students did not receive additional learning support for nine months. Support when arranged is effective. Some work-based learners are not assessed fully and there is an over reliance on employers' recruitment tests. Some students with additional needs only receive support because they referred themselves.

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

56. The overall management of the engineering provision is unsatisfactory. However, the management arrangements for work-based aeronautical engineering are good. Four full-time vehicle engineering teachers who started recently are receiving effective support and mentoring. Staff meetings are regular across the divisions. Most teachers are appraised regularly and training is clearly focused on improving teaching and learning. Comments from external verifiers' reports are generally positive. However, too many aspects of management are unsatisfactory. Too many lessons are cancelled or disrupted by constant changes to teaching staff. Communication with work-based learners on NVQ level 3 programmes is poor. There is still insufficient trained staff to operate an effective internal verification system. Insufficient use is made of management information for quality improvement. Tracking of students' progress has only recently been introduced. Teachers were involved in the compilation of the self-assessment report, but most course reviews are insufficiently detailed. Inspectors agreed with most of the self-assessment report, but considered that insufficient weight was given to some key weaknesses. The lesson observation grade profile awarded by inspectors was lower than stated in the self-assessment report.

### **Business administration and management**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates in bookkeeping and accounts
  
- well-developed oral and written communication skills
  
- highly effective work experience

- good assessment practice
  
- good monitoring of students' progress .

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on a number of courses
  
- low pass rates on AS-level business and the certificate in text processing
  
- lack of challenge for the more able students
  
- restricted range of courses.

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

57. The college offers a range of business courses from the level 1 certificate in business practice to higher level part-time courses, such as the certificate in personnel practice. Most students aged 16 to 18 follow the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA exam board (OCR) certificated business courses ranging from levels 1 to 3. Full-time students can also enrol on AS-level or GCE A-level business courses. The part-time provision includes courses in personnel practice, accountancy and bookkeeping. Text and word processing are offered to part-time students during the day. There are 125 students in the department, of whom 66 are full time and 59 part time.

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

58. Pass and retention rates are high in bookkeeping and accounts, and in the certificate of personnel practice. In GCE A-level business studies and the certificate of text processing, pass rates are well below average. In the certificate of administration and NVQ accounting courses, pass rates are high, but retention rates are below the national average.

59. The standard of students' work in lessons is mostly satisfactory, but sometimes high. Generally, students have a good knowledge and understanding of business terminology, concepts and skills. They are able to apply what they have learned to new situations. For example, a level 3 student was able to work out the consumer profile of a do-it-yourself store accurately, and a level 2 student analysed fully the range of issues confronting his proposed disc jockey business. Some students develop the necessary analytical and evaluative skills needed to make connections between various areas of the course. In general, however, these skills are not well developed. Students make excellent use of their work experience placements to provide evidence for their assignments. For instance, one student was able to identify the characteristics of good customer service using examples from her work placement at a training centre for cabin crew. At all levels, students display good research skills and make very good use of the Internet for their work. Generally,



communication skills are above average, grammar and spelling are good and there are examples of sophisticated writing within assignment work. A few students, however, struggle with the interpretation of the examination criteria.

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

| Qualification                     | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Bookkeeping and accounts          | 1     | No. of starts    | 18   | 34   | 33   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 83   | 94   | 91   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 80   | 81   | 87   |
| NVQ accounting                    | 2     | No. of starts    | 22   | 16   | *    |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 73   | 56   | *    |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 44   | 44   | *    |
| AS-level business                 | 3     | No. of starts    | 31   | 23   | 25   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 71   | 70   | 84   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 68   | 75   | 52   |
| Certificate in personnel practice | 3     | No. of starts    | 33   | 25   | *    |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 91   | 80   | *    |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 97   | 95   | *    |

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

\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

60. Teaching is generally satisfactory with some good teaching and the occasional very good lesson. Lessons are well planned with learning objectives, but these are not always shared with students. Teachers are good at developing students' knowledge and understanding of essential concepts. They have positive and productive relationships with their students, which adds to students' motivation and builds their confidence. Teachers regularly ask questions to test students' understanding, but they do not always explore the answers fully. In one good AS-level business studies lesson, students were able to demonstrate that the effect of an increase in value added tax would depend on the elasticity of demand for goods. Good use is made of case studies within the AS-level course. Teachers give good support to students in their assignment work and encourage them to meet deadlines. Students work well independently and in groups, and have positive attitudes to their work. However, there is insufficient use of teaching methods such as open questions and challenging statements to encourage students to develop their analytical and evaluative skills. Set tasks do not always stretch the learning of more able students.

61. Accommodation and resources used for teaching are good, but there is no set area to simulate a real working environment. Teachers are appropriately qualified. However, few have recent industrial experience or a good working knowledge of current business practices. Teachers make very good use of the Internet.

62. The assessment of students' work is good. Written work is marked regularly and accurately, and students receive good feedback to help them improve their performance. Students are regularly set achievable and appropriate targets. Students' assignments are mostly well presented. In a few cases, students commence set tasks without understanding fully external assessment criteria. Internal verification systems are thorough. External moderation reports are mostly positive. The monitoring of students' progress is very good.

