



PORTSMOUTH COLLEGE

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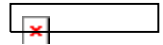
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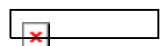
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Basic information about the college

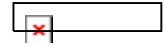


Name of college:	Portsmouth College
Type of college:	FE College
Principal:	Mr Tom Espley
Address of college:	Tangier Road Portsmouth PO3 6PZ
Telephone number:	023 9266 7521
Fax number:	023 9234 4363
Chair of governors:	Stuart Juniper JP
Unique reference number:	130706
Name of reporting inspector:	Christine Langton HMI
Date(s) of inspection:	1_5 October 2001

Part A: Summary

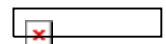


Information about the college



Portsmouth College was established as a sixth form college in 1984. It aims to meet the needs of the local community. Some 82% of its students come from within Portsmouth city boundaries. There are areas of severe social and economic deprivation in the city. Portsmouth has a local deprivation index of 15.9%. The college offers a wide range of courses for full-time and part-time students. In 2000/01 the college enrolled 733 full-time students, of whom 638 were aged 16 to 18, and 2,300 were part-time students. Full-time students account for 77% of the college's funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Approximately 65% of students are on advanced-level courses. The college offers courses in over 30 general certificate of education at advanced level (GCE A level) subjects. In 2001/02, there have been approximately 820 enrolments on full-time GCE courses and more enrolments on GCE advanced subsidiary-level (GCE AS-level) courses. A minority of students are working towards a general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) at advanced level and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 3. In 1997, the college introduced a GNVQ foundation course to remedy the lack of provision at this level, identified in the last inspection report. A significant number of students are on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) 'repeat' courses. The proportion of students aged 16 to 18 on non-advanced courses is 35%. The college makes significant provision for adult students. A substantial number of students aged 19 or over enrol on full-time courses in leisure and tourism, administration and childcare and an access to science course. Many others enrol on advanced-level courses and are taught in the same groups as students aged 16 to 18. The college also makes provision for a number of asylum seekers who are enrolled on English courses. During the last inspection, a lack of numeracy and literacy courses in the college was identified. These courses are now a rapidly growing feature of provision. The college works closely with a local college of further education (FE) to widen participation in Portsmouth without unnecessary duplication of provision. The college has a statement of its key purpose in which it sets out its aim to ensure that all students experience 'progression, achievement and success'.

How effective is the college?



The college provides effective teaching and good opportunities for learning for most of its students. Individual students receive good support to help them to succeed. Many students on GCE A/AS-level courses add value to their achievements by obtaining grades higher than those predicted for them, on the basis of their GCSE grades. In 2001, pass rates for all students improved significantly. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 have improved over the last three years and are now in line with the national average for sixth form colleges. Retention rates for students aged 19 or over, however, are below this national average. Management activity has focused effectively on raising standards.

Key strengths

- significant added value of students' achievements in light of prior attainment

- effective teaching

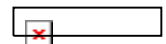
- good support for individual students
- good learning resources
- wide range of programmes to meet local needs
- effective management to bring about improvements.

What should be improved

- some poor retention rates
- poor attendance by some students
- assessment of key skills
- action planning and target setting.

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

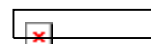


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Mathematics	Good. Teaching is effective. Students do well in the light of prior

	attainment in the subject. There is a wide range of well-managed courses. There are insufficient resources to help students work effectively on their own.
Science	Satisfactory. Lessons are well organised and there is good use of information technology (IT) in teaching and learning. GCE A-level pass rates are good but retention rates are unsatisfactory. Many students' GCSE results are poor.
Business and administration	Satisfactory. Teaching is effective and well organised. The range of provision is wide. There are high pass rates at GCE A level. On some courses, retention and attendance rates are unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention is paid to the learning needs of some students.
Computing and IT	Satisfactory. The teaching in practical sessions is good. Students develop computing skills effectively. However, in some lessons learning objectives are not made clear to students. Students receive insufficient feedback on assessed work. Specialist resources are particularly good. A wide range of good courses are provided in the local community. Course reviews lack rigour.
Health and social care	Good. Students have a wide range of health and care courses from a programme which meets their individual needs. Teaching is good. Pass rates on all courses are above the national average. There is insufficient use of information learning technology (ILT) on courses.
Visual and performing arts	Good. Students do well on the visual and performing arts courses. They make considerable progress and achieve high grades on GCE A/AS-level courses. Teaching is good. Some retention rates are poor. Pass rates on some courses at level 2 are low.
Psychology, sociology and history	Good. Teaching is lively and purposeful and students learn well. Students' written work is of a good standard and they develop abilities in analytical and critical thinking and writing. The use of IT is an integral part of the curriculum. Pass rates on GCE AS-level courses are good. Retention rates on two-year GCE A-level courses are declining.
English	Good. Teaching on advanced-level courses is good. Students' pass rates are consistently high. A minority of teaching at level 2 is unsatisfactory. The assessment, monitoring and review of students' work are rigorous. Teachers provide effective support for students. Retention rates on some courses are poor.
Basic skills for English speakers of other languages (ESOL)	Good. Provision meets the needs of the community effectively. Teaching is consistently well planned. High standards are expected of students. Students receive good support. Pass rates on full-time courses are high and on part-time courses they are satisfactory. Resources in community venues are insufficient.

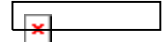
How well is the college led and managed?



The college is well managed. Governors, managers and staff at all levels are committed to raising standards. Overall retention and pass rates have improved. Retention rates of students aged over 19 continue to be below the national average. The college has effective partnership arrangements with outside bodies, which help it to meet local needs. The prior attainments of many students who enrol at the college are low. Many students on GCE A/AS-level courses obtain significantly higher

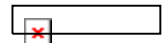
planning are effective in bringing about improvements although insufficient attention is given to action planning and to monitoring the achievement of objectives. The college's assessment of its own performance was detailed, thorough and rigorous. Financial management is sound and, on the basis of the improvements in standards achieved, the college provides value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



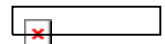
The college ensures that its curriculum is educationally and socially inclusive and meets all the needs of all of its students. Equality of opportunity is promoted. The college's equal opportunities policy states that the college aims for 'the curriculum to be a potent force for promoting intercultural education'. The college's equal opportunities committee has started to monitor the achievements of students from particular groups, such as minority ethnic communities. The college promotes equal opportunities through its approach to learning and student support. Students obtain significantly better results in examinations than those predicted for them on the basis of their attainment when they joined the college. Two years ago, the overall attainment level of girls aged 16 joining courses was 13% higher than that of boys aged 16. In the last two years, this difference in the overall levels of achievement of male and female students has lessened significantly. Good support is provided for students with learning difficulties and disabilities on mainstream courses. There is effective support for speakers of other languages. Many students are from minority ethnic groups. The college has widened participation successfully through its courses for adults which take place in schools and community venues. It has recruited a large number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Teachers provide much good formal and informal support for students. The tutorial system focuses effectively on monitoring and reviewing the progress of individual students. Students value their individual tutorials. Some students, however, do not find their group tutorials as useful. Those who need it, receive good additional learning support in lessons. Careers and progression advice is satisfactory. A range of services provide personal and welfare advice.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

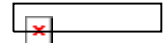
- friendly environment
- helpful and supportive staff

- feeling valued and respected
- good teaching
- high reputation for helping students to succeed.

What they feel could be improved

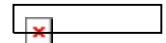
- refectory and social areas
- assessment of key skills.

Other information



The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors must agree the plan and send copies of it to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors



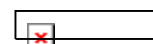
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	76	21	3

19+ and WBL*	66	30	4
Learning 16-18	73	22	5
19+ and WBL*	59	37	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. Portsmouth College offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses for full-time and part-time students. The college has increased its provision for adults significantly and is involved in several community projects to widen participation. Approximately 65% of students are following advanced-level courses. The majority of these students are on GCE A/AS-level courses with a small number working towards a GNVQ at advanced level, the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) and NVQs at level 3. The college offers GCE A/AS-level courses in over 30 subjects. It also offers one course leading to a GNVQ at foundation level, two courses leading to GNVQs at intermediate level, and three AVCE programmes. The college has carried out rationalisation of its AVCE programmes. This took place after the college and a local FE college came to an agreement not to duplicate one another's AVCE programmes. A substantial number of students are following 'repeat' GCSE programmes.

2. The college was last inspected in 1996 and the report was published in 1997. The inspection identified significant variations in pass rates across courses, and on some courses poor pass rates were unsatisfactory. The report also highlighted the need to improve retention rates. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 have improved and are now in line with sixth form colleges. However, retention rates for students aged 19 and over remain below the national average. In 2000, the overall pass rate of students of all ages was below the national average for sixth form colleges. College data for 2001 indicate a significant improvement in the pass rates both for students aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 and over. These pass rates are now near to the national average for sixth form colleges. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about students' achievement and standards of work on particular courses.

