



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Business](#)

[Visual, performing arts and media](#)

[Humanities](#)

[English and modern foreign languages](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

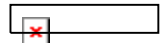
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

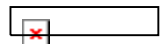
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

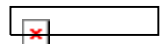


Name of college:	St Francis Xavier
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Bernie Borland
Address of college:	Malwood Road London SW12 8EN
Telephone number:	0208 772 6000
Fax number:	0208 772 6099
Chair of governors:	John Opara
Unique reference number:	130422
Name of reporting inspector:	Robin Goddard HMI
Dates of inspection:	18-22 April 2005

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



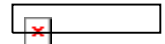
St Francis Xavier is a Roman Catholic college adjacent to Clapham Common in the London Borough

boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth. During 2004, there were 1,346 students at the college of whom the vast majority were aged 16 to 18. Some 53% were Roman Catholics and 83% are drawn from widening participation postcodes. Many students are of minority ethnic origin, 40% being either Black African or Black Caribbean.

The college provides general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) and advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) courses in 33 subjects. There are also advanced vocational courses in seven subjects, intermediate vocational courses in seven subjects and two vocational foundation courses. Around 85% of students are on advanced-level courses and 14% are taking general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate or foundation courses. A small number are also taking subjects at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) level. A range of courses are offered for adults in the local community mainly on a self-financing basis.

The college proclaims Christian values in the Roman Catholic tradition and strives to ensure that all individuals are given equal opportunity to fulfil their unique potential.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the provision to be outstanding in one curriculum area and good in four others. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- consistently good teaching across the college

- high pass rates on most courses

- high levels of attendance

- good progress made by students

- clear and effective leadership by senior managers

- provision of a safe and calm learning environment

- very strong pastoral and academic support for students

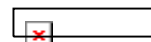
- o strong Catholic ethos informing all aspects of the college's work.

What should be improved

- o the contribution of the more reticent students during lessons
- o self-critical element of self-assessment
- o better use of students' views on their experience to drive improvement.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

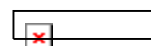


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Good. Good teaching and support leads to a high proportion of students completing their courses and succeeding in examinations. Students in GCE A-level mathematics make good progress. In AS-level mathematics, too few make the progress expected of them. Many students progress to science and mathematics courses in HE.
Business	Good. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses. However, pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate and AS-level business courses are below national averages. The quality of most lessons is either good or very good. Assessment and the monitoring of students' progress are carried out thoroughly.
Visual, performing arts and media	Good. Pass rates are high on all courses. There is much very good teaching in which teachers use a range of teaching methods to challenge students. Students produce high-quality work in many subjects. Learning resources for students are good, but some rooms are overcrowded.
Humanities	Outstanding. The contributory grade for psychology and geography is good . Teaching is confident and very well planned. The curriculum is managed well, and subject tutors give very strong support to their

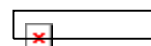
	students. Pass rates are very high on most courses. Most students achieve higher grades than those which their performance at GCSE would predict.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. There is much good teaching and effective curriculum organisation. Retention and pass rates are high. Students make good progress, particularly those taking foreign languages. Pass rates in GCSE English declined substantially in 2004.

How well is the college led and managed?



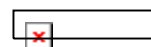
Leadership and management are outstanding. A very high proportion of the teaching is good or very good. It is supported by a very wide range of professional development activities. Overall, students do much better in examinations than predictions based on their performance at GCSE. There is an unremitting focus on students, their progress and the effectiveness of teaching. A strong Catholic ethos pervades all aspects of the college's work. Senior managers provide highly effective leadership and the whole college community shares a common set of values. These underpin the clear priorities for the college's development. Teamwork at all levels is a strong. Communications throughout the college are excellent. Clear and systematic quality assurance arrangements lead to improvements. Some aspects of self-assessment, however, lack rigour. Governors play an active part in the life of the college, know it well and contribute fully to strategic planning. The financial management and financial health of the college are strong and the college offers good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The governors and trustees support recruitment and curriculum policies which reflect the needs of young people in the area and the diocese in which the college is located strongly. Around 83% of college students come from disadvantaged backgrounds and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is high. A commitment to equal opportunities pervades all aspects of college life. Policies and procedures for equal opportunities are reviewed regularly. Additional support for students with learning difficulties or disabilities is very good. The college has strong links with Oak Lodge School for the Deaf. A Braille service operates within the college and blind and partially sighted students receive specific support from the Lambeth Visually Impaired Service. The college's race equality policy and action plan are extremely thorough and fulfil its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Considerable work has been undertaken by the college to meet its obligations under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA).

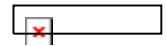
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are outstanding. Thorough arrangements for recruitment and pre-entry guidance enable prospective students to make well-informed choices. Careers guidance is

support needs are very effective. The support provided to students with particular needs or specific learning difficulties is very well planned and structured. Its impact is not monitored sufficiently. There is a very strong commitment by teaching departments to providing personal support for students which is welcomed and highly valued. The tutorial programme is supported by a comprehensive scheme of work, but tutorials vary in quality. The systems to monitor student attendance and punctuality have had a positive effect on attendance. Advice on progression opportunities is very good. Most students go on to further study in higher education (HE), further education (FE) or into employment.

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

- the high quality of the teaching

- helpful friendly staff who are ready to give their time

- the wide range of enrichment opportunities

- the amount of feedback on progress received from teachers

- good mix of academic and social life

- the high expectations of the college.

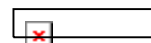
What they feel could be improved

- limited access to computers at peak times

- intrusiveness of the building work

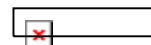
- o the provision of food and social areas
- o additional help to bridge the GCSE/AS-level divide.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole

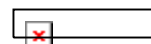


Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect 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	83	17	0
Learning 16-18	77	23	0

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

Achievement and standards

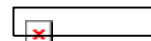


1. Data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 2001/02 and 2002/03 were provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2003/04. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details of achievements and standards on particular courses.