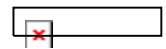
63. The curriculum provision is sufficient, but narrow in comparison with other similar colleges. Students aged 16 to 18 have clear progression routes from level 1 to level 3. However, there are only two courses for adults and no foundation course in business studies. Subject enrichment is limited. The curriculum-related work experience programme is well organised and effective. However, insufficient use is made of industrial visits, enterprise activities and visiting speakers to enrich the curriculum. There is good teaching of communication and ICT key skills, which are integrated fully with the subjects taught.

64. Support for students is good. Business teachers are now fully involved in the recruitment and induction process. Students are placed on appropriate courses. The induction programme is good and the assessment of students' literacy and numeracy needs is effective. Students feel well supported. Tutorial periods are well used and cover a good range of topics that are relevant. HE advice is satisfactory. Students have access to careers advice, but few use this service.

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

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular team meetings have a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. The lesson observation system is good. Observed teachers receive a clear action plan that is monitored carefully. Lesson planning is good, but schemes of work sometimes contain insufficient details about teaching methodology. The system for mentoring new staff is effective. The use of value added is in the early stages of development. The self-assessment report is satisfactory, but there is insufficient analysis of attainment, retention rate problems and weaknesses in teaching.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high standard of work
  
- good progression by adults
  
- much stimulating teaching
  
- imaginative use of assignments to develop students' skills and understanding
  
- good individual support in lessons
  
- good curriculum management.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor attendance and lack of punctuality on full-time courses
  
- inefficient preparation for some lessons
  
- unsatisfactory target setting for students on self-study workshop programmes
  
- narrow range of courses for adults.

### **Scope of provision**

66. The college offers full-time general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses that range from levels 1 to 3. There are 65 full-time students aged 16 to 18 on this provision. The vast majority of students are part-time adults following a limited range of courses. Most of the 1,496 students are following self-guided City and Guilds qualifications at levels 1 and 2 in community venues. An additional 71 students are working towards Open College Network (OCN) qualifications from entry level to level 2. These include short courses such as 'never used a computer' and some longer courses lasting up to a year.

### **Achievement and standards**

67. Since the last inspection, retention and pass rates have improved on most courses and are now close to the national average. Pass rates are high on the City and Guilds basic competence in information technology (IT) short course and on the GNVQ intermediate course.

68. Students produce a high standard of work. They demonstrate a good range of skills and techniques in their written work. Their solutions to tasks are often creative and well presented. On vocational courses, they exhibit a good awareness of industrial practice. Students aged 16 to 18 demonstrate good evaluative skills. Adult students are particularly enthusiastic about their new learning. They progress well between courses and levels, and many use ICT as a stepping stone to enter other areas of study. However, in a few full-time lessons there is a pattern of frequent absence and lack of punctuality.

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

| <b>Qualification</b>                                      | <b>Level</b> | <b>Completion year:</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| City and Guilds 4242<br>basic competence in IT<br>(short) | 1            | No. of starts           | 132         | 185         | 39          |
|   |              | % retention             | 86          | 97          | 97          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 90          | 97          | 87          |
| City and Guilds 7261                                      | 1            | No. of starts           | 278         | 224         | *           |

|  |   |               |    |     |     |
|--|---|---------------|----|-----|-----|
| certificate in computer applications** |   | % retention   | 39 | 78  | *   |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 59 | 40  | *   |
| Certificate for IT users**             | 1 | No. of starts | *  | 730 | 617 |
|  |   | % retention   | *  | 49  | 77  |
|  |   | % pass rate   | *  | 53  | 62  |
| GNVQ intermediate in ICT               | 2 | No. of starts | 26 | 32  | 17  |
|  |   | % retention   | 69 | 91  | 71  |
|  |   | % pass rate   | 83 | 52  | 83  |

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

\*course did not run

\*\*certificate/diploma for IT users replaces City and Guilds 7261 qualifications

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

69. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods and creative materials. Much teaching is stimulating. Lessons are well planned. Group activities are managed skilfully. Students are motivated and work well together. They enjoy learning. Teachers check frequently on what is learnt and use a variety of tasks to sustain interest. In one good lesson, beginners, many of whom were beyond retirement age, were engrossed in learning basic concepts. The teacher's inspiring and entertaining presentation was complemented by attractive software. This taught them mouse control and raised their awareness of health and safety issues. In a good lesson for students aged 16 to 18, a group discussion about web design was lively and well informed.

70. However, some lessons are not well prepared. Teachers do not introduce tasks clearly and have to repeat instructions to individuals. In some lessons, teachers use the network well as a source of prepared exercises; in others, students have to spend time copying printed handouts before they start a task. Some handouts and overhead projector slides are poorly produced and difficult to read.