3. The college recruits many students aged 16 whose average GCSE point score at entry is below the average for national sixth form colleges. In 2000, the percentage of year 11 pupils in Portsmouth gaining five A* to C grades was 34% which is substantially below the average of 47% in England as a whole. In 2000, the average point score of students in the college entered for two or more GCE A/AS-level subjects was 17.7, compared with the average of 16.8 in Portsmouth Local Education Authority (LEA) schools and institutions, and 18.5 in England as a whole. The students' point score has improved substantially since 1997, when it was only 13. The college makes analytical comparison of students' examination results in different subjects and monitors students' progress on courses. It calculates the value added to students' achievements by comparing these with the results predicted for the students on the basis of their GCSE grades when they joined their course. The examination results of students on GCE A/AS-level courses demonstrate that the value added to students' achievements is high. The students' work showed that many students were performing well in many subjects, particularly when account was taken of their prior attainment at 16.

16-18 year olds

4. Most pass rates at GCE A level are good. In 1999/2000, 84% of students aged 16 to 18 who completed their GCE A-level course passed the examination and about half gained high grades. In

the same period, the pass rate for students enrolled on GCE AS-level courses was poor. Only about half the students passed and of these, only 28% achieved a high grade. According to college data for 2000/01, overall, the pass rate for GCE A-level courses has stayed about the same. The pass rate for GCE AS level has improved significantly from 43% in 2000 to 82% in 2001. The percentage of students gaining high grades has increased from 28% to 50%. The overall retention rate on GCE A/AS-level courses is in line with the national average.

5. A small number of students are enrolled on GNVQ advanced/AVCE programmes. The majority are aged 16 to 18. Over the last three years, retention rates have remained consistently high at just over 80%. In 2001, the pass rate was high at 93%. This was a considerable improvement from the previous year when it was 78%. Since 1998, about 40 students have enrolled on courses leading to an NVQ at level 3. In 2000, the retention and pass rates on these courses were 100% and 80%, respectively. In 2001, however, the pass rate rose to 100% but the retention rate fell to 50%.

6. In 1999/2000 of students aged 16 to 18 on GCSE courses, 78% completed their course, but only 38% obtained passes at the higher grades of A* to C. This proportion is well below the national average of 47%. In 2001, the pass rate in mathematics for students of all age groups was 43.4% and above the national average, but the retention rate was only about 75%. On the GCSE English course, the pass rate was 48.4%, slightly below the national average, and the retention rate was 85%. On the courses leading to NVQ level 2 and the GNVQ at intermediate level, retention rates were good and the pass rates were in line with the national average.

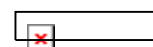
Adult learners

7. In 2000, the retention and pass rates of adult students on GCE A/AS-level courses were poor. In 2001, the retention rate on GCE A-level courses improved slightly but it is still poor, at 61%. The pass rate, however, improved significantly to 85% with 61% of students gaining high grades. On GCE AS-level courses, the retention rate declined from 86% in 2000, to 58% in 2001. During the same period, the pass rate on these courses declined from 68% to 64% but the proportion of students who obtained high grades increased substantially to 51%. The number of students enrolled on access to higher education (HE) courses has declined from 25 in 1998, to 13 in 2000. Pass rates are consistently high and nearly all students are successful in gaining a place at university. In 2001, the retention and pass rates of adults on courses leading to an NVQ at level 3 improved significantly and are now above the national average.

8. Each year since 1999 retention rates have declined on GCSE courses for adults and in 2001, were low at 63%. The proportion of adult students gaining grades A* to C has improved significantly from 44% in 2000 to 66% in 2001. The retention and pass rates for adults on courses leading to NVQ level 2 have improved steadily over the last three years and are now above the national average.

9. The college is providing an increasing number of courses for adults, including asylum seekers, to help them improve their literacy and numeracy. The college is responsive to the learning needs and lifestyle of individual adult students and is providing appropriate courses for them. Community-based courses for students whose first language is not English have helped to widen participation. Overall, students make good progress. Many students progress to other courses offered by the college. Many have improved their employment prospects.

Quality of education and training



10. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 129 sessions. Some 75% of the teaching was good or very good and just over 5% was excellent. There was some good and very

teaching was excellent. Lessons were well organised and had clear learning objectives. The best teaching was tailored to meet the needs of students with different levels of ability working in the same group. Teachers made high but realistic demands of students. In the best lessons, the pace was brisk and purposeful. Learning activities excited and held the students' interest, had a logical sequence and enabled the students to make steady progress. Teachers used well-chosen resources effectively including information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers drew on students' prior learning and checked regularly that the students understood new work. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subject and positive working relationships with students contributed much to the students' learning experience. Only 3% of lessons were unsatisfactory. There was, however, a small incidence of poor teaching in English, business studies, computing and basic education. Features of the weaker lessons included: failure to explain key terms fully or explore to ensure students understood them; insufficient introduction of new topics to help weaker students; pitching of some work at the wrong level for the abilities of the students and some activities which failed to interest the students and motivate them to learn.

11. Much good teaching occurred on the level 3 courses. In these courses, 81% of lessons were at least good and very few were less than satisfactory. In a particularly good history lesson, complexities of political organisation in pre-revolution Russia were tackled effectively through the use of well-prepared learning materials, detailed attention to difficult terms and structural diagrams to summarise understanding of groupings. In a NVQ business administration lesson in a realistic working area, well-chosen resources helped students to understand key business concepts. On business administration courses, students benefited from a professional working environment. In lessons, there was an appropriate balance between theoretical and practical work and students were enabled to make steady progress.

12. The quality of teaching on the level 2 and level 1 courses is more variable. There was some particularly good teaching in each of the curriculum areas. One good GCSE mathematics lesson had been carefully planned. The teacher went over some recent work with the students again to make sure they had understood it. The students then made further progress by working through some well-chosen problems. In a literacy lesson, the teacher had a good rapport with the students and held their interest through lively questioning at the start. The lesson had clear objectives and the teacher shared these with the students. The teacher questioned the students regularly to make sure they understood what they were doing and gave them feedback on their performance to help them improve it. Learning assistants provide valuable support and encouragement to individual students. There were a few instances of unsatisfactory teaching in some IT and English lessons. In these lessons, the learning objectives lacked clarity and resources were ill matched to learners' needs. On GNVQ courses, some lessons were good or at least satisfactory. These lessons were managed well and students were given a sequence of appropriate tasks matched to their needs and abilities. The teacher gave the students clear feedback on the performance to sustain their interest and help them produce work to the required standard. In a well-planned lesson on an NVQ level 2 course, the teacher questioned the students skilfully, encouraged them to explore their ideas in discussion and then helped them strengthen their learning by completing a worksheet which they found interesting.

13. In about two thirds of the lessons for students over the age of 19, the teaching was good or very good. It was unsatisfactory in less than 4% of lessons. In the best lessons, the students had clear learning plans, were given well-designed assignments, had a positive relationship with their teachers and made good progress. At one community centre, the learners were highly motivated by teaching which challenged them to think, explore their ideas and use their skills to the full. Students responded well to questions about prior learning and these helped them to plan their studies effectively.

14. Ways of teaching key skills and enabling students to achieve certification in key skills are being developed. Students on level 3 courses can select a route to certification which is suitable to their programme. Those working towards NVQs at levels 2 or 3 are advised to take a GCSE subject relevant to key skills, such as English or mathematics, or work towards certification in key skills at level 3. Students on GCSE courses receive two lessons on key skills. One lesson is on ICT and the other is on communication and application of number. The college intends that full-time students should achieve certification in key skills over two years. From autumn 2001, however, these

students who have made good progress in key skills will be able to take the necessary tests within a shorter time-scale.

15. Relationships between teachers and students and between students themselves are good. They help to further the students' social development and are instrumental in helping the students make progress and succeed. Students with mobility problems are provided with accommodation easily accessible to them and they receive appropriate help and support.

16. In the sample of lessons inspected, attendance overall was 82.8%. This represents an improvement on the figure of 77% across the whole college, for the last academic year. There was, however, considerable variation in students' attendance between courses, and between different levels of courses. In most areas, attendance at lessons on level 3 courses was better than for lessons on level 2 courses. In only one area was overall attendance below 80%. The college has an attendance policy. Staff have carried out an investigation to see if students on GCSE and GCE A-level courses who attend regularly, achieve better results than those who do not. Most students are punctual for lessons but in a few instances when students were late they were not asked to explain why they had failed to arrive on time.

17. In general, the assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. When students are set target grades their prior attainment is taken into account. Teachers hold regular meetings with students to review their progress and in most areas, these are carried out well. However, the short-term targets for improvement, which some students are set in their individual action plans, are not specific enough.

18. Most teachers mark students' assignments and coursework thoroughly. In many instances they provide students with constructive comments to help them improve their performance. There is a programme for reporting to parents of students under the age of 18 and this includes a series of consultation evenings.

19. Teachers are appropriately qualified. They have a sound knowledge of their subject or vocational area and draw on this effectively in lessons. Some 95% of teachers have teaching qualifications and about 32% are qualified as assessors or internal verifiers. A good number of staff have received staff-development training in ICT which they have put to good use in their teaching. Some teachers of business studies and art have updated their industrial experience but this good practice in staff development has not been replicated in other areas across the college.

20. Overall, the teaching accommodation is well decorated and conducive to learning. Many teaching rooms are subject specific, contain good displays of relevant learning materials, and provide a stimulating learning environment. A few rooms are not big enough for the classes using them and students in these are cramped. Specialist facilities, such as the studio theatre, business office and multi-gym, enable students to apply theory in a realistic practical setting. Most teaching areas have good resources for teaching and learning. However, there are deficiencies in learning materials in some areas such as computing, media and film studies and mathematics.