16 to 18 year olds

2. The college provides mainly courses for students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses. In October 2004, there were 1,131 students, around 85% of whom were on advanced courses. The remainder are on foundation and intermediate level programmes. Retention rates have been consistently just above national averages for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced level courses and around the averages for other courses.
3. Pass rates on advanced level courses are consistently in the top 10% of sixth form colleges. For AS levels, they were between 9% and 16% above national averages over the past four years. For GCE A levels, the pass rates have been maintained at 99% throughout the period 2002 to 2004. The college subscribes to a national value added system of analysis. Data for the college as a whole show that students have consistently achieved better AS-level and GCE A-level grades than would be predicted by their GCSE performance. Although this has gradually declined from a peak in 2000, the overall performance remains significantly high. Data for 3-year average of value added scores up to and including 2004 show that in 12 GCE A-level subjects this is significantly high and in only 2 subjects is it significantly lower. For AS-level subjects, there is a similar but slightly less high pattern. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) average points score for each student for GCE A-level and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses was 244.4 in 2004. It has remained at or around this level for the past three years.
4. A group of around 40 students take a package of GCSE subjects. The proportion of students who achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics is above the national average. All the students taking a GCSE package in 2003 remained in education the following year. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on foundation level GNVQ courses have been consistently high in business, but below national averages in leisure and tourism. The pass rates on intermediate and advanced level vocational courses are high. Around 200 students enrol on these courses. Pass rates for intermediate level vocational courses have steadily improved and are now well above national averages. They include the GNVQ intermediate course in health and social care on which pass rates are above 90%. Around 140 students take advanced level vocational courses in seven subjects. Pass rates on these courses are good, many close to 100%.
5. The pass rates for Black African students on level 2 courses were well above the national rates at 91%. Pass rates at level 3 are above national rates for all ethnic groups and were 100% for Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian students in 2003, and 96% for white students. The college provides excellent opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress to HE. Around 75% of students who completed advanced level courses went directly to HE in 2004. There is also good progression from foundation and intermediate level courses. In 2004 all the students who completed foundation level courses continued in education at the college or elsewhere.
6. Students produce written and practical work of a high standard. Research and analytical skills are consistently well developed, particularly on advanced level courses. In most lessons, students express their ideas logically and clearly, using appropriate specialist terminology. The communication skills of more reticent students are not always sufficiently developed. Most students are well motivated and they invest considerable energy in trying to reach high standards. In science, students participate confidently in practical investigations. In humanities, they research and organise their work very thoroughly and produce some perceptive and original writing. In modern foreign languages, students develop good listening and comprehension skills. Very high-quality, three-dimensional practical work is produced by graphics and textile students.
7. Attendance during the inspection, at 89%, was above the national average for sixth form colleges inspected during 2003/04. It was consistently high across the curriculum areas inspected, the lowest being 85% in visual, performing arts and media and the highest, at 93%, in science and mathematics.

Quality of education and training



8. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 77 lessons. Inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in 83% of lessons and satisfactory in 17%. None were less than satisfactory. This is a substantially better profile of grades than the average for sixth form colleges nationally. Teaching was of a consistently high standard in all areas inspected. However, only three lessons were judged to be outstanding. The strongest teaching was found in lessons for GCE A-level subjects. Some 92% of these lessons were good or better.

9. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that they contain a variety of activities to stimulate students' interest. Their knowledge and enthusiasm often generates great interest and commitment by students to tackle challenging tasks. For example, students starting to sculpt with clay in a GNVQ art class were inspired by the way the medium was introduced; similarly in one lesson on rhythm in poetry, the teacher's love of the subject was contagious.

10. Most teachers have developed very strong relationships with their students. They set high standards and are adept at using humour with good effect. Students' understanding is thoroughly checked using good questioning techniques, and recapitulation activities. In a minority of lessons, not all students are sufficiently involved, particularly in discussion, and insufficient action is taken by teachers to address this. Good use is increasingly made of information and learning technology (ILT), including powerpoint which is often used together with high-quality paper-based learning materials.

11. Teachers are well experienced and qualified. Many act as external moderators, examiners or verifiers. Staff development needs are clearly identified through a performance review process and development opportunities provided. The college estate is well maintained. Classrooms are generally well laid out and equipped. Several rooms, including those for religious education, business administration and some media classes are overcrowded. Some accommodation for teaching staff is also cramped. A major programme of building work to be completed in September 2005 will greatly improve some facilities including a new learning resource centre. The current centre, although old and small, is well managed and very efficiently resourced. There is excellent liaison with teaching staff. Learning resource centre staff ensure that students work quietly and productively.

12. A small part of the college is not currently accessible to students with restricted mobility. Special arrangements may be made to accommodate such students in the curriculum areas affected. Following an audit, the college has bid for substantial funds to make the older parts more accessible. The college information technology (IT) systems support learning well. An updated and well-supported network provides stable access to internet, intranet and specialist software. There is a good ratio of workstations to students at around 1 to 3. Some curriculum areas have helpful material on the intranet, but the intranet is not used effectively in all areas. All curriculum areas have a good range of specialist resources, ranging from books and other printed learning resources, to specialist media systems and laboratory equipment. Many classrooms are equipped with electronic presentations systems which are used increasingly to help learning. Health and safety are systematically monitored and high standards are maintained.

13. Assessment of students' work is carried out rigorously across the college. Work is set at regular intervals and is marked promptly. Comments are generally helpful and constructive. They indicate how students can improve their performance. In a few cases, the feedback is too brief to be useful. Target grades are used effectively as part of the assessment process in some areas. The overall monitoring of students' progress is well managed and effective. Subject specialists regularly advise their students on progress. Personal tutors maintain regular contact through their routine tutor group meetings. This is augmented by a formal and effective system of days set aside for individual discussions and reviews. This system involves students well in reflection and the setting of targets for improvement. Many of these targets, however, are not sufficiently precise to give a student a clear indication of what they should be doing differently in order to improve. Managers are promptly involved in discussions and action to assist underperforming students. There are good links with parents to keep them well informed of students' progress. As well as a formal report, and a progress review meeting, there are very regular informal contacts on a variety of academic and personal

issues. Some staff are now using e-mail to correspond with families.