71. Computer resources on the main site are good. Machines are up to date and have multimedia facilities. Rooms are well laid out and have good access to the Internet. Community venues are welcoming and comfortable. Adaptive technologies are available for students who might need to use them. There are adequate resources in the library. Computer equipment is regularly audited and updated. Staff are well qualified vocationally and professionally, and many have had recent relevant training. However, few full-time staff have any commercial computing experience.

72. Assignments are used imaginatively to develop students' understanding and skills. They are well planned, mapped clearly to assessment criteria and marked rigorously. Teachers give good feedback as to how students might improve their work. One well-designed assignment for adults encouraged them to experiment when producing attractive letter templates. Assignment briefs clearly identify opportunities for demonstrating competence in key skills within an ICT context, but these are referred to rarely. Full-time students have good individual learning plans which set them clear academic and personal targets. These are usually clear and specific, and are monitored regularly in tutorials. However, target setting for adult students on self-study workshop programmes is unsatisfactory. Although reviews discuss progress, little of the discussion is recorded. Targets are set, but they are rarely specific or time based. There is a system for students to self-assess, but some find it confusing.

73. The provision for full-time students is satisfactory, but for adults, who represent by far the largest proportion of students, the range of courses is narrow. There is no level 3 provision and few taught courses lead to formal qualifications. Self-guided students have little access to evening tutorials. There are no technical courses. However, a wider range of courses is planned for September 2005.

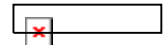
A programme of visiting speakers, work experience for AVCE students and trips to local enterprises is used effectively to enrich full-time students' experience of ICT.

74. Individual support in lessons is good. Full-time students' support needs are identified early. There are effective arrangements to use additional learning support assistants as the providers of appropriately dedicated help. Students have good access to help, advice and guidance. They value the range and sensitivity of the support offered. Initial assessment for adult beginners is appropriate. Students with an identified learning need receive good support. However, formal testing has only recently been introduced for students on self-guided programmes. Some students do not receive the support they need. For example, an adult student with dyslexia was making very slow progress on their self-guided learning programme because of the requirement to read the workbooks independently.

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

75. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum is co-ordinated well with good communication that involves all staff. New staff are mentored well. Observation of teaching within the department has raised standards. Students' feedback is analysed routinely and used to make improvements. Good practice is shared across the college and with other colleges. Staff now have a better understanding of how to use data for monitoring and planning. The relationship between students and staff is very respectful. Students have a very good understanding of equality and diversity. The department has been successful in recruiting many full-time students from minority groups. A recent visit to the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) effectively raised students' understanding of disability. Teachers contributed to the new curriculum strategy and to the self-assessment report. The report identified most strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Some aspects of the new strategy have yet to have an impact.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates in hairdressing at levels 2 and 3 and in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3
- high pass rates in hairdressing at level 2 and in beauty therapy at level 2
- good support for students
- high standard of work in students' assignments.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rate in NVQ level 3 beauty therapy
  
- low attendance at lessons
  
- lack of stimulating teaching in many lessons
  
- insufficient number of clients restricting development of students' skills and assessment opportunities.

**Scope of provision**

76. The college offers a range of full-time NVQ courses in hairdressing at levels 1 and 2 and beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. Part-time provision includes Indian head massage, cosmetic make-up, theatrical and media make-up, body massage, manicure, nail treatments and NVQ hairdressing at level 3. There are 300 students enrolled on courses, of whom 108 are aged 16 to 18. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 18, but 23 adults are full time with an additional 169 following the part-time provision. NVQ hairdressing at level 1 is followed by 64 pupils from 5 local schools. There are 13 learners from local salons who attend an apprenticeship programme.

**Achievement and standards**

77. Retention and pass rates are high on NVQ level 2 programmes in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and NVQ level 2 beauty therapy are well above the national average. The NVQ level 3 beauty therapy pass rate is improving, but in 2004 was still below the national average. Since the inspection of May 2003, there has been a significant fall, from 100% to 32%, in the pass rate on the NVQ level 1 in hairdressing. Retention rates in NVQ level 1 hairdressing are high and well above the national average. Achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is high, but the cohort size is small.

78. Most students achieve the necessary practical standards that would enable them to work effectively in a commercial salon. During practical lessons, students often work independently and competently. They demonstrate the required technical skills and a strong commitment to health and safety and customer service. The standard of students' assignments is high. Health and safety and cutting assignments are well researched and presented. The attendance rate at all lessons observed was 64%, well below the national average of 75%. However, college records indicate that in the week before inspection and overall during the inspection week attendance averaged 74%, around the national rate.