21. Students have benefited from the college's investment in up-to-date IT equipment. IT is used effectively in several curriculum areas but its use is less well developed in others. General software was used appropriately in English and psychology lessons. Students on art and design courses have access to specialised IT equipment. In humanities, students made good use of the Internet when carrying out coursework on the October revolution. Students on GCSE mathematics courses were motivated by being able to use software which helped them to improve their numeracy skills. IT enables students on some vocational courses to learn effectively. For example, health and care students use IT to devise systems for preparing hospital meals. The well-equipped computer centre and library are excellent. For most areas of the curriculum the library has a good range of book stock, periodicals, journals and CD-ROMs to help students with their research. Students value the quiet study area in the library which also houses useful careers information. Many subject-specific learning resources are held by departments. These resources are not always available to students outside their normal class time. There is no central inventory of book stock and other learning materials for the whole college.

22. Students make good use of the college's sporting facilities which include a football pitch, rugby field, tennis courts and cricket pitch. The refectory also serves as a communal area as there is no student common room. In their feedback, many students express dissatisfaction with the refectory services.

23. The college provides an extensive range of programmes to meet many local needs. Liaison between the college and local schools is well established and effective. Staff from the college help local schools by, for instance, giving advice on IT, running poetry workshops for pupils and helping to design projects. Current students say they benefited from the college's 'taster days' and the help they received to ease their transition from school to college. Collaborative work with a local general FE college to rationalise the curriculum is well developed. Joint brochures and combined presentations at open days are used effectively to inform potential students of the choice of courses. The college works closely with the nearby university that provides progression opportunities for students. The college is committed to widening participation and has attracted additional funding for this work. The number of adult learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly asylum seekers, has grown considerably in recent years. Minority ethnic languages are offered at GCSE level and GCE A level. Through its established partnerships with several agencies in the local community, the college has been successful in recruiting unemployed adults to courses. A good range of IT training is offered to all age groups in the community.

24. There is a well-structured induction programme for students. Full-time students attend an introduction day in July and sample lessons to help them make an informed choice of their studies. The college has strengthened its support and guidance services since the last inspection. The number of students taking up learning and language support has doubled in each of the last two years. A strong feature of the system for providing students with additional learning support is the carefully planned help the learning support assistants give students. Students who received additional learning support said it helped them to cope with their studies more effectively. The needs of students who have not achieved grade C or above in GCSE mathematics or English are assessed on entry to the college. Those who need it are provided with appropriate support through workshop sessions. During their courses, some students are encouraged to ask for additional learning support but few do so. Little work has been done to analyse the impact of learning support on retention and pass rates. Language support for students for whom English is a second language is good. Students benefit from the bilingual skills of their teachers and classroom assistants. Students with mobility problems said they had chosen the college because its accommodation was easily accessible to them.

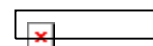
25. The college's policy and procedures on tutorial support are implemented effectively. All full-time students must attend a group tutorial each week. Group tutorials do not always maintain students' interest. Students value, however, the individual help and attention they receive in one-to-one tutorials. During these, the students receive a review of their progress, carry out action planning to improve their work, and are set targets. Feedback from students confirms that they are well satisfied with these tutorials. Personal tutors monitor attendance and routinely follow-up absence from classes. Programmes are enriched with activities including overseas study trips. Many full-time students undertake a range of extra activities on what is termed a short course programme. These include clubs, literary studies, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and various sporting activities. Students' attendance on these short courses is not monitored systematically. There are no records of students' attendance at activities.

26. The college has a professionally qualified counsellor who uses the time allocated for counselling flexibly to meet the needs of students. The counselling service is well promoted at induction and was used by 22% of students surveyed last year. Students welcome the service. The college has contacts with a range of external counselling agencies to which students who require specialist help may be referred. The college has an appropriate policy on religious observance and provides facilities such as a room for the Christian Union and a prayer room for Muslim students. A comprehensive list of religious festivals is included in the student organiser.

27. Specialist careers guidance is available from a centre in the college library. The resource area includes a good range of careers education and guidance materials, including IT software. Individual interviews for students are arranged with the external careers service. Students in some

curriculum areas are dissatisfied with the careers advice they receive. Students' responses to questionnaires show that about two thirds of all students did not seek an interview with a representative of the external careers service. Personal tutors assume much of the responsibility for helping students choose and apply for a HE course, and the students value the guidance they receive.

Leadership and management



28. College managers have set clear direction for the work of the college. All staff are committed to raising standards. Communication at all levels is good. Most of the weaknesses identified in the report prepared by inspectors of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in 1997 have been rectified. Provision is good in six of the programme areas inspected and satisfactory in three.

29. In 2000, the college was re-organised into 12 small teaching departments overseen by two assistant principals. Expertise in areas such as management information and health and safety is secured through an effective partnership arrangement with a neighbouring FE college. In general, teaching departments are well managed but there is no formal training programme to help staff develop their management skills. Heads of departments know their students well and the progress of individual students is discussed at team meetings. Particular importance is placed on identifying and supporting students who are a cause for concern. Members of the senior management team mentor students who are falling behind in their work or whose attendance is poor. In some areas, such as IT and visual and performing arts, subjects are managed by different departments and there is insufficient co-ordination to ensure that issues and developments are addressed consistently. Staff within departments share work areas and make good use of opportunities to share good practice. There are no systematic arrangements to enable staff across the college to share good practice.

30. Governors work well with senior managers. They provide them with support but where necessary challenge them to justify their decisions. They operate within a sound framework for governance and are well informed about the academic performance of the college. The college makes good use of local partnerships to widen participation and meet local needs. Strategic planning is effective and governors are appropriately involved in setting the strategic direction of the college. Operational objectives are not precise enough. Insufficient action has been taken to establish performance indicators against which the college can measure progress towards achieving its objectives. Detailed action plans for achievement of long-term objectives are drawn up. The college does not set itself enough interim targets. Governors monitor the financial performance of the college carefully. They receive reports from the principal on implementation of the strategic plan. When governors are appointed, they receive guidance on their new role. There is, however, no systematic programme of training for governors.

31. Quality assurance procedures have improved since the last inspection and are proving effective. They are set out clearly in the quality assurance manual and, in the main, they are applied consistently across the college. The procedures, however, are not being fully used on courses for adults. There are effective electronic procedures for monitoring attendance. Lessons are observed regularly. Observations lead to the identification of development needs. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The findings from lesson observations are not taken in staff appraisals. Course reviews are carried out but these also do not reflect the findings from lesson observations. Many action plans are too general and include few measurable targets. Monitoring procedures are insufficiently systematic. Targets are set for students' retention and pass rates across the college as a whole, and for individual courses. In the year prior to the inspection, 9 out of 12 targets for retention and students' achievements set by the corporation were met. Some of the targets, however, were not demanding enough.

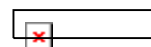
32. Self-assessment is carried out annually and involves staff and governors. The self-assessment

report is set out clearly but does not cover teaching and learning sufficiently. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Self-assessment action plans lack detail and departmental action plans do not address all the weaknesses identified through self-assessment. The self-assessment process is not yet fully integrated with planning procedures.

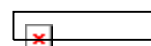
33. The equal opportunities policy states that the college aims for 'the curriculum to be a potent force for promoting intercultural education'. The equal opportunities committee has started to monitor the achievements of students from particular groups, including minority ethnic communities. Procedures for the committee to report its findings to the corporation were established in the year prior to inspection. Procedures have not been established for implementing equal opportunities policy fully. The self-assessment process does not cover the promotion of equal opportunities in enough depth. The college promotes equal opportunities through its provision of learning and student support. For example, two years ago, The overall attainment of girls aged 16 at enrolment was 13% higher than that of boys aged 16. In the last two years, the difference between the attainments of male and female students has lessened significantly. Many students achieve significantly better examination results than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades.

34. Financial management is sound and the financial position of the college has shown significant improvement. Curriculum areas are allocated budgets for materials based on student numbers. Procedures for costing courses were implemented the year prior to the inspection. There are some small classes but in general, class sizes are cost effective.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Mathematics



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

Strengths

- wide range of courses
- effective teaching
- high value added score of students' pass rates on GCE A/AS-level courses
- well-planned and managed courses

- rigorous monitoring of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some courses
- insufficient learning materials to help students to work on their own
- lack of specialist IT equipment.

Scope of provision

35. There is a wide range of full-time provision in mathematics. The college provides GCE AS-level courses in pure mathematics, applied mathematics and statistics, thereby offering students a range of options to choose from when deciding on their GCE A-level studies in their second year. From next year GCE AS-level further mathematics will also be available. Approximately 300 students each year take GCSE mathematics. GCSE statistics is also offered. The department offers courses leading to numeracy qualifications and provides numeracy tuition across the college. There are evening courses in GCE AS-level mathematics and GCSE mathematics.