14. There is a broad range of subjects to meet the needs of students studying at advanced level with the intention of progressing to degree level. At GCE A level, students have a very wide choice of 33 subjects. A number of advanced level vocational courses are also available. They include AVCE courses in science, IT, travel and tourism, and art and design, the national diploma in business, sports studies, art and design and the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma in child care and education. Students who can benefit from a 1-year GCSE course have a choice of 10 subjects, including English and mathematics. For those entering at a lower level, foundation courses in business and travel and tourism are available, with good progression routes to study at a higher level. These courses have a core of English and number and the time allocated to them is extended to 24 periods a week.

15. The college has responded well to requests from partner schools seeking continuity in languages provision from their own curriculum. It has prioritised the maintenance of such courses at GCE A level and GCSE. Courses in GCE A-level French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese are offered each year. The curriculum also reflects the needs and interests of students well. Russian and Polish courses can be arranged, by the employment of additional part-time teachers. Electronics, accounting, ethics and critical thinking are available as additional AS-level qualifications. Students combine subject choices successfully. Popular subjects appear in each of the five option blocks. Timetabling allows time for additional lessons in subjects, such as dance, which require further time for practical activities.

16. The teaching of key skills is integrated into subject teaching. Students may gain accreditation, but very few successfully do so. Key skills diagnostic assessment is effective. A well-applied system of testing all new students in application of number and communication leads to constructive discussions with tutors, and then appropriate support for those who require it. Specialist support staff carry out further detailed tests as required.

17. A broader enhancement for all students is provided through the core curriculum. Tutorial, careers guidance, enhancement activities and general religious education are co-ordinated as a single programme, accredited by the Accreditation Syndicate for Education and Training (ASET) certificate of achievement in core studies. Enrichment courses are available to all students on Wednesday afternoon. Activities include an impressive range of sporting and fitness activities. There are music groups for instrumentalists, songwriters and singers. On other courses, students are introduced to continental and African cinema, art and drama, and participate in chess and other interest groups. The college's Broad Oak Training Centre provides part-time courses, mainly at full cost to adults. Short courses in IT, languages, leisure and general interest are provided as part of the community education programme.

18. Support and guidance for students are outstanding. Students are helped to make well-informed choices of their courses in a variety of ways. There are good links with partner schools. The prospectus contains comprehensive information about college facilities, course details, entry requirements and progression routes. The college organises interviews, open days and 'taster' sessions to further inform student choices. Specialist learning support staff are available for the initial interviews of applicants who declare a learning difficulty and/ or disability. Comprehensive enrolment and induction processes help students to settle in quickly.

19. Students receive good careers education and guidance which they value highly. Careers guidance is an integral part of the admissions and course change processes. Progression to HE is effectively supported by a wide range of activities. This includes transporting 500 students to an annual UCAS Careers Fair on hired tube trains. Support for application to HE includes mock interviews involving tutors, governors and university admissions tutors. Little use is made of careers guidance or resources by students studying level 3 courses who do not intend to progress to HE. Intermediate and foundation level students all receive individual interviews with a careers advisor employed by the college or the local Connexions Service about progression routes available at the college, employment opportunities and courses offered at other colleges.

20. Arrangements to identify and meet individual additional support needs are very effective. These

include the thorough initial assessment, referral by a teacher and self-referral. In 2003/04 124 students received additional learning support. Students with dyslexia or low levels of literacy and numeracy skills have weekly timetabled lessons in the student support centre, as do some students requiring support for English as an additional language. Attendance at these lessons is very good. In-class support is provided for partially sighted or deaf students and managed effectively by subject teachers. Communication between learning support and subject staff is very good. Teachers know their students well and make effective and sensitive use of information about personal or learning difficulties. The college carries out some analysis of the impact of learning support on specific groups of students. This requires further detailed development to compare the performance of groups of students receiving support against the whole student body.

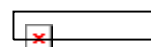
21. Thorough systems are in place to monitor student attendance and punctuality. They have had a positive effect on attendance which is very good. Students are allocated to a group tutor within one of four faculties. Tutors provide personal support, monitor individual attendance and punctuality and where necessary set targets for improvement and hold tutorials using the tutorial programme. This is a carefully planned programme consisting of a mixture of careers and study skills and sessions on citizenship, health and personal finance. Quality assurance arrangements for tutorials have improved but the quality of tutorials remains too variable. The chaplaincy has a well-publicised counselling service and contacts with external agencies to provide wider support for students.

22. The college has a detailed child protection policy. It has been recently revised and is awaiting approval by the governing body. A designated member of staff has responsibility for child protection and liaison with the local social services and other agencies. All college staff have received training on child protection issues and governors' training is planned. However, some aspects of the college's child protection arrangements require further improvement in the light of recent legislation.

23. The general religious education programme encourages students to participate in discussions on belief, ethics, relationships and justice, science and religion and a variety of faith traditions in the light of Christian teaching. All students are engaged in the programme for one period each week as part of their entitlement and lessons are well attended. The programme is accredited as part of the Archdiocese of Southwark's Bishops Certificate for Core Studies. In 2004, 90% of students obtained the qualification. A team of seven well-qualified and experienced teachers teach the programme. All religious education lessons observed were good or better.

24. The chaplaincy is at the heart of the college and is well used by students. Two full-time college chaplains promote the college's spiritual wellbeing through wide ranging activities including work with small groups of students on issues of social and spiritual significance in theme weeks. Large numbers of students are involved in such activities and charitable initiatives throughout the year. These include, for example, support for the Columbian Fathers in Peru and for Fairtrade, as well as for voluntary work by the Youth St Vincent de Paul group in a nursing home and in the Salvation Army charity shop. The chaplains provide an extensive framework for worship and the prayer life of the college. In addition to weekly Mass and morning prayers in the chapel, which are voluntary, there is a daily prayer session in tutorial groups and regular opportunities to celebrate the liturgical events of the year and key points in the academic calendar. Voluntary masses and liturgies on feast days and special occasions, such as the Academic Mass and the Leavers' Mass, are well attended. Students provide music and reading of a high quality. This approach ensures the pattern of the prayer life in the college is appropriate and meets the varied needs of the diverse student body.