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

| Qualification      | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ hairdressing   | 2     | No. of starts    | 78   | 50   | 26   |
|                    |       | % retention      | 27   | 66   | 69   |
|                    |       | % pass rate      | 90   | 61   | 89   |
| NVQ beauty therapy | 2     | No. of starts    | 16   | 83   | 64   |

|                    |   |               |     |    |    |
|--------------------|---|---------------|-----|----|----|
|                    |   | % retention   | 38  | 71 | 91 |
|                    |   | % pass rate   | 100 | 85 | 97 |
| NVQ beauty therapy | 3 | No. of starts | 22  | 15 | 32 |
|                    |   | % retention   | 50  | 87 | 81 |
|                    |   | % pass rate   | 73  | 38 | 54 |

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

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

79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. No teaching is unsatisfactory, but only a small proportion is good or better. In the more interesting lessons, teachers are well prepared, use a variety of methods and encourage students to participate. In a lesson on professionalism, students' understanding was developed through working in pairs and the production of 'mind maps'. Explaining the mind maps to other members of the class helped students to explore professional concepts and practices and develop communication skills. Attention to health and safety procedures is good. Students keep the salons safe and clean and wear appropriate personal protection. There is a good rapport between teachers and students, and teachers are effective in raising students' confidence, and social and practical skills. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own performance. They take responsibility for their own development by the use of colour-coded cards. These require them to review their progress at the beginning and end of each lesson.

80. In the weaker lessons, teaching is not stimulating and students' learning is not challenged sufficiently. When responding to questions, students are frequently allowed to give short answers which do not indicate any depth of understanding. Some lessons start well, but too often the pace of work drops and students lose interest. Most practical lessons are well planned, but this is often undermined by the shortage of clients and the consequent loss of a realistic working environment. Work-based learners and college students about to complete their second years frequently have to return to working on head forms. This constrains the development of their practical skills and limits assessment opportunities. Key skills are identified in assignments; however, they are not well integrated with vocational activities.

81. Salon accommodation for hairdressing and beauty therapy is satisfactory. However, the décor and equipment are dated and do not reflect industrial standards. There is a large reception area. The full-time qualified receptionist assesses students for their reception and retail duties. Students are taught how to maintain computerised records of clients' appointments, but not of stock control. The library is well stocked with vocational textbooks and videos.

82. The assessment of students' work and progress is satisfactory. Verification procedures are adequate, but they were started just before the inspection, particularly in beauty therapy. Delays, compounded by a lack of qualified verifiers, have led to some invalid verification. New systems have been introduced across the college to ensure the timeliness and standardisation of assessment and verification practice. However, their impact is not yet clear.

83. The provision meets local needs. Adult students appreciate the flexible timing of part-time courses, and progression opportunities between levels are satisfactory. Further extension of the course range, including full-time hairdressing at level 3, is to be offered from September 2005.

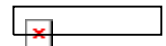
84. Students are well supported. Each group of students has one key teacher for the whole of the year. They are responsible for meeting individual students' needs. Learning support is provided in lessons as well as in separate sessions. Individual training plans are well used in tutorials to set targets and review progress. Group tutorials offer a stimulating environment within which students can look at a range of topics. These include time management, healthy living, career planning and interpersonal skills.

85. Work placements for apprentices are good. Employers provide good, flexible training opportunities in supportive salons. However, salon training and training in the college is not well co-ordinated. Employers and their staff are unfamiliar with the college's training schedule. Progress reviews for work-based learners are satisfactory, but some lack detailed guidance on how targets might be achieved.

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

86. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new divisional structure has been established with clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Teachers have high aspirations for the division. Regular team meetings provide good opportunities for discussions on course issues and individual students. These meetings are now informed by accurate management information to monitor performance. Much teaching is just satisfactory and lacks inspiration. On-the-job and off-the-job training are poorly co-ordinated. Employers and salon stylists lack understanding of the training and assessment process and how they could contribute. The college has recognised this problem. Inspectors mostly agreed with the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Equality and diversity are actively promoted during students' induction, in tutorials and within key skills.

### **Art, design and media studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high standards of students' work on most courses
  
- much good teaching
  
- very good studio space and equipment in visual arts and media
  
- rigorous assessment and evaluation
  
- effective curriculum leadership and management.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on a minority of courses



- o low retention rates on most national diploma courses.

### **Scope of provision**

87. There is a good range of full-time and part-time courses in visual arts and media. These include national diplomas in fine art, graphics, media, e-media, photography and multimedia, as well as a foundation diploma in art and design. GCE A levels are offered in media studies and film studies. Courses at level 2 are offered through first diplomas in art and design and media. A new full-time level 1 course in art and design was introduced in 2004/05. The full-time National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) fast-track journalism course is also offered to adults. A range of part-time courses for adults is offered at the main college site and some community venues. These include floristry, sculpture, pottery, drawing and painting, and web page design. There are 394 students enrolled on these courses, of whom 305 are full time and 89 part time. Some 55% of students follow media courses and 45% study art and design.

### **Achievement and standards**

88. Most pass rates are at the national average, but are low on a minority of courses. For example, only 71% of students completing the national diploma in media passed in 2004. This is well below the national average. Retention rates are low on most national diploma courses. The retention rate in the national diploma in fine art has been below the national average for the last three years. However, in-year retention rates are high and more students are now staying on than in previous years.