Achievement and standards

36. The attainment of students on entry to GCE A and AS-level courses in mathematics, in terms of their performance in GCSE mathematics, is significantly below the national average. In addition, the college allows students with a C grade from the intermediate GCSE mathematics to study mathematics to GCE A level if they demonstrate strong motivation. Most students have low attainment in mathematics when they join their GCE course. GCE A-level pass rates show that the students' make substantial progress and that their achievements are considerable. Pass rates have been in line with national averages for the past three years. In 2001, 11% of students who passed GCE A level joined the course with grade C at GCSE. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses have been below the national average, except in 2000, when they were above the national average. In 2001, retention rates on GCE AS-level courses were high for students aged 16 to 18, but low for adults. Only a few students take the GCE A-level course in further mathematics and the GCSE course in statistics but retention and pass rates on these courses are above average. The proportion of students who obtain grade C or above on the GCSE mathematics course has been consistently in line with the national average, and was above it in 2001. The retention rate on the GCSE mathematics course has been at, or just below, the national average.

37. Students' work is of an appropriate standard. Many GCE A-level students have good algebraic skills and can find the solution to an equation by a variety of methods. Some students, however, lack confidence in their ability to use basic algebra. GCE A-level students are confident users of IT and specialist mathematical software. They use software to investigate graphs of complex functions as well as to manipulate and display data. On GCE AS-level courses, teachers aim to ensure students can use calculators and effectively develop skills in the use of IT. Many students rapidly acquire competence in algebraic work and most can work with equations of a circle and the equation of a tangent. However, some GCE AS-level students have weak basic skills in algebra and

they have difficulty rearranging and simplifying expressions. Some also have difficulty with equivalent fractions and percentages. The GCSE course gives students a chance to improve their GCSE grade. Many learn to cope well with basic number work and statistics. In one lesson, students were given demanding work solving equations and they improved their mathematical skills. Some students, however, lack confidence in using skills of basic numeracy. Such students receive little extra help in class to enable them to work with more confidence and make progress.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Mathematics, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	281	279	240
		% retention	77	76	76
		% pass rate	37	35	43
GCE A-level mathematics 2 year	3	No. of starts	86	47	56
		% retention	71	88	70
		% pass rate	90	83	90
GCE A-level mathematics 1 year	3	No. of starts	20	13	*
		% retention	50	54	*
		% pass rate	60	86	*
GCE A-level further mathematics 2 years	3	No. of starts	8	4	6
		% retention	88	50	83
		% pass rate	100	50	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

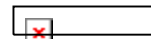
38. Courses are well planned and managed effectively. There are detailed schemes of work with clear learning objectives and assessment strategies. Teachers monitor students' progress regularly and assess students at the end of course units. The students' assessment results are taken into account when setting students targets. Teachers monitor students' attendance and punctuality carefully. They mark students' work regularly and return it promptly. The majority of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are well planned. They have clear objectives which are shared with the students. In the best lessons, teachers give clear explanations. They work through well-chosen examples and check students' understanding regularly by asking demanding questions. Teachers have good working relationships with their students. Their enthusiasm for their subject motivates their students to learn effectively and succeed. Teachers have high expectations of students and most students work hard to meet these. In most lessons, teachers provide students with help and support but they also require them to undertake demanding work. Students undertake a variety of appropriate tasks and activities which sustain their interest and engage their full concentration. In a few lessons, however, students are allowed too much time to work through examples and some lose interest. Teachers are skilful in giving individual students of different abilities the help and support they need. There are insufficient learning materials which students can use on their own.

39. In lessons, teachers make good use of graphics calculators linked to an overhead projector. Teachers suggest to students that they strengthen their understanding of classroom work by carrying out tasks on the college computers. There is no appropriate IT equipment in the classroom for students to use.

Leadership and management

40. The department is well managed. There are clear plans for developing courses. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 has been well planned and successfully implemented. GCE AS-level provision has been developed to provide a wide range of options for students. Teachers work well as a team. They share ideas and resources. There is an effective staff appraisal system and through this, the training needs of staff are identified. All members of staff have individual plans and are set targets.

Science



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

Strengths

- good GCE A-level pass rates above national average
- well-organised lessons
- good use of IT in teaching and learning.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on GCE A-level courses
- low pass rates on GCSE courses
- insufficient support to help individual students meet their learning needs.

Scope of provision

41. The college provides an adequate range of science courses. GCE A and AS level and GCSE biology, chemistry and physics are offered. Most students who attend lessons during the day are full time and are aged between 16 and 18. About 35 adults are on GCSE biology and GCE AS-level environmental science courses, and an access to HE course in biology. The college does not offer any vocational or GNVQ courses in science, following the rationalisation agreement it entered into with a nearby FE college. Science short courses are offered as part of the enrichment programme and these include a course in forensic science. There is a significant proportion of students on science courses for whom English is a second language.

Achievement and standards

42. There are good pass rates on GCE A-level courses. Pass rates in biology, chemistry and physics are consistently above the national average. A significant proportion of students obtain passes at grade C and above. In 2001, 39% of students obtained grades A or B and 65% obtained grade C or above. For several years, many students on all GCE A-level courses have obtained grades higher than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses, however, are unsatisfactory. Many students progress to HE. The retention rates of GCSE courses are satisfactory but the proportion of students who obtain grades at C or above is small. Most students are attentive and co-operative in lessons and they work diligently. Practical work is carried out carefully and safely. In lessons, students achieve standards of work appropriate for the stage and level of their course. Overall attendance rates are close to national averages for sixth form colleges. Most students are punctual but a significant minority of students arrive late at the start of the day.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Science, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE human physiology and health	2	No. of starts	32	25	48
		% retention	72	76	77
		% pass rate	38	18	35
GCSE chemistry	2	No. of starts	13	*	11
		% retention	92	*	82
		% pass rate	33	*	0
GCSE physics	2	No. of starts	13	*	11
		% retention	92	*	82
		% pass rate	54	*	11
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	46	25	42
		% retention	57	96	43
		% pass rate	83	100	94
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	29	17	24
		% retention	62	94	58
		% pass rate	94	93	100
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	26	17	24
		% retention	69	82	63
		% pass rate	94	86	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

43. Lessons are well organised. Teachers use a wide variety of appropriate teaching methods, make their lessons lively, give students help and encouragement, but also require them to undertake demanding tasks. In a GCSE chemistry practical lesson, students had to design and construct apparatus to separate mixtures. This required an understanding of the physical properties of substances and the ability to design an appropriate experiment. Students worked effectively and

safely. On science courses in the evening, adult students carried out practical work well. Through practical tasks, they strengthened their understanding of scientific theory and became more confident in relating theory to practice. From time to time, students make visits to places of scientific interest in order to broaden their understanding of particular aspects of the subject. Teachers use computers to good effect to illustrate scientific processes. In one lesson, the students went to the science computer room to download information about fundamental particles prior to constructing model particles using quark cards. Students are also encouraged to use computers in their course work. Schemes of work show the teaching of key skills as an integral part of GCE A-level science courses. In a biology lesson, students were developing the key skill of the application of number through determination of the average length of palisade mesophyll cells in prunus leaves. Few students have so far completed the work necessary to gain a level 3 award in key skills.

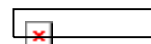
44. Coursework guides are carefully written and comprehensive. Teachers are supported effectively by three laboratory assistants. Science laboratories are well equipped.

45. Teachers monitor individual student's progress effectively. Each student is set a minimum grade as a target to attain. In determining this grade, staff take into account the quality of the student's current work. Reviews of students' progress are undertaken regularly. Many students start advanced science courses having achieved low GCSE grades. Students receive no initial assessment to identify gaps in their scientific knowledge. There are no systematic arrangements for providing extra subject support in science for students who need it. Teachers give help informally when approached by students. Teachers' marking of students' work is rigorous. Work is returned with useful written comments to help students improve their performance. Sufficient homework is set regularly. It is marked and returned promptly.

Leadership and management

46. Science is well managed. There is a clear schedule for staff meetings. The quality of courses is reviewed and the implementation of action for improvement is monitored. Course materials and other science resources are well organised.

Business and administration



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

Strengths

- broad range of provision
- much well-planned and effective teaching
- good pass rate at GCE A level
- good support for students with learning difficulties in the classroom.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on NVQ level 2, GNVQ and GCSE courses
- low attendance rates on most level 2 courses
- failure to address the learning needs of some students.

Scope of provision

47. The college offers a broad range of provision in this curriculum area at levels 1, 2 and 3. This includes GCE A and AS-level, GCSE, GNVQ and NVQ courses. Evening courses in accounting are offered. The department provides an NVQ course off site as part of the 'Pride of Pompey' initiative which aims to help unemployed persons back into work. The provision is arranged flexibly and meets the needs of adult students. The GNVQ foundation course has been specifically tailored for the local market with the inclusion of optional units on leisure and tourism. The NVQ business administration course meets the needs of employers in the area.