Leadership and management



25. Leadership and management are outstanding. A very high proportion of the teaching is good or very good. Pass rates are high and advanced level students achieve significantly better grades in their examinations than predictions based on their prior performance at GCSE. There is an

teaching. Expectations regarding students' work, attendance and behaviour are high.

26. Governors and senior management demonstrate their strong support for the Catholic mission and ethos of the college by the overarching emphasis on Christian values in every aspect of the daily life of the college and in strategic planning. Building on the long tradition of Catholic education on this site the college has achieved a reputation as a centre of excellence for academic achievement and pastoral care with its Catholic partner high schools and with parents. The Archdiocese of Southwark recognises the outstanding contribution the college makes in supporting the faith of those young people who are already baptised Catholics (approximately 53%) and in conveying the message of faith and Christian values to all others in the college community.

27. Dynamic and sensitive leadership of the college has resulted in the creation of one community, in which all members are valued equally. The development of policies and practices takes full account of their impact on the mission and ethos. There is considerable investment in the provision for spiritual and personal development by the appointment of teachers and the allocation of time to ensure the quality of the general religious education programme. The Vision and Values Working Group, chaired by the principal, is committed to the development of a shared mission in which governors, staff and students address learning and the person in a holistic way.

28. The governors and principal provide very clear direction. All staff are involved in the identification of the college's priorities. Staff are highly aware of the college's goals. Memorable acronyms help staff keep these priorities in mind. The college assesses closely the strategic risks it faces. A strategic planning day enables the college to identify objectives for the coming year. These are set out in the very comprehensive development plan and operating statements. They detail clear responsibilities, timescales, success criteria and costs. The progress towards these objectives is monitored regularly by the governing body, through the principal's extremely comprehensive reports. In other college plans, some objectives are not sufficiently specific and monitoring their achievement is more difficult as a result. Leadership and management are at least good in all the curriculum areas inspected except in business studies where it is satisfactory. Teamwork at all levels is a significant strength. Managers are approachable and consult staff regularly on their views. Communications throughout the college are excellent

29. Quality assurance arrangements are clear and systematic. The principal and vice-principal scrutinise students' achievements in depth. Any area of underperformance is tackled promptly. There are clear guidelines for the observation of each other's lessons by teachers and line managers. Developmental feedback is given to individual teachers, but the good practice observed in lessons is not systematically shared across the whole college. All areas of the college assess their own performance. Teaching departments review their courses regularly and this underpins summary self-assessment reports for faculties and the college as a whole. Inspectors agreed with most of the college's judgements about the quality of its provision. A few departmental development plans do not address weaknesses identified and in a minority of self-assessment reports weaknesses are overlooked or understated. The evaluation of the effectiveness of tutorials is not well established.

30. The college uses the views of students in its self-evaluation, but these are not always fully exploited. Support areas agree standards for the services they provide. The achievement of these standards is tested by managers. The college's evaluation of its own work informs strategic and staff development priorities.

31. The college sets, monitors and regularly meets appropriate and demanding targets. These are focused on students and their achievements, including pass rates, progression, point scores and attendance. Other key targets include staff costs, a balanced budget and the proportion of students recruited from Catholic families or schools. Management information is accurate and mostly well used by managers. There are timely and comprehensive course management and pastoral reports. These include regular reports on the number of students leaving courses, analysed by ethnicity and gender. The college's returns to its funding body have been consistently accurate.

32. The college's commitment to equal opportunities is very strong. Equal opportunities and diversity are at the very heart of the college's mission and values. They figure prominently in the prospectus and handbooks for staff and students. The effective policies and procedures relating to equal

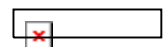
opportunities are reviewed regularly. The principal chairs the college's equal opportunities committee, which oversees the implementation of the college's policy. The principal has been a member of the commission for black staff in FE. The college does not tolerate harassment or oppressive behaviour in any form. Formal complaints are infrequent and none has related to equal opportunities in the years for which records are available. Senior managers monitor closely the progress, retention and pass rates of different ethnic groups. They also monitor and report on the recruitment and promotion of staff by ethnic grouping and gender. The college has undertaken considerable work to meet its obligations under the SENDA legislation and has a timetable for further improvements. The college's race equality policy and action plan are extremely thorough. Their implementation is monitored and reported on by the equal opportunities committee. The college clearly meets its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000.

33. Staff development priorities are identified carefully through individual performance review, self-assessment and strategic planning. There is a very wide range of appropriate professional development. Resources available for staff development are very good. They are allocated prudently to support college priorities. The chair of governors appraises the principal annually and line managers review the performance of their staff each year. There is no formal link between lesson observations and annual performance review. The college helps staff to gain higher degrees or teaching qualifications, as appropriate. New staff are well supported and the college's mentoring scheme is currently under review.

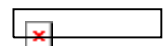
34. Governors are very much part of the life of the college and know it well. They take part in mock interviews for students, visit college events and are members of various college committees, including the 'vision and values group'. They contribute fully to the college's strategic planning and are watchful that the values of the college are present in its work. Governors monitor the college's performance closely and evaluate the effectiveness of their own work. Relationships between governors and senior managers are excellent. The ability of governors to monitor the college's finances would be enhanced by more frequent management accounts in a clearer format.

35. The financial management and financial health of the college are strong. The principal and managers monitor expenditure closely. Budgets are constructed carefully to reflect needs and meet priorities. Particular care is taken to evaluate the viability of non-core activities, such as adult education and the college's nursery. Very effective use is made of the accommodation available. The college is currently undertaking a major building project. It recognises that this will have a significant impact on its cash flow and has made appropriate arrangements. The college offers good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses

- consistently high pass rates on many courses
- good progress by students in GCSE A-level mathematics
- much good teaching
- highly effective support by subject teachers
- very good progression to HE.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level mathematics
- poor progress by students in AS-level mathematics and chemistry
- lack of specific guidance on improvement in feedback on written work.

Scope of provision

36. AS-level and GCE A-level courses are offered in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and further mathematics. Students interested in the study of science that is more applied can enrol on a double award in vocational certificate of education (VCE) applied science. GCSE courses in mathematics and science are also offered and students who do not have the entry requirements for AS-level mathematics can study GCSE mathematics at a higher level. Students interested in a larger programme of sciences study the GNVQ intermediate science course. There are 532 enrolments on science and mathematics courses.