89. Students produce work of a high standard. Some practical projects are challenging and imaginative. Some work in art and design is on a large scale. Level 1 art and design students produce individual projects based on visits to the Soane museum and Pitt-Rivers museum. Media students use industrial-standard software with confidence. They are able to describe in detail complex procedures such as 'betweens' in flash design software. The second year media film group produce a drama recording each year in which they audition and use trained actors. After the recording, students' understanding of the urgencies of shooting schedules and the sensitivities of working with professionals were greatly enhanced. Many level 3 students produce dynamic portfolios and make progress to prestigious HE courses. However, some students' portfolios lack excitement and vitality. The displays of students' work, both in the school of art and in the main campus buildings, help celebrate achievement and enhance the circulation spaces for all students.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in art and design and media studies, 2002 to 2004**

| <b>Qualification</b>                            | <b>Level</b> | <b>Completion year:</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Diploma in foundation studies in art and design | 3            | No. of starts           | 50          | 37          | 54          |
|   |              | % retention             | 96          | 86          | 96          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 96          | 97          | 96          |
| National diploma in fine art                    | 3            | No. of starts           | 47          | 39          | 43          |
|   |              | % retention             | 47          | 46          | 53          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 86          | 89          | 96          |
| AS-level film studies                           | 3            | No. of starts           | 30          | 26          | 21          |
|   |              | % retention             | 87          | 77          | 76          |
|   |              | % pass rate             | 96          | 100         | 94          |
| National diploma in                             | 3            | No. of starts           | 27          | 23          | 29          |

|       |             |    |    |    |
|-------|-------------|----|----|----|
| media | % retention | 59 | 65 | 59 |
|       | % pass rate | 63 | 93 | 71 |

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

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

90. There is much good teaching in art and media. Courses are well organised with comprehensive lesson plans. Schemes of work are appropriate to students' ability and aspirations. Individual teaching on the foundation diploma and second year national diploma courses is enabling, challenging and sensitive. Teachers take full account of students' HE ambitions. Media students are encouraged to develop a good awareness of the demands of industry. Communication key skills are combined successfully with contextual studies. For example, in one very effective lesson, students presented the results of their research on artists and designers before being evaluated by their fellow students. Feedback by teachers covered assessment criteria effectively for both key skills and contextual studies.

91. Teachers are well motivated and appropriately qualified specialists. Many part-time teachers bring valuable experience from their own professional practice. Current industrial standards and expectations are taught effectively. Many art teachers practise and exhibit their own work. The studio spaces, facilities and equipment throughout the school of art, design and media are excellent and create an inspiring environment. Computer equipment is extensive, modern and well maintained. Students benefit from industrial-standard software. The television studio is professionally equipped. Students are encouraged to use many of the facilities provided principally for HE courses.

92. Assessment and evaluation of students' work are effective. Students present, describe and evaluate their work confidently in groups. For example, photography students describe and evaluate their finished project work on still life with keen visual awareness and a good use of critical vocabulary. Individual tutorials support the assessment process well and group tutorials are used to reinforce students' understanding of specialist language.

93. The range of courses offered is adequate. Courses are offered from level 1 through to the Higher National Diploma (HND) in art and design and from level 2 through to HND in media. Additionally, a number of certificated courses for part-time study are available at the main college site and at community centres.

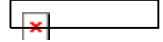
94. Students are well supported by their teachers and tutors and feel able to speak openly to their subject teachers. Individual and group tutorials are increasingly effective. Students' individual needs are now identified and their progress monitored closely. Group profiles of each class record students' learning needs, including any specialist support they may require. However, initial guidance has been poor in the past and, prior to September 2004, some students were enrolled on inappropriate courses or levels. Retention rates on some of these courses were low. However, with improved initial guidance and support, a significant proportion of students are now being retained.

### **Leadership and management**

95. Leadership and management are good. Communication is effective. Lesson observations are used effectively to improve teaching and learning. Staff training is good and has focused on the production of coherent lesson plans, identifying extension activities and integrating key skills. The management team are relatively new, but have established a well-planned timetable for improvement. Student guidance and attendance monitoring have improved significantly. Issues that might adversely affect students' performance are resolved quickly. Accredited adult and community art and design provision is now the responsibility of the school. There are clear plans to improve this provision and extend its range and recruitment. Links with local schools are strong. Teachers are committed to raising the awareness of the wide range and quality of work produced in schools and the college. There is an extensive programme of displays, including work from local schools. The self-assessment report identifies the majority of strengths and areas for improvement accurately

within both art and media. However, not all staff contributed to the composition of the report.

## **Modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- high retention rates on most courses
  
- well-developed oral skills
  
- highly effective curriculum organisation.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates in AS-level and GCE A2 French, AS-level Italian and English as a foreign language at level 1
  
- insufficient use of ILT in teaching
  
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

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

96. The college offers eight languages, including Chinese, Japanese and modern Greek, from beginners' level to level 3. The advanced level offer is limited to French and Spanish. There are currently 690 part-time students following accredited courses in modern languages. The college provides a number of non-accredited courses in French, Spanish and Italian, and provides holiday language courses and intensive language weeks at beginner and intermediate levels. English as a foreign language courses are offered from beginner level to proficiency level. There are 182 part-time and 12 full-time students following these qualifications.