Achievement and standards

48. Pass rates on GCE A-level courses are good and above the national averages. The retention rate on the GCE A-level business studies course has improved and is 5% above the national average. Retention rates on accounting and economics courses are low. The value added scores of students' pass rates on these courses are in line with the national average. The retention and pass rates on the recently introduced GCE AS-level course in business studies are 77% and 72%, respectively. Retention rates on GCSE courses are 7% below the national average. In 2000/01, the pass rate on the GCSE business studies course was high, at 93%. The retention rates on daytime vocational courses are below the national average but the pass rate on the course leading to an NVQ in business administration is high. The pass rate on the accounting course which is provided in the evening for mature students is high, at 23% above the national average. This year, a GCE AS-level course in business studies is provided as part of evening provision. This replaces a one-year course in accounting.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Business and administration, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Accounting certificate	1	No. of starts	**	25	49
		% retention	**	80	86
		% pass rate	**	75	88
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	46	40	33
		% retention	74	65	58
		% pass rate	52	65	95
GCSE accounting	2	No. of starts	30	24	15

		% retention	57	75	73
		% pass rate	88	83	73
GCSE business	2	No. of starts	22	24	23
		% retention	77	75	68
		% pass rate	65	44	93
GCE A-level business studies/accounts*	3	No. of starts	34	16	16
		% retention	62	31	38
		% pass rate	57	40	60
GCE A-level accounting	3	No. of starts	8	11	17
		% retention	100	91	58
		% pass rate	63	90	86
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	67	34	37
		% retention	60	76	84
		% pass rate	90	86	90
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	14	14	13*
		% retention	21	93	31
		% pass rate	100	85	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* includes 9 students enrolled on bus/econ on ISR

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

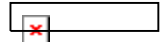
49. Courses are well organised and ably managed. Staff create a learning environment in which students are expected to work to professional standards. Relationships between staff and students are productive. Support assistants are particularly effective in giving help to individual students with learning difficulties. In the best lessons, students are given demanding tasks and develop good analytical and evaluative skills. Students are fully involved in various learning activities. These include group work, case studies and the presentation of feedback on their tasks. These activities require the students to work on their own and also to learn from one another. In some lessons, however, students lose their concentration and then do very little. The attendance rate of students on level 3 courses was in line with the national average but for students on level 2 courses, it was poor. Some teachers organise their lessons effectively to ensure they meet the needs of students of different abilities and aptitude. In the better lessons, teachers gave students tasks which increased in complexity progressively and made good use of IT. In the poorer lessons, however, everyone in the class was set the same tasks and this proved too easy for some students and too difficult for others.

50. Students are given their homework assignments through the college's intranet. When students have been absent, they know they need to find out through the intranet what homework they have missed and must now complete. Teachers set and mark work regularly but some do not give the students enough detailed feedback on how they can improve their work. Students' files and portfolios are well presented, particularly on the NVQ business administration course. On some courses, students are provided with workbooks which help them to organise their studies throughout the year and enable them to work at their own pace. Internal verification procedures for NVQ and GNVQ courses are well planned and carried out as part of an annual cycle.

Leadership and management

51. The department is ably managed and well organised. Communications are effective and regular staff meetings are held at which quality assurance issues are addressed. Courses are reviewed regularly. Clear targets are set. Action planning, however, is not precise enough and does not identify specific action to build on strengths and rectify weaknesses.

Computing and IT



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

Strengths

- good teaching in practical computing lessons
- effective development of students' computing skills
- good specialist resources
- wide range of IT courses within the community.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in GCSE IT
- insufficient feedback on students' assessed work
- failure of teachers to make learning objectives clear to students
- lack of rigour in course reviews.

Scope of provision

52. The college provides a range of courses in computing and IT to meet the needs of students in all age groups. The full-time courses include those in GCE A/AS-level computing and ICT, GCSE IT, and an AVCE course in ICT. There are no full-time courses in IT at foundation level for school leavers. Many courses for adults are carried out well at various locations in the local community. They include integrated business technology (IBT) stage 2, IBT stage 3, European computer driving licence, computer literacy and IT, and introduction to computer courses.

Achievement and standards

53. The retention and pass rates on GCE A-level computing courses have risen steadily over the last three years. They are now in line with the national average. Students write up their GCE A-level computing projects well and their work in these is of a high standard. The pass rate on the GCE AS-level computing course is well above the national average and the retention rate is also good. The retention rate on the GCE AS-level course in ICT is high but the pass rate is below the national average. The retention rate on the GCSE IT course has remained constant for the last three years and is above the national average. The proportion of students who obtain grade C or above on the GCSE IT course is low at 22% and is well below the national average.

54. The pass rate on computer literacy and IT courses is satisfactory. In 2001, the pass rate on the IBT stage 2 course was high but the retention rate was below the national average. Computing and IT students have a good practical understanding of the software packages they are using. Students at all levels use the Internet for research effectively. Students on the AVCE course do not go out on work experience and are not given any opportunity to find out what an actual IT work environment is like.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Computing and IT, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
IBT 2	1	No. of starts	*	80	95
		% retention	*	90	82
		% pass rate	*	43	67
IBT 3	2	No. of starts	*	*	13
		% retention	*	*	77
		% pass rate	*	*	60
GCSE IT	2	No. of starts	61	72	47
		% retention	75	76	79
		% pass rate	30	31	22
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	33	29	50
		% retention	61	69	72
		% pass rate	55	76	75

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

55. Teaching is good in practical computing lessons. Students are well motivated and able to work successfully at their own pace. Practical lessons are well managed to ensure that students' computing skills are developed effectively. Most teachers make use of questioning skilfully to revise

and confirm previous learning and to draw on students' own experiences. There is a good rapport between staff and students. Students feel that their teachers are willing to listen to them and treat them as equals. Adult students on the access to HE programme are particularly appreciative of the support they receive. They value their lessons because they enable them to develop the skills they need. In most lessons, teachers set demanding tasks and students complete them successfully. In some lessons, students spent all their time on unimaginative practical tasks which failed to hold their interest. They became bored, did not concentrate on their work and learnt little. The objectives of lessons are not stated on lesson plans. Nor are they routinely shared with students, who are sometimes unclear of what is expected of them.

56. In addition to group tutorials, students meet individually with their tutors twice a term for progress reviews. During these progress reviews, the students agree targets and action plans to help them improve their work and achieve their qualifications. Students' progress is monitored carefully.

57. The college has good specialist IT resources. All students store their work on the college network. Many learning materials, including presentations, quizzes, handouts and hyperlinks, are available to students on computing courses. The ratio of computers to students is high. All practical teaching rooms are well designed but in some the computer chairs are most unsuitable. The library has few books and specialist journals relevant to this curriculum area.

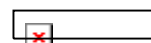
58. Assessment meets awarding body standards. In their work, students achieve standards appropriate for the level of their course. When marking students' work, however, some teachers do not give students enough feedback to help them improve their performance. Some students are not given assignment schedules and are unable to plan use of their time over the year effectively.

59. The college provides a large number of courses for adults in a wide range of community locations including community centres and sheltered housing. On some of the courses, laptop computers are available to students. These courses are designed for persons from groups formerly under-represented in the college, such as single parents, older learners, asylum seekers and the wives of naval personnel. By providing these courses, the college has helped to counter social exclusion within the city. Links with industry are weak.

Leadership and management

60. The course provision is the responsibility of two departments. The mathematical sciences department is responsible for GCE A/AS-level and GCSE provision and the business education department is responsible for the AVCE and the adult and community provision. Both departments give priority to improving students' learning experience. There are, however, no systematic arrangements whereby staff from the two departments can collaborate to share experiences and good practice. Course reviews result in action plans at the end of each year. Teachers do not systematically monitor the effective implementation of these action plans. Appropriate action is being taken to improve retention rates. Students' attendance is monitored closely. Students whose absences are causing concern are set targets for attendance. Since the introduction of such targets, there has been some improvement in retention rates.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- well-designed NVQ programmes

- good pass rates
- high standard of work in students' portfolios
- effective links with the workplace
- effective strategies for working with community groups.

Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements for staff to update their vocational experience
- insufficient specialist books for students
- insufficient use of IT in teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

61. The college offers courses in care and early years care and education. These include full-time AVCE and GNVQ courses and both full-time and part-time courses leading to NVQs at levels 2 and 3. A number of part-time courses leading to NVQs are offered off site through partnership arrangements, with the aim of widening participation. These courses have attracted women from the local Bengali community. They offer a pathway to further study in the college or in the community. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 can follow programmes leading to different types of qualifications. They can take a GCE subject and also work towards an NVQ. For example, one student was taking GCE AS-level sociology, working towards an NVQ in early years and education at level 2 and also aiming to achieve the AVCE single award. The students' work experience and assessment of work-based competency were scheduled carefully to give the student enough time to cover the other subjects on the programme. Students working towards an NVQ at level 2 also take GCSE mathematics and English if they do not have a grade C or above in these subjects. This year, there has been an increase in enrolments on all courses.

Achievement and standards

62. Pass rates on all courses are good. The pass rate on the GNVQ advanced course has been well above the national average for the last three years. In 2001, the pass rate on the NVQ level 2 courses was 100%. The pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate course is 6% above the national average. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate course is also above the national average. A

significant number of the full-time students on the NVQ programme transfer to work-based training schemes in order to complete work for this qualification.