Achievement and standards

37. Pass rates are consistently high on many courses and have been 100% in GCE A-level biology, chemistry, mathematics and further mathematics for the last three years. Pass rates in all AS-level subjects and GNVQ intermediate science declined in 2004. AS-level mathematics pass rates have been declining and consistently below national averages for the past three years. Pass rates for vocational certificate of education VCE applied science have been around the national average. GCSE biology and mathematics have had pass rates consistently in line with national averages. Students on GCE A-level mathematics courses make good progress, achieving higher grades than

predicted by their GCSE grades, but students on AS-level chemistry and mathematics courses make poor progress. Retention rates are very good across the curriculum areas with many subjects retaining all their students.

38. The standard of students' work is good. Written work contains well-presented answers which show clear understanding of key processes. Students demonstrate good analytical skills. Their powers of reasoning and evaluation are high. In practical sessions, students use equipment confidently and competently and with due regard to health and safety.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	153	193	173
		% retention	59	80	84
		% pass rate	40	48	45
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	13	20	17
		% retention	92	90	100
		% pass rate	92	94	82
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	43	48	54
		% retention	98	98	96
		% pass rate	100	98	88
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	29	26	31
		% retention	100	100	94
		% pass rate	93	96	55
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	61	64	80
		% retention	90	77	91
		% pass rate	78	69	58
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	23	32	38
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

39. Teaching is good overall and a significant proportion is very good. Lessons are well structured and teachers use a range of activities, materials and equipment to stimulate learning. Chemistry students confidently participated in the identification of unknown cations and anions by practical investigations. Their knowledge and understanding was developed through discussion and analysis of their results. Lessons in which the teacher uses extended questions to promote discussion and analysis allow students to develop a better understanding of the concepts. Students studying Decision mathematics responded to challenging questions to extend their understanding of the Minimum Cut Theorem. They explored solutions and reinforced their knowledge with practice questions. In a minority of lessons teachers fail to capture the interest of students and to challenge their thinking so that not all students are engaged in the learning process.

40. Assessment and monitoring are good across both curriculum areas. Homework is set regularly and marked and returned promptly with written comments to guide improvement. Generally this feedback is not specific enough and is not linked to criteria for improving grades except for students

studying vocational courses.

41. Support and guidance for students are good. All areas have a well-organised and informative induction programme to support the transition from school to higher-level courses. Year 11 students from partner schools are invited to taster days to experience college life and different subjects. Mathematics students with only a grade B at intermediate level are given an intensive catch-up course to fill the gaps in their mathematical knowledge. Subject-specific workshops are available throughout the year, both within and outside the college day. The workshops are highly valued and well attended by students and are compulsory for weaker and underachieving students identified through the monitoring and referral system.

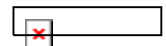
42. The curriculum area is well resourced with appropriately equipped specialist laboratories, specialist mathematics rooms, good levels of specialist equipment and well-qualified staff. The skills and experience of three subject-specific science technicians are used effectively.

43. Intranet sites have been developed in all subjects for the provision and management of learning resources for both staff and students. There are numerous paper-based resources including course and topic booklets which are used to guide learning. Extensive banks of examination questions and answers for practice and revision are available for science and mathematics students. Rooms and laboratories have stimulating wall displays to enhance the learning environment.

Leadership and management

44. Faculty, department and course leadership and management are good. Course leaders set clear agendas and action plans for improving teaching, learning and achievements in their area. These actions arise from detailed analysis of results at the end of each year. Some subjects action plans lack detail and are insufficiently targeted to effect improvement. Course teams meet regularly to discuss course development, the production of course materials, the standardisation of coursework and student progress. Teaching styles and methods of support are changed in response to student feedback and progress. There is considerable informal and formal exchange of good practice and sharing of material within teams and across the faculties. Staff are clear about their responsibilities for equal opportunities.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses

- very high pass rates on GCE A-level courses

- good teaching and learning in the majority of lessons

- o good assessment and monitoring of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- o low pass rates on intermediate and AS-level business.

Scope of provision

45. The college offers a good range of full-time courses in business for students aged 16 to 18. At the time of the inspection, there were 337 students enrolled. The main courses are GNVQ vocational business at foundation and intermediate levels and AS-level and GCE A-level courses in business studies and economics. An AS-level course in accounting was introduced in 2003. The advanced vocational course in business was replaced in 2003 by the national diploma in business.

Achievement and standards

46. There are high pass rates on most courses. Retention rates are also at, or above, national averages. Performance is particularly good on the foundation business course where both the pass and retention rates have been above national averages. On this course, there has also been a good percentage of high grades. Pass rates in GCE A-level economics and business are also particularly good at around 100% in each of the last three years. Attendance and punctuality are good, with attendance rates at nearly 90%, above the national average for sixth form colleges.

47. Whilst pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course have consistently been well above national averages, at intermediate level they are well below. AS-level business pass rates have declined over the last three years. Progression rates on to GCE A2 business from this course are low. Added value analysis indicates that both the GCE A-level and AS-level business students are not making sufficient progress compared with their past performance.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation business	2	No. of starts	36	33	30
		% retention	94	76	90
		% pass rate	91	96	93
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	20	20	21
		% retention	80	85	86
		% pass rate	75	76	78
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	92	101	120
		% retention	90	93	90
		% pass rate	88	85	77
AS-level economics	3	No. of starts	25	28	26
		% retention	96	89	92
		% pass rate	91	88	92

GCE A2 business	3	No. of starts	49	53	64
		% retention	100	100	98
		% pass rate	96	98	98
GCE A2 economics	3	No. of starts	14	14	20
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

48. Good teaching and learning takes place in most lessons. Most are well planned and include a variety of teaching and learning activities that develop students' interest and enthusiasm. Students display good skills in group work. In one lesson devoted to the conflicts between macro economic objectives, students used good analytical skills often extending debate beyond that required at this level. Teachers use questioning effectively to check and reinforce learning. For example, at the end of one lesson, the tutor asked a series of questions in a good humoured way. As each student answered successfully they were allowed to leave. All students took an active part and enjoyed the exercise. There is good stress placed on the needs of the awarding body. Good guidance is given on examination techniques. Up-to-date material is drawn from national newspapers to illustrate business theory where possible. Students take an active part in lessons and contribute freely to class discussion. Good use is made of educational visits.