### **Achievement and standards**

97. Pass rates are high in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) Spanish, GCSE Italian and in GCE A2 Spanish, but enrolments have declined and are now low. Over 500 students passed OCN level 1 in a selection of languages and more than 150 were successful at NVQ level 2. Only a few students failed. In English as a foreign language, pass rates are high on London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) courses offered at four different levels and in the Cambridge Preliminary English Test. In 2004, pass rates in AS-level and GCE A-level French and AS-level Italian were low. Pass rates on several English as a foreign language courses were low, but improved in 2004 to at, or around, the national averages. Retention rates on most modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language courses are high. Few students have withdrawn from courses during the current academic year.

98. In modern foreign languages, students' oral skills are developed systematically. Constant exposure to the foreign language in lessons helps students develop listening and comprehension skills and improve confidence in speaking. In a few lessons, vocabulary is not introduced in context and students have problems remembering it. Written work is usually of an acceptable standard and is mostly grammatically accurate. Students' pronunciation is generally satisfactory, but intonation is sometimes anglicised. In English as a foreign language, most students are confident speakers of English. They are keen to make useful contributions in lessons, but a significant number have problems with spelling.

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

| <b>Qualification</b>   | <b>Level</b> | <b>Completion year:</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| English as a foreign language University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) qualification level 1 (short) | 1            | No. of starts           | 137         | 62          | 91          |
|  |              | % retention             | 93          | 97          | 96          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 6           | 10          | 32          |
| GCSE Spanish 1 year  | 2            | No. of starts           | 28          | 15          | *           |
|  |              | % retention             | 79          | 60          | *           |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 100         | 89          | *           |
| Certificate of proficiency in English (short)  | 3            | No. of starts           | 21          | 39          | 30          |
|  |              | % retention             | 95          | 95          | 87          |
|  |              | % pass rate             | 30          | 16          | 54          |

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

\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

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

99. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory and no lesson was unsatisfactory, a significant improvement since the previous inspection in May 2003. Good oral skills are now evident in many lessons. In lessons, students ask questions in a natural manner in the foreign language they are learning. In one vibrant lesson, students acted out a rehearsed role play and several had sufficient confidence to add impromptu comments in German. In an AS-level Spanish lesson, students spoke at length on complex topics, for example, the status of Gibraltar and the recent terrorist bombings in Madrid. In an English as a foreign language lesson, students enjoyed designing letters for job applications. They demonstrated a good awareness of language and were able to select an appropriate tone, style and range of phrases. The frequent use of closely monitored work in pairs

enables teachers to give immediate and targeted individual support. In these lessons, students of all abilities make appropriate progress. However, some learning materials are dull. Teachers do not use the technological advances available. Occasionally, in modern foreign languages lessons, teachers speak in English unnecessarily. New items of vocabulary, for example, are simply translated without trying first to demonstrate the use of the word in a meaningful context. Modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language teachers sometimes fail to encourage the more reticent students to participate more actively. Faulty pronunciation and intonation are not always corrected. In general, students enjoy their learning and value the good rapport they have with their teachers.

100. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced for the levels they teach. New technical equipment such as CD, DVD and video players were purchased recently, but are not as yet incorporated fully into teaching and learning. These and other technologies such as satellite television and languages-related software are underused or not present in lessons. Rooms are generally well equipped with televisions, overhead projectors and whiteboards. A few rooms have good modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language related wall displays. E-mails are being used increasingly and effectively for contacting students and for sending and receiving work.

101. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory overall. The accuracy of marking on written work is good. Useful comments are sometimes added to help students know how to improve their performance. However, oral feedback is insufficiently detailed on occasions. Initial assessment is now used satisfactorily and students identified with additional learning needs are referred for specialist help. External moderator reports are mostly positive and comment favourably on the standard of internal marking. The monitoring and recording of students' progress have improved and are now satisfactory.

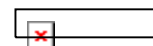
102. The GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level modern foreign languages course offer is in decline in part due to falling recruitment, but also strategic decisions. The range of OCN language courses remains broad. Student numbers on these courses are large and stable. There are good progression opportunities between the various levels. Modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language students enjoy a varied range of enrichment opportunities.

103. Pastoral and academic support are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The introduction of better monitoring systems is helping teachers identify and rectify problems as they arise. Subject-specific targets focus on aspects of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers give willingly of their time outside lessons to assist students in a variety of ways. Some teachers successfully use work in pairs and small groups to promote mutually supportive working. Teachers are increasingly using detailed student profiles to target support whenever it is needed.

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

104. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum organisation is highly effective and the management team work well together. Progress since the last inspection is good and most weaknesses have been eliminated. Teachers have made good progress in harmonising documentation and improving the standards of teaching and learning. However, generally, there is little sharing of good practice. Data reliability has improved and data are used increasingly to monitor trends and inform planning. Although inspectors agreed with most of the self-assessment report, they considered that not all of the provisions' key strengths and weaknesses were identified. The college's lesson observation profile closely matched inspectors' findings.