63. The standard of work in portfolios on the GNVQ courses is good. Students make effective use of IT to present their work. The students' work for their health and care assignments shows that the students have drawn effectively on their knowledge of other subjects on their programme. For example, they make use of information and theories they have learnt on their GCE AS-level psychology or sociology courses. Students display a clear understanding of the issues of professional care work although they do not provide enough examples of practical experiences in their written reports. In some of their assignments, students use key skills. They do not, however, always record evidence of their acquisition of these in their portfolios. Assessment of full-time students' work-based competences is carried out during the students' periods of work experience and is recorded carefully. Students develop their knowledge of theory through tasks and assignments. One student for whom English is a second language, presented evidence innovatively in the form of photographs supported by short statements.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Health and social care, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ early years care and education	2	No. of starts	*	33	30
		% retention	*	70	77
		% pass rate	*	87	100
GNVQ advanced	3	No. of starts	15	3	12
		% retention	33	100	67
		% pass rate	100	100	88
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	*	10	22
		% retention	*	100	68
		% pass rate	*	90	93

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

64. Teaching is good. Staff have high expectations of students. They set students targets and monitor their progress towards reaching them. Teachers work together effectively as a team to ensure that students begin building up their portfolios right from the start of the course. Teachers check students understand the level and standard of work required for the qualification. They mark work promptly and provide students with immediate feedback on what they need to do to achieve high standards. Teachers regularly praise students for their efforts. Tasks are set for homework and if students return homework late they have to explain why. In the most effective classes, teachers use a variety of methods to bring the subject to life. Case histories, scenarios and examples of working practice capture the interest of the students. In the few weaker lessons, students spend a disproportionate amount of time completing worksheets and written exercises. Also, teachers do not pay enough attention to students' responses to oral questions and alter their lesson plans in the light of these.

65. Teaching methods are varied to meet the needs of students aged 16 to 18 and adults. In lessons for adults, the teacher acts as a facilitator and there is useful discussion and exchange of experiences. In one lesson on a community-based course the use of an interpreter, who had previously completed a GNVQ in health and social care, ensured all students were able to join in

the discussion.

66. The department has a range of appropriate books, videos and information packs but these are not always readily available to students. The library holds journals and a core set of texts. There is insufficient use of IT in lessons. Although students have good access to the Internet there are no care or early years-specific software programs to help them develop key skills.

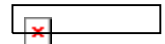
67. Practical experience is gained in work-experience placements. Links with work placements are good. The department is actively building relationships with local hospitals, schools and social services. Many of the nursery placements have work-based assessors. Many of the nurseries which accept students on work placements have employees who are on part-time courses at the college. One nursery has a mentor scheme for students. Students have a mentor who plans tasks which enable the students to develop the requisite NVQ competences.

68. All members of the team are qualified teachers and hold a range of vocational qualifications. There are inadequate arrangements for teachers and peripatetic assessors to update their vocational experience. Work-based assessors are mainly active practitioners in their particular field.

Leadership and management

69. The department consists of a small but effectively managed team. The provision for which it is responsible is growing rapidly. Links with partnership organisations led to a growth in off-site provision and courses for adults in line with the college's strategic plan. The department fosters links with secondary schools through activities such as the 'out-of-school club'. External and internal verification of assessment is thorough and extends to the work place. Attendance of students is closely monitored.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- broad range of subject options at level 3
- high pass rates on many GCE A-level courses
- large number of high-grade passes on some GCE A-level courses
- high value added scores of students' pass rates on many GCE A-level courses
- effective use in lessons of teachers' professional skills as artists

- good practical skills of students
- good studio accommodation and resources for visual arts and drama.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most GCE A-level courses
- very low pass rates on GCSE media course
- lack of opportunity to develop practical skills in media and film studies.

Scope of provision

70. The college offers a broad range of GCE A/AS-level courses in this curriculum area. These include courses in media and film studies; drama, dance and performing arts; music; fine art; design technology; graphic design; and photography. There is a smaller range of GCSE courses. The art department offers a small number of part-time evening courses. There has been a large increase in the number of GCE AS-level students.

Achievement and standards

71. There are consistently good pass rates on many GCE A-level courses. The pass rate on all the visual arts courses is consistently high and close to 100%. The proportion of students who achieved grade C or above in GCE A-level photography is 90%, well above the national average. The pass rates in GCE A-level drama, dance and performing arts, media and film are at, or above, the national average. The proportion of students who gain grade C or above in GCE A-level media and drama is above the national average. On many courses, particularly graphics and drama, the students' achievements have high value added scores. These scores reflect the considerable progress students make during their two years of study. The pass rate on GCE AS-level courses is impressive with 86% of students achieving a pass and 76% gaining grade C or above. In art and design, 40 GCE AS-level students gained a grade A. GCSE pass rates are low. In media, they are consistently below national averages. The college is reviewing level 2 provision with a view to offering more vocational and practical courses. Retention rates on most GCE A-level and GCSE courses fell last year to well below the national average for students aged 16 to 18. The departments are taking action to improve retention rates on GCSE courses.

72. Students' work is good. Students develop good practical skills in dance, drama and performing arts. They work well in groups. Art and design work is well presented. Observation drawing is good and creative use is made of computer graphics and photography. Media and film students explore sophisticated concepts and are confident in using technical terms in discussion. Assessment of key skills is being made an integral part of courses. Specific projects are being developed through which students will develop and demonstrate key skills. Many students, however, have to carry out

additional work in order to complete their portfolios of evidence of their acquisition of key skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Visual and performing arts, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE art and design	2	No. of starts	17	18	16
		% retention	65	67	75
		% pass rate	55	75	58
GCSE photography	2	No. of starts	49	30	41
		% retention	80	73	63
		% pass rate	80	73	69
GCSE media	2	No. of starts	26	19	34
		% retention	6	79	67
		% pass rate	22	27	23
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	30	17	29
		% retention	73	100	76
		% pass rate	95	100	100
GCE A-level photography	3	No. of starts	12	15	20
		% retention	75	67	45
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level graphics	3	No. of starts	18	12	33
		% retention	61	91	70
		% pass rate	100	100	96
GCE A-level design	3	No. of starts	7	6	6
		% retention	57	83	83
		% pass rate	75	100	100
GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	38	31	33
		% retention	79	87	70
		% pass rate	90	93	96
GCE A-level drama, dance and performing arts	3	No. of starts	37	31	34
		% retention	54	74	65
		% pass rate	80	90	91

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

73. Teaching is particularly good. Many of the teachers are professional artists, dancers, actors or musicians and they make good use of their skills in bringing lessons to life. All teachers prepare their lessons well. Activities are carefully sequenced to help students learn effectively. Good use is made of prepared learning materials, handouts and visual aids such as videos and projector slides. The majority of lessons are well managed. Students are given a wide variety of appropriate activities including individual work, work in pairs or groups, verbal discussion and practical work.

Most students maintain a high level of interest and concentration throughout the lessons. Teachers check that students understand the lesson by asking questions and then calling on individual members of the class to answer them. Teachers are particularly good at moving between theory and practice in lessons. In one dance lesson, students practised the movement styles of well-known dancers before analysing the theories behind them. In a minority of weaker lessons, tasks are often too complex and students lose interest and cease to concentrate.

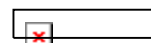
74. Students are kept well informed about their progress. There are thorough assessment schemes. The feedback given to students on their work is both written and verbal. It is prompt, detailed and clear and helps them to improve their performance and progress. Teachers set students minimum grades to attain in their work and these are determined on the basis of the students' qualifications on entry to their course. Teachers monitor students' progress towards reaching these grades. Students welcome this practice.

75. There are good studio facilities for art and design with excellent resources for computer graphics and design technology. The photography darkroom facilities are small and students using them are cramped. Drama, dance and performing arts students benefit from having access to an excellent small professional theatre space as well as a large hall and dance rehearsal space. The teaching areas for media and film are good. However, resources for video and film are very limited. There is also a lack of technician resources. Students have little opportunity to put theory into practice and prepare adequately for progression to HE or industry. Students have little access to the darkroom and specialist graphic computers outside timetabled hours.

Leadership and management

76. Media and performing arts and art and design courses are organised by two separate departments within different divisions. The two departments are ably managed. Staff work well together in teams. Staff and students in the two departments have many informal links. The two departments, however, do not co-ordinate their developments of courses and specialist resources. Course reviews are insufficiently rigorous in their analysis of trends in enrolment and retention and pass rates. Action plans are too general and do not include specific and achievable targets.

Psychology, sociology and history



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

Strengths

- good pass rates in GCE AS-level history, sociology and psychology
- lively and purposeful teaching
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- effective use of IT as an integral part of the curriculum

- high standard of students' written work.

Weaknesses

- some poor retention rates on GCE A-level courses in 2000/01
- poor pass rate in GCE A-level sociology.

Scope of provision

77. The inspection covered GCE A-level and GCE AS-level courses in history, psychology and sociology. GCSE humanities and GCSE sociology courses were also inspected.