49. Teachers are well qualified in their subject areas. Very few, however, have recent industrial or commercial experience. Staff have been well prepared for introduction of the new national diploma course. There is a good stock of learning resources available to teachers, including a large number of well-used relevant videos. Students are provided with good standard texts in most subjects. Some rooms are too small for the number of students using them, with some sitting outside the tutor's field of vision. Where rooms are equipped with computers, the background noise sometimes interferes with classroom debate.

50. Students' work is assessed thoroughly in accordance with the awarding body criteria. Separate marks are often given by teachers for analysis, evaluation and synthesis in order to stress their importance as factors in achieving high grades. Constructive comments are made on written work to enable students to clearly understand where they need to improve performance. Regular homework and tests, together with termly profiles, are used well to monitor progress. Where necessary staff take quick and appropriate action to address poor progress.

51. A broad curriculum is available to students. The GNVQ foundation in business caters for 30 students each year. These students come from a variety of backgrounds and often have previously failed to succeed in education. Work experience is used with vocational students at levels 1 and 2 to enhance social and work skills. The college has responded to student demand by introducing an AS-level accounting course. Progression rates to HE are good. Curricular links with local companies are limited, but some are well used, particularly in the recruitment and selection unit of the national diploma.

52. Support for students is good. Effective use is made of the computerised attendance monitoring system leading to high levels of attendance. Individual learning support needs are identified and appropriate action taken where the need is clearly established. However, where there is a less clear need, some students are reluctant to take up support. Support is particularly strong for the students who are profoundly deaf from both communicators and subject staff.

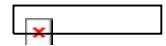
Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular minuted meetings are held by business

teachers. Considerable stress is placed on the monitoring of the performance of courses and the progress of individual students causing concern. Staff and physical resources are well managed. Classroom observations are used at an individual level, but the observations only take place infrequently and the judgements are too optimistic. Staff development is well targeted. New staff have a mentor and this provides them with good support. Staff work well together sharing resources and ideas. Equality and diversity issues are covered as specific topics in most business courses and the staff are well aware of the importance of these issues.

54. The self-assessment of the business programme area lacks depth of analysis and does not sufficiently recognise weaknesses. Strategies to address weaknesses in AS-level business and GNVQ intermediate business have had little impact. After-college lessons have been established. However, attendance has been poor and these have not improved results. Added value data is not used effectively to improve curriculum management.

Visual, performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses

- high-quality student work in graphics, three-dimensional (3D) design, media and film studies

- wide variety of activities which engage students

- good academic support for students

- good use of learning resources and college intranet by students

- wide range of enrichment in art and design and performing arts.

Weaknesses

- little student participation in discussions in art and design and media

- o insufficient space for students in theory and media computer rooms.

Scope of provision

55. The college has 477 students following courses in visual, performing arts and media. Approximately 64% take courses in media, 25% in visual arts and 11% in performing arts. At intermediate level, the college offers GCSE media studies and GNVQ intermediate in visual arts. At advanced level, AS levels and GCE A levels are available in art and design, graphics, dance, drama, film studies, media studies and performance studies. A national diploma is also offered in art and design.

Achievement and standards

56. Pass rates are high on all courses. The pass rates in GCSE media studies, AS-level film studies, AS-level and GCE A-level drama and GCE A-level performing arts have been outstanding at around 100% over the last three years. Retention rates are high on most courses and are above the national average.

57. Students produce very good work in 3D design, graphics and textiles. Students on AS-level and GCE A-level graphics courses use a wide range of media confidently. Those on the GNVQ intermediate course designed and made chairs to a high standard in an innovative project using metal, wood and textiles. Students in art and design do not develop drawing skills to the same high standard. Their work is less experimental and vibrant. Students in media and film produce assignments that are well researched, analytical and well argued. A high proportion of students studying film or media studies continue their studies in HE. Students are usually punctual, although some lessons are disrupted by latecomers.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate in art and design	2	No. of starts	15	12	14
		% retention	100	83	93
		% pass rate	87	90	85
AS-level art and design (graphics)	3	No. of starts	*	32	35
		% retention	*	88	80
		% pass rate	*	93	96
AS-level film/video production	3	No. of starts	39	41	40
		% retention	90	90	95
		% pass rate	100	100	97
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	27	25	22
		% retention	85	92	91
		% pass rate	100	96	100
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	65	69	78
		% retention	91	100	99
		% pass rate	97	100	99
GCE A-level	3	No. of starts	28	20	34

performance studies	% retention	93	100	97
	% pass rate	100	100	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

58. There is much very good teaching. None is less than satisfactory. Teachers use a range of teaching methods to vary the activities in lessons and to challenge students. For example, in a media lesson, the teacher used discussion, worksheets, video and analysis of each student's work to prepare for a forthcoming AS-level examination. Another teacher of GNVQ intermediate art and design worked with a technician to demonstrate a technique for making clay relief sculpture. Students used the technique confidently and were inspired by this introduction to working with clay. Learning materials on the national diploma in art and design help students make confident presentations to the class. Theory and practical activities are integrated well. The intranet contains a wide range of information for media studies and art students including a comprehensive range of examples of artists' work.

59. Students are keen to learn. They focus on the task in hand and take great care to improve the quality of their work. Most support each other well, offering constructive advice and confidently present their ideas during lessons. Some students in art and design and media do not contribute to class discussions or individual tuition willingly and some teachers do not employ effective strategies to encourage them.

60. Staff are well qualified. Most have a teaching qualification and some have post-graduate degrees. Students have ready access to computers in art and design and media rooms and use these well. Rooms used for performing arts are spacious and well resourced; some art and design and media rooms, however, are small and not suitable for the use made of them. Resources in the learning centre are good and the college responds quickly to obtain additional resources if students request them. Technician support in art and design and media is good and linked effectively with the work of teachers. Students are kept well informed of their progress through discussions with teachers, assessment of their work and regular meetings with tutors. They are set target grades which are reviewed regularly. Most assessed work includes feedback from the teacher that tells students how to improve.