### **Literacy and numeracy**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on most courses
- much good teaching of literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- very effective use of diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring
- very good progression opportunities
- high levels of individual support during lessons.

### ***Weaknesses***

- very low pass rates in key skills
- insufficient ICT resources at community venues
- underdeveloped lines of communication across the curriculum area
- weak monitoring of action plans.

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

105. The college provides courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL for adults in nine community centres throughout East Surrey and at the main college site. Literacy courses are offered at entry levels 1 to 3 and at levels 1 and 2; numeracy courses are offered at entry levels 1 and 2 and at levels 1 and 2. ESOL courses are offered at five levels in response to local needs. Off-site provision includes family learning and a project to develop workplace literacy. Many courses are part time and vary in length from introductory 3-hour sessions to 10-week programmes. The provision includes additional support in class by learning assistants, and numeracy and literacy taught as part of a vocational course. The college has recently introduced a full-time ESOL course. GCSE English and mathematics are offered to students on mainstream programmes. Key skills in communication, ICT and application of number are integrated with subjects, but some lessons in key skills are taught separately. There are currently 430 students enrolled on courses in this area, excluding key skills enrolments. Of these, 163 are following ESOL courses, 200 are following basic literacy and

numeracy courses and 67 are taking GCSE in mathematics or English.

**Achievement and standards**

106. There are high retention and pass rates on most courses. In GCSE English and mathematics, the pass rates are well above the national averages and are improving. At the last inspection, it was noted that very few students achieved external qualifications for literacy and numeracy. Recent changes in policy have enabled students to work towards national tests in literacy and numeracy by using an online testing facility. Retention and pass rates in literacy and numeracy are high. Attendance is satisfactory and lessons start punctually. There are very low pass rates in key skills, which have remained well below national averages for the last three years from 2002. Most students fail to complete their portfolio work. The pass rate improved in 2004, but is still very low.

107. Attainment levels are satisfactory. Students are able to demonstrate reading, writing and numerical skills appropriate to the level of qualification they are following. Students become more confident and many achieve their aspirations. Most adult students learning in community venues speak highly of the courses and say how much they have learned. They are very appreciative of the levels of support given to them.

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

| Qualification                     | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| ESOL generic short course         | Entry | No. of starts    | 154  | 261  | 371  |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 55   | 92   | 86   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 80   | 97   | 83   |
| GCSE mathematics                  | 2     | No. of starts    | 78   | 83   | 72   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 72   | 75   | 76   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 48   | 60   | 64   |
| GCSE English                      | 2     | No. of starts    | 51   | 39   | 44   |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 76   | 69   | 70   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 46   | 48   | 61   |
| Key skills: application of number | 1,2,3 | No. of starts    | 286  | 793  | 436  |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 86   | 84   | 91   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 2    | 1    | 12   |
| Key skills: communications        | 1,2,3 | No. of starts    | 243  | 746  | 550  |
|                                   |       | % retention      | 84   | 84   | 91   |
|                                   |       | % pass rate      | 1    | 1    | 12   |

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

**Quality of education and training**

108. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ESOL is mostly good or better. Lessons are well planned and taught at a level and pace suited to the needs of students. Teachers frequently check students' understanding and ensure they keep learning. Teachers are adept at encouraging students and supporting the development of personal skills. In the best lessons, they use a stimulating range of teaching methods and resources. ESOL teaching is particularly stimulating and makes very good use of the cultural diversity within groups to promote social inclusiveness. Teachers use topics such as weddings and typical homes to explore and celebrate cultural differences. In the less effective lessons, there is an over reliance on a narrow range of methods: question and answer techniques

are poor and group work is poorly planned. Students appreciate the teaching of key skills within a vocational context. However, in some lessons more attention is paid to completing assignments than to developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.

109. Teachers are mostly well qualified and experienced although a significant number do not have a specialist qualification. The majority of learning support assistants are not trained in basic skills. However, all teachers have participated in Skills for Life training. Most teaching takes place in pleasant rooms with sufficient space to allow different activities. The Skills for Life and additional support centres provide a good environment for learning, and provide a wide range of supplementary teaching materials. Good use is made of the national Skills for Life materials. There are insufficient ICT resources at some community centres and ILT resources are not used to their full potential.

110. Diagnostic assessment identifies students' learning needs effectively, and the results are used for the development of individual learning plans. A few plans, however, are insufficiently detailed. Some individual short-term targets remain too general to measure students' progress accurately.

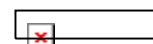
111. The provision is structured coherently and meets local needs. Graduated progression opportunities are good. Community venues serve the local community well. Partnership projects enable literacy and numeracy to be taught in the workplace. Taster courses, flexible lesson times, and courses of varying lengths demonstrate the college's readiness to accommodate students' domestic and work commitments.