Achievement and standards

78. On GCE A-level history and psychology courses, students' pass rates are high but retention rates are low and declining. The pass rate and the retention rate are low on the GCE A-level sociology course. In 2001, the pass rates on GCE AS-level courses in history, psychology and sociology were high and retention rates were satisfactory. On the GCSE sociology course, the pass rate is high and the retention rate is satisfactory. On the GCSE humanities courses, the pass rates are very high but the retention rates are low. The value added analysis of GCE A-level and AS-level results shows that the extent of students' achievements is considerable and that most students achieve higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Psychology, sociology and history, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE humanities/ studies 1 year	2	No. of starts	413	397	470
		% retention	84	82	72
		% pass rate	33	40	35
GCSE psychology 1 year	2	No. of starts	74	23	9
		% retention	68	65	56
		% pass rate	34	33	100
GCSE sociology 1 year	2	No. of starts	22	29	18
		% retention	91	52	72
		% pass rate	50	33	100
GCE A-level history 2 years	3	No. of starts	22	26	26
		% retention	59	77	65
		% pass rate	77	82	82
GCE A-level general	3	No. of starts	52	77	301

studies 1 year		% retention	92	95	87
		% pass rate	83	74	18
GCE A-level psychology 1 year	3	No. of starts	38	11	*
		% retention	39	55	*
		% pass rate	80	83	*
GCE A-level psychology 2 years	3	No. of starts	37	45	48
		% retention	57	78	60
		% pass rate	100	97	86
GCE A-level sociology 1 year	3	No. of starts	14	15	7
		% retention	64	47	43
		% pass rate	100	71	100
GCE A-level sociology 2 years	3	No. of starts	28	20	20
		% retention	21	75	60
		% pass rate	83	100	58

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

79. Teaching is well planned and effective. Course documentation shows that priority is given to ensuring that teaching meets individual students' learning needs. Lessons are well organised. Handouts and other learning materials are well produced and students find them most useful. There are guides and unit booklets for each subject which inform students about the structure of their course, assessment methods, and the demands the course will make upon them. Students use these guides extensively and find them particularly useful in helping them to understand the nature and scope of their courses.

80. Students benefit from lively and purposeful teaching. Teachers ensure that students are given opportunities in lessons to contribute to discussion, explore concepts and exchange ideas. In one GCE A-level history class, students were given materials on the character and background of the main contenders for the leadership of the Bolshevik party after the death of Lenin. They were then asked to rank them on two grids in terms of their suitability for leadership and ability to win the struggle. The results were displayed, compared and discussed. The students found the exercise stimulating and it excited their interest. The subsequent discussion showed that they had learned detailed historical facts and were also developing skills in analytical and critical thinking. Students are often encouraged to assess their own performance. In one GCE A-level sociology lesson, students were given marking criteria and essays to discuss and grade. This exercise was successful in helping students to make objective judgements about their own work. The use of IT is an integral part of teaching and learning in all subjects. All classrooms have computers which give access to the Internet. There is also a new research base where students can enter data from investigations on a computer. In an excellent GCE AS-level lesson, students worked on their own in the research base room to produce materials on sport psychology. Students make good use of the Internet to carry out research into topics. Students make continual use of the facilities to produce their own work. In most lessons, teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods. In a GCE A-level psychology lesson on the theory of perception, students revised their knowledge of theory and then made models to use in their own research. In some lessons, a few students find it difficult to join in discussions or work effectively in groups because they lack good communication skills. The use of subject-specific vocabulary was particularly difficult for some students.

81. Teachers set relevant and challenging tasks and the students respond with some very good written work. Examples of written work of a high standard are found in coursework by GCE A-level sociology students on 'Secularisation in the City', investigations by GCE A-level psychology students into biorhythms, and assignments by GCE A-level history students on Lenin's economic policies. In a few instances, students have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and their written work is poor. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly and accurately and monitor students' progress carefully. Students said that in addition to giving them written comments on their work, teachers also provide oral feedback during lessons. In psychology and sociology, the teachers enter feedback on a form which is attached to the students' work. The students find the extended comment on this form useful as a record of their progress. All students are aware of the target minimum grades they have to attain. They enter their marks on a chart which indicates the extent of their progress towards reaching a particular grade. Students find this process helpful as a means of recording their marks and identifying what they need to do to improve their performance. In each subject, students have to complete one assignment on key skills. Students comment unfavourably about key skills and do not regard them as important. Enrichment activities are seen as an important part of the courses and there are many opportunities for students to attend conferences and go on trips to broaden their knowledge. For example, psychology students visit the National Police College to meet forensic crime specialists. History students visit the European Parliament in Brussels. Many students progress to HE. Staff give students valuable help with their applications to HE establishments.

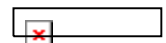
82. Tutorial provision is well organised. The students meet as a group once a week and the rest of tutorial time is used for reviews of individual students' progress. Students value the opportunity to talk to their tutors individually. They are less positive about group meetings. Individual records of attendance are checked at group meetings using management information systems information on absences. In addition to asking students who have not attended regularly to explain their absences, tutors are also careful to praise those whose attendance record is good.

83. Most lessons are timetabled appropriately to take place in a room designated for the subject being taught. The subject identification of some of these rooms is strengthened by displays of students' work which are imaginatively and attractively mounted. The library has an adequate book stock and additional resources are held in the rooms used for the teaching of particular subjects. Subject videos may be borrowed from the bank of teaching resources.

Leadership and management

84. The provision is well managed. Staff meet regularly to discuss students' progress on courses and plan and develop future provision. Students' pass and retention rates are a focus of discussion and planning. Action is taken to rectify particular weaknesses. For example, workshop sessions have been introduced to help students improve their assignment work and performance in examinations. Staff are well qualified. They receive training in IT skills and attend staff-development events to bring themselves up to date in their subject.

English



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

Strengths

- good teaching on advanced courses

- consistently good pass rates
- rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' work
- effective support for students
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- some poor retention rates
- unsatisfactory teaching on GCSE courses in a few instances.

Scope of provision

85. The college offers GCE A/AS-level English language, GCE A/AS-level English language and literature, GCE A/AS-level English literature, GCE AS-level critical thinking and GCSE English mature courses. The GCE AS-level and GCSE courses take place over one year and the GCE A/AS-level courses take place over two years. In addition, the college offers adults a GCSE course in the daytime and GCE AS-level course in English literature in the evening. Currently, there are over 200 students on GCE A/AS-level courses and a similar number on GCSE courses.

Achievement and standards

86. Pass rates for all subjects at levels 2 and 3 are consistently high and above the national averages. Pass rates on the GCE AS-level critical thinking and GCE AS-level English courses were 100%. Retention rates on some courses are either below or significantly below the national average. Most students arrive punctually for lessons but some have poor attendance records. Most students produce work of an appropriate standard for the level of their course. Some students on GCSE courses are not able to express themselves clearly orally. GCE A-level students have developed sophisticated oral skills. They are able to put together coherent arguments and express them clearly. They are able to work effectively both on their own and collaboratively. Students are expected to use relevant key skills in written assignments. They are set examination grades as targets and these are determined on the basis of their previous performance. Their progress towards achieving these targets is monitored closely. The number of students who have progressed to studying English at degree level has significantly increased.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion	1999	2000	2001
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		year:			
GCSE english	2	No. of starts	200	169	158
		% retention	76	72	85
		% pass rate	64	55	48
GCE A-level english language	3	No. of starts	24	9	14
		% retention	67	78	71
		% pass rate	88	86	90
GCE A-level english language and literature	3	No. of starts	19	14	20
		% retention	68	64	70
		% pass rate	77	78	93
GCE A-level english literature	3	No. of starts	41	45	35
		% retention	74	82	63
		% pass rate	81	100	95

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

87. GCE A-level courses are taught well. Relationships between staff and students are good and students are well motivated. The aims and objectives of lessons are clearly stated. Lessons are planned carefully. Teachers ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the amount of their activity, such as the presentation of topics, and that required of the students in the form of learning tasks. Students are often encouraged to work collaboratively and do so to good effect. Teachers place emphasis on the need for students to learn how to formulate opinions and arguments and then articulate them clearly. In lessons, teachers expect and encourage students to concentrate hard, participate in learning tasks fully, ask questions and contribute to class discussion. Teachers use visual aids imaginatively to make lessons interesting and exciting for the students. Classroom displays are stimulating and informative. Students find the course notes and an extensive written glossary provided for them very helpful, particularly when working on their own. The importance of stage directions and the intentions of the authors in plays studied are emphasised by teachers. In one lesson students analysed the complex sub-text of 'The Homecoming' and made very perceptive comments. Students make good progress. In lessons on critical thinking, students observe the conventions of formal debate. In one lesson, for example, they debated the merits, or otherwise, of human cloning. Students were members of the audience in a recent edition of the BBC programme, 'Question Time' and some asked questions of panel members. Students are required to word-process a significant proportion of their coursework. Teachers are assiduous in their marking and they always give the students helpful written feedback on how to improve their work. Consistency in assessment is ensured through extensive joint marking by teachers. Students are set minimum grades as targets to achieve and these are determined on the basis of their attainment when they started their course. Individual progress is monitored carefully. Focus workshops are provided on particular topics to help students with the planning of their assignments. Students benefit from enrichment activities, such as contributing to the college newspaper or joining the literary studies group.

88. There are wide variations in the quality of teaching on GCSE English courses and in a few lessons, it is unsatisfactory. Teachers' expectations of students vary within the teaching team. Some students find the chosen texts too demanding and they learn little. Students' interest is not always engaged and they become discouraged. There is too much reading aloud of texts with insufficient focus on helping students understand what they are reading. Study techniques, such as structured note taking, are not being developed effectively. Insufficient attention is given to word definitions. In some lessons, teachers let some students get away with inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.