61. There is a good range of enrichment activities in art and design and performing arts. In art and design, there are regular visits to galleries, additional teaching and artists visit the college. In performing arts, teachers have arranged additional courses in music, a residency by a group of performers from Malawi, a visit by Rambert dance company and regular performances of dance and drama. The performing arts department also has a close relationship with the Young Vic theatre company which leads to a rich programme of workshops with actors and directors. In August 2003, a group of students performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in a 'hip-hopera' that they had written and composed, based on the opera *Don Giovanni* but set in South London. In media, there are film clubs and annual trip to London film festival. An expansion of courses is planned in media and performing arts to coincide with new accommodation which is being built.

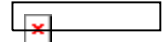
62. Support for students is good. Several students with hearing impairments are integrated well into lessons in art and design. Teachers are trained in meeting the needs of students with hearing impairments and work well with the communicators who accompany the students. Punctuality and attendance are monitored well by teachers.

Leadership and management

63. Leadership and management are good. Managers provide clear guidance to their teams. Staff work effectively in teams to plan and teach courses. The performing arts curriculum is lead with a

passion that inspires students. Teachers share good practice and resources well. Staff are provided with good professional development and support to study for higher degrees. Some self-assessment reports are not sufficiently self-critical, lack clear targets and identify strengths that are not supported by the college's data. Comprehensive data on retention and pass rates by ethnic and gender groups are produced. The media department has used the data effectively to ensure its provision reflects the mix of students coming to the college.

Humanities



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

Contributory grade for psychology and geography is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- very high pass rates in most subjects

- very good progress by most students in comparison with their previous attainment.

- well-planned and confident teaching

- very strong support for students from their subject tutors

- good participation by students in most lessons

- high-quality and well-used learning resources

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- very low pass rate in AS-level geography in 2004.

Scope of provision

64. The college offers A-level and GCE A-level courses in classical civilisation, critical thinking, general studies, geography, government and politics, history, psychology, religious studies and sociology. History and religious studies offer two distinct syllabuses. Critical thinking is offered at AS level only. GCSEs are offered in history and sociology. At the time of the inspection, there were 699 enrolments.

Achievement and standards

65. Pass rates are very high and for most GCE A-level courses have consistently been 100%. The pass rate in AS-level geography was very low in 2004. Students make very good progress in relation to their achievement at GCSE in AS-level and GCE A-level history, classical civilisation and religious studies. One student in GCE A-level religious studies was in the top five of all students nationally. Students made less progress in GCE A-level psychology and AS-level geography in 2004. Pass rates for GCSE sociology are consistently very good, but history fell below the national average in 2004.

66. Students contribute extremely well in class and their written work is usually thorough, well researched and organised. In an AS-level history lesson, they were able to explain the doctrine of transubstantiation, and how various Protestant movements departed from it in redefining the significance of bread and wine in the Eucharist. GCE A-level government and politics students have produced a very comprehensive and clear study guide on the topic of recent legislation to combat crime and terrorism and its impact on civil liberties. In a small number of lessons, some students have not fully accepted the disciplines and rigour of advanced level study.

67. Religious studies is a successful course with increasing enrolments and very good pass rates. In 2004, the pass rates at AS level and GCE A level were 95% and 90%. One student received a letter of commendation from the examination board for being in the top five performing candidates in the national cohort. This academic year, there are 85 students studying religious studies, with a further 17 enrolments for AS-level ethics.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	36	34	29
		% retention	94	88	97
		% pass rate	94	90	43
AS-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	47	50	44
		% retention	96	92	93
		% pass rate	96	96	95
AS-level religious studies	3	No. of starts	39	62	72
		% retention	90	89	91
		% pass rate	89	95	94
GCE A-level classical civilisation	3	No. of starts	16	23	18
		% retention	94	96	94
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	51	43	44
		% retention	90	98	95

		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	26	28	48
		% retention	96	96	98
		% pass rate	100	96	96
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	52	66	57
		% retention	100	97	96
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

68. The quality of teaching and learning is good and a significant proportion is very good or outstanding. Teachers are confident and very well prepared. During the inspection, many lessons concentrated on consolidating previous learning in preparation for forthcoming examinations. Teachers set tasks, provided a structure for addressing key points and effectively helped students to remain focused on bringing their ideas together. In an AS-level sociology lesson, students worked in pairs and drew up a comprehensive list of reasons why parental and adult attitudes to children had changed significantly since the Middle Ages. In a small number of lessons, the teacher did not involve students sufficiently in the formulation and structuring of ideas.

69. Individual students are very well supported in their study. There are comprehensive study guides for all subjects to help students. Work is carefully marked, but the quality of advice to students of how to improve is variable. Tutors know their students well. Information about their individual difficulties and problems is used sensitively to ensure they receive appropriate support and encouragement. Revision classes held after college and during holidays are well attended. Students value their termly progress reviews because they get a clear idea of the standards they are achieving, but subsequent improvement targets lack precision. Progression to HE is very good. In the last 4 years, 13 students have progressed to humanities-related courses at Oxford or Cambridge.

70. Resources to support teaching and learning are good. Staff are well qualified and experienced. ILT is used effectively to enhance and consolidate learning in many areas. For example, an interactive white-board was used to show a critical scene in which two of the central characters, Pendeus and Dionysus, confront each other powerfully as part of the study of *The Baccae*. Restricted access to ILT has limited its use in psychology. History and sociology departments have made good use of the college intranet to provide helpful student study guides. These include specimen answers, lists of resources, and explanations of key concepts. The learning resources centre has an impressive stock of humanities books and the humanities faculty has pioneered a successful project with learning resource centre staff to develop students' research skills.