112. Students receive high levels of good and flexible support. For example, additional individual assistance during lessons, drop-in sessions in the Skills for Life centre, team teaching of key skills alongside vocational teachers, and special courses for entry level students. Tutors make good use of individual reviews to identify potential learning difficulties and agree actions to address them. Comprehensive course files record students' progress. Teachers, learning support assistants and students enjoy good relationships based on mutual respect. Specialists in dyslexia are used effectively.

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

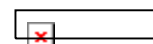
113. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new head of division has developed plans and strategies for improvement, but it is too early to comment on their effectiveness. Communication is not effective. For example, although a large proportion of teachers are part time and they work across a wide geographical area, their attendance at the bi-monthly team meetings and training events is irregular. Processes to ensure that good practice is shared effectively are not yet sufficiently strong. Actions to improve teaching have been identified, but the monitoring of these plans is weak. Some good progress is being made, for instance, in the systematic implementation of national standards and qualifications, and the greater emphasis on the professional development and mentoring of staff.

## **Part D: College data**



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

| Level | 16-18 % | 19+ % |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 1     | 35      | 77    |





|              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| <b>2</b>     | 48         | 9          |
| <b>3</b>     | 16         | 5          |
| <b>4/5</b>   | 0          | 1          |
| <b>Other</b> | 1          | 8          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

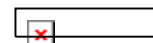
Source: data provided by the college in spring 2005

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

| <b>Curriculum area</b>                               | <b>16-18<br/>No.</b> | <b>19+<br/>No.</b> | <b>Total<br/>Enrolments (%)</b> |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Science and mathematics                              | 409                  | 133                | 3                               |
| Land-based provision                                 | 15                   | 100                | 1                               |
| Construction   | 260                  | 157                | 2                               |
| Engineering, technology and manufacture              | 473                  | 489                | 5                               |
| Business administration, management and professional | 430                  | 532                | 5                               |
| Information and communication technology             | 363                  | 3,041              | 16                              |
| Retailing, customer service and transportation       | 23                   | 62                 | 0                               |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel              | 249                  | 3,192              | 16                              |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy                      | 285                  | 201                | 2                               |
| Health, social care and public services              | 254                  | 1,332              | 7                               |
| Visual and performing arts and media                 | 579                  | 3,318              | 18                              |
| Humanities   | 95                   | 117                | 1                               |
| English, languages and communication                 | 923                  | 1,684              | 12                              |
| Foundation programmes                                | 694                  | 1,755              | 12                              |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>5,052</b>         | <b>16,113</b>      | <b>100</b>                      |

Source: data provided by the college in spring 2005

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**



| Level (Long Courses) | Retention and pass rate      | Completion year |      |      |       |       |       |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
|                      |                              | 16-18           |      |      | 19+   |       |       |
|                      |                              | 2001            | 2002 | 2003 | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  |
| 1                    | Starters excluding transfers | 528             | 535  | 392  | 1,118 | 1,115 | 2,395 |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 59              | 70   | 63   | 73    | 62    | 63    |
|                      | National average %           | 75              | 76   | 76   | 70    | 71    | 71    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 42              | 60   | 40   | 50    | 77    | 71    |
|                      | National average %           | 67              | 69   | 73   | 68    | 70    | 77    |
| 2                    | Starters excluding transfers | 997             | 706  | 836  | 941   | 942   | 1,178 |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 56              | 66   | 58   | 63    | 65    | 46    |
|                      | National average %           | 70              | 71   | 71   | 68    | 68    | 67    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 47              | 62   | 54   | 52    | 74    | 72    |
|                      | National average %           | 68              | 70   | 73   | 67    | 71    | 73    |
| 3                    | Starters excluding transfers | 741             | 722  | 596  | 832   | 601   | 880   |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 66              | 62   | 69   | 52    | 68    | 46    |
|                      | National average %           | 70              | 77   | 77   | 68    | 70    | 69    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 65              | 82   | 71   | 49    | 78    | 61    |
|                      | National average %           | 75              | 77   | 80   | 68    | 71    | 74    |
| 4/5                  | Starters excluding transfers | 11              | 2    | *    | 75    | 75    | 55    |
|                      | Retention rate %             | 45              | 100  | *    | 45    | 93    | 95    |
|                      | National average %           | 73              | 71   | *    | 67    | 68    | 69    |
|                      | Pass rate %                  | 5               | 0    | *    | 47    | 19    | 46    |
|                      | National average %           | 20              | 57   | *    | 54    | 54    | 58    |

*Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges). Where applicable, the national rates used in the table are for GFE colleges which are grouped in the LSC benchmarking data as colleges with a high widening participation factor.*

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

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

\*data unreliable

**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)     | 57                     | 36             | 7                        | 44                      |
| Level 2 (intermediate) | 43                     | 54             | 3                        | 39                      |
| Level 1 (foundation)   | 41                     | 45             | 14                       | 22                      |
| Other sessions         | 80                     | 15             | 5                        | 20                      |
| <b>Totals</b>          | <b>54</b>              | <b>40</b>      | <b>6</b>                 | <b>125</b>              |

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