89. Students benefit from, and appreciate, the structured tutorial system. There are twice-weekly group meetings for the sharing of information and planned one-to-one tutorials at which individual students have their progress reviewed. When the progress of a student aged 16 to 18 is causing concern, his or her parents are usually informed. Staff hold regular meetings with parents to discuss their child's general progress and attainment.

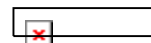
90. Some large GCE AS-level groups have lessons in specialist rooms which are not big enough for them. In lessons under these conditions, there is not enough room for the students to carry out some important learning activities effectively, such as discussion and debate, group work or role-play exercises. Dictionaries and electronic research facilities are available in each classroom and students use them with confidence. The library has good reference and fiction sections which are used extensively. Students can usually gain access to a computer whenever they need to use one.

Leadership and management

91. The curriculum area is well managed. Members of the English team work closely together. Students' achievements are analysed. Staff identify whether female students perform better than male students, or vice versa and where necessary, take appropriate action to ensure that the curriculum matches the needs and interests of students of both sexes. Where possible, the work of both female and male writers, in balanced proportion, are studied. Written materials from other countries are included in course schemes. The newly introduced courses in critical thinking are proving popular and students make good progress on them.

1.

Basic skills for English speakers of other languages (ESOL)



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

Strengths

- high pass rates by students on full-time programmes
- good use of learning materials and topics from everyday life
- wide range of effective additional learning support
- good use of community languages in helping students learn English
- effective response to the learning needs of the community.

Weaknesses

- insufficient learning resources in community venues
- inadequate analysis of students' retention and pass rates.

Scope of provision

92. The college offers full-time and part-time provision in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and in English as a second language (ESOL). The ESOL and basic skills teams also provide language, basic skills, and additional learning support for approximately 200-250 students aged 16 to 18 across the college. There are currently 10 students aged 16 to 18 on a pre-foundation programme leading to skillpower and word and numberpower awards. Four of these students also work towards GNVQs and NVQs. The college provides short family-learning programmes on basic skills for adults in local schools and through three part-time evening classes. Parents on family learning programmes work alongside their children. Students have the opportunity to gain word or numberpower awards at foundation level up to level 2. There are 26 young adults studying on a full-time ESOL programme and a further 30 asylum seekers on intensive short part-time courses in a community centre. There are 50 part-time ESOL students at the college or in community venues. The ESOL programmes lead to qualifications in numeracy/mathematics, IT, job-seekers' English and general studies. The number of enrolled students increases across the year through continuous enrolment and the setting up of additional classes. This range of provision provides an effective response to the learning needs of the community. The timetable for full-time ESOL has been adapted to meet the domestic commitments of adults. Teachers are members of local basic skills networks and work regularly with other agencies.

Achievement and standards

93. Students' pass rates on the full-time pre-foundation course are high. In 2000/01, the retention rate was 100% and all students gained awards in skill, number and wordpower. Five progressed to FE or training and three have returned to the programme to achieve higher-level qualifications. Students with a range of learning difficulties develop in confidence. They learn to work together effectively. In 2000/01 the retention rate on the full-time ESOL programme is satisfactory. The majority of students are recently arrived asylum seekers. Many move out of the area before the end of the course. The students who complete the programme achieve a range of awards. Two students each gained six awards. Some 71% progressed to other programmes within the college. In the ESOL mathematics group, where the mathematical attainments of students varies greatly, the students work well and receive additional help with English to meet their individual needs. They use appropriate methods of calculation from their own countries and cultures.

94. Pass rates were good in numeracy stages 1 and 2 in 2000, but results from 2001 were not available for the inspection. Retention rates are satisfactory in both number and wordpower. Adult students are able to negotiate their learning priorities and reflect upon their preferred learning styles. Students on school-based family-learning programmes develop greatly in confidence through compiling a wordpower evidence portfolio drawn from child and school-focused projects. Retention and pass rates on the ESOL programmes for asylum seekers were poor. The college subsequently restructured courses into shorter programmes and introduced oral assessment. There has been a significant improvement in retention rates but some pass rates remain unsatisfactory. Retention rates on short non-accredited programmes for asylum seekers are good. In ESOL lessons, students were confident and participated fully in the oral activities and worked keenly on written tasks.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Basic skills for English speakers of other languages

(ESOL), 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Pitmans ESOL	basic	No. of starts	304	5	20
		% retention	53	20	100
		% pass rate	22	100	70
Wordpower	foundation	No. of starts	28	15	11
		% retention	82	33	82
		% pass rate	87	20	*
Wordpower	stage 1	No. of starts	**	10	21
		% retention	**	100	76
		% pass rate	**	100	*
Numeracy 3750	stage 1	No. of starts	**	8	56
		% retention	**	63	73
		% pass rate	**	100	*
Numeracy 3750	stage 2	No. of starts	**	60	23
		% retention	**	82	70
		% pass rate	**	84	*

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data unavailable

** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

95. Teachers plan lessons well and ensure that all students are fully engaged in demanding learning activities. Teachers are good at bringing tasks and challenges encountered in daily life into the classroom and using them effectively as the focus for learning. In one lesson, ESOL students developed their listening and reading skills through listening regularly to a live broadcast of the 10 am radio news and then skim reading the days' newspapers to provide a summary. In a numeracy class, young students were planning a weekly shopping basket of purchases using a supermarket's promotional leaflets and home-shopping web site. A menu from a restaurant located in the same community centre was used to role-play the ordering of a meal. Young people on the skillpower programme developed their team-working skills through a project to support the homeless at Christmas. During lessons, teachers do not always check systematically that the students understand what they are being taught. In a few lessons, materials are not tailored sufficiently to meet the different levels of ability in the group. Individual learning plans are used systematically. The targets ESOL learners are set, however, are general rather than specific and do not provide an adequate basis for the review of learners' progress. Tutorials and systems for termly reviewing of progress help keep students on target and motivate them to improve their work.

96. Basic skills and ESOL learners receive a great deal of additional help in class and this is managed effectively. Learning support teachers and assistants work across the full provision including adult evening and community classes and meet a range of needs. Support for numeracy is a particular strength. There are also effective workshop and one-to-one support arrangements. The team of language-support assistants is able to provide bilingual support in Albanian, Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, Hindi, Mandarin, Malaysian and Russian. Such support is particularly helpful to

students who are learning English for the first time. Some of these assistants teach these languages, or word processing in these languages, as part of the college curriculum. It is part of the team's ethos to use other languages to promote cultural awareness and help students learn English. Bilingual ESOL teachers, who know the communities well, teach in off-site classes set up for the longer-term settled Chinese and Bangladeshi communities.

97. Community venues and schools used for off-site classes are comfortable, welcoming and conveniently located. Basic equipment is available to the classes but few learning materials are provided. There is a particular lack of materials for practising and extending basic speaking and writing skills. Family learning groups are provided with samples of school curriculum materials to further parents' understanding of the learning activities their children undertake.

Leadership and management

98. Teaching teams are managed through the head of student services, outside the faculty structure. This arrangement makes it possible for learning support across the college to be provided as an integral part of courses. In some areas, however, leadership is not sufficiently effective. Course reviews have been carried out without making a rigorous analysis of retention and pass rates and data on the progression of students. Priority has been given to the external accreditation of course components rather than the effective identification of the learning needs of students through initial assessment and individual learning plans.

Part D: College data

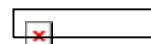
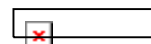


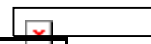
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2000/01



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	5.7	48.8
2	50.2	20.5
3	43.3	12.7
4/5	0	0
Other	0.8	18
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2000/01



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %

Science	1,653	839	2,492
Agriculture	0	11	11
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	0	17	17
Business	321	766	1,087
Hotel and catering	93	5	98
Health and community care	66	550	616
Art and design	434	66	500
Humanities	2,290	729	3,019
Basic education	84	578	662
Total	4,941	3,561	8,502

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
1	Starters excluding transfers	424	450	218	546	914	589
	Retention rate (%)	45	70	85	67	58	63
	National average (%)	78	81	82	72	69	74
	Pass rate (%)	41	56	51	50	55	65
	National average (%)	69	71	77	67	75	76
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,457	1,500	1,539	516	508	550
	Retention rate (%)	74	76	80	61	69	69
	National average (%)	79	80	82	71	71	75
	Pass rate (%)	67	79	75	71	68	65
	National average (%)	84	85	82	75	77	77
3	Starters excluding transfers	971	1,112	759	472	434	346
	Retention rate (%)	67	70	83	72	63	68
	National average (%)	77	78	80	62	65	69
	Pass rate (%)	84	79	79	54	67	65
	National average (%)	86	85	85	69	71	74
4/5	Starters excluding	10	6	2	70	69	3

	transfers						
	Retention rate (%)	70	50	*	69	72	*
	National average (%)	89	**	**	75	71	**
	Pass rate (%)	0	0	*	67	62	*
	National average (%)	96	**	**	74	67	**

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 (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

2. College rates for 1997/98-1998/99: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for (1999/2000): provided by the college in spring 2001.

* too few students to provide a valid calculation

** data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	81	18	1	74
Level 2 (intermediate)	74	18	8	38
Level 1 (foundation)	36	64	0	11
Other sessions	67	33	0	6
Totals	74	23	3	129

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