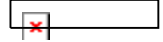
71. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are good and include a residential field trip to Abervagenny for geographers. Classical civilisation students have the opportunity each July of visiting major sites in Greece such as Delphi and Epidauros.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management of the curriculum are good. The self-assessment reports for individual departments are very thorough and self-critical in analysing current performance. Key issues for improvement emerge very clearly in an overarching faculty report, but departmental plans do not always clearly identify improvement measures. Heads of department effectively promote teamwork through the sharing of ideas and the joint development of resources. Although lesson observations have successfully enabled the sharing of good practice, there is scope for further development, for example, in the formulation of a consistent approach to the differentiation of work to take account of the differing abilities of students in humanities. There is a strong emphasis on

equal opportunities and teaching materials reflect the cultural diversity of the student population.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates
- better progress for most students than expected from their previous attainment.
- much good teaching and learning
- very effective curriculum organisation.

Weaknesses

- poor GCSE pass rate in English
- few strategies to promote broad participation in English discussions.

Scope of provision

73. The range of provision in English and modern foreign languages is good. Courses offered include English language, English literature, English language and literature, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish at AS level and GCE A level. GCSE courses in English, French, German or Spanish are also available. The college offers evening classes for adults in modern foreign languages. A minority of students are studying the certificate in business language competency. The majority are following college courses in six different languages. There are 423 enrolments in English and 135 in modern foreign languages.

Achievement and standards

74. Pass rates are very good overall in the curriculum area. In GCE A-level English literature, English language and literature and French, they have been 100% for the last three years. Higher grade pass rates are consistently outstanding in AS-level and GCE A-level Spanish. Higher-grade passes have declined in AS-level English language over the last three years, but risen in both AS-

level English literature and English literature and language where they were well above the national average in 2004. Students make very good progress in GCE A-level Spanish, Italian and French and achieve well above what would be expected from their GCSE performance. In GCSE English, the number of students achieving A* to C passes fell below the national average in 2004. Retention rates are good on most courses.

75. Modern language students develop good listening and comprehension skills through effective use of the languages they are learning in lessons. While many can speak fluently about rehearsed topics, only the most able cope confidently with unfamiliar, advanced topics. Standards of pronunciation and intonation are good, but written work contains basic grammatical errors.

76. In English, advanced level students develop the ability to structure a logical argument supported by appropriate textual references. A minority are reluctant to participate in oral work and there is no shared departmental strategy to address this. Much written work contains well-presented arguments based on good knowledge and full understanding of the issues. Many GCSE students lack the skills to analyse texts effectively and express their views clearly. Attendance was very good during the inspection, but occasionally students were not punctual to lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and modern foreign languages, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	137	139	109
		% retention	78	81	82
		% pass rate	58	60	44
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	69	75	98
		% retention	90	93	96
		% pass rate	100	99	96
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	26	47	48
		% retention	88	94	98
		% pass rate	100	100	96
AS-level Spanish	2	No. of starts	37	31	30
		% retention	86	100	97
		% pass rate	100	100	90
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	58	49	38
		% retention	97	100	95
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level Spanish	3	No. of starts	12	24	22
		% retention	92	96	100
		% pass rate	100	100	95

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

Quality of education and training

77. The majority of teaching is good and a small proportion is very good. Lessons are effectively planned with clear objectives and the best are taught with drive and gusto. For example, in a lesson on rhythm in poetry, the teacher's love and enthusiasm for poetry was contagious. Teaching was lively, dramatic at times and full of mime, gesture and good humour. The very positive responses and enjoyment of students was underpinned by sound learning and the gaining of valuable new

insights. Some English teachers are very adept at using power-point as a teaching tool. In a GCSE lesson, video clips of the recent royal wedding were used effectively so that students could identify the elements of informing, explaining and describing in clips of news reports from the BBC, ITV and Channel 4. Teachers use a wide variety of tasks and activities to sustain students' interest and to stimulate learning. Work in pairs and small groups is used well to practise and consolidate recent learning. In some English lessons, however, a minority of students are not challenged enough to participate in oral work. Language teachers are very competent linguists and use the foreign language constantly in lessons. In a Spanish lesson, a very professional power-point presentation was the basis of a highly effective combination of language revision and detailed examination guidance.

78. Verbal feedback in lessons is good. Marking of written work in languages is good and often very good in English when comments linked to assessment objectives show students where additional marks can be gained. Staff complete their record books carefully to ensure students' progress is monitored effectively. Students value their termly reviews, the target setting that arises from them and the high aspirations expected of them.

79. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and many are external examiners. Classrooms have good levels of technical equipment which is used very effectively in most lessons. Two foreign language assistants help in oral work. The learning resource centre has an adequate stock of books and there is a good supply of reference books in the faculty. The cramped accommodation limits the range of teaching styles that can be used.

80. Enrichment opportunities are good. There are numerous visits to theatres, cinemas, museums and study visits abroad. Authors have visited the college to run workshops and a number of voluntary classes are offered outside the normal timetable to extend students or to aid revision. Progression to subject-related courses in HE is good. Pastoral and academic support are good. The faculty works closely with student support services to assist weaker students with their learning. Students appreciate the support they receive from their tutors in and outside the classroom.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management are good. Day-to-day curriculum organisation is highly effective and problems that arise are quickly managed. All the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been addressed, except low numbers on some language courses. Staff work well as a team to achieve high standards and good practice is frequently shared. They ensure the curriculum takes account of equal opportunity issues and make every effort to reflect the considerable diversity of the student population in the learning materials. Inspectors agreed with most of the self-assessment report, but considered that there was some overstatement of students' progress in English.

Part D: College data

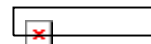
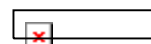


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	3	52
2	13	20



Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	510	145	109	23	82	103
	Retention rate %	95	87	88	65	54	46
	National average %	86	84	85	74	68	63
	Pass rate %	79	85	82	73	21	26
	National average %	70	63	81	51	46	64
2	Starters excluding transfers	627	582	625	69	101	91
	Retention rate %	83	76	80	72	62	48
	National average %	81	84	83	63	65	67
	Pass rate %	86	89	90	26	85	68
	National average %	79	83	85	68	61	70
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,078	2,217	2,325	7	68	67
	Retention rate %	91	92	92	100	97	94
	National average %	75	86	88	64	76	75
	Pass rate %	91	95	95	57	61	52
	National average %	81	82	81	66	63	70

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 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*.

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)	84	16	0	64
Level 2 (intermediate)	67	33	0	9

Level 1 (foundation)	100	0	0	4
Totals	83	17	0	77

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

