



Scarborough Sixth Form College

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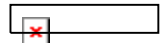
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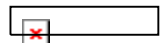
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Basic information about the college

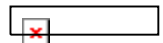


Name of college:	Scarborough Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Mrs N Watson
Address of college:	Scarborough Sixth Form College Sandybed Lane Scarborough YO12 5LF
Telephone number:	01723 380 7000
Fax number:	01723 367 049
Chair of governors:	Mr E Hall
Unique reference number:	130593
Name of reporting inspector:	Ian Richardson HMI
Dates of inspection:	12-16 November 2001

Part A: Summary

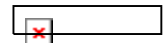


Information about the college



Filey, numbers about 70,000. A high proportion of the population are of retirement age, more than 25% in Filey and 20% in Scarborough. On all indicators, Scarborough is more deprived than the rest of North Yorkshire. Two of Scarborough's wards are within the 10% most deprived wards in England. The town has attracted a number of grants, including Single Regeneration Budget funds, Objective 2 European funding and On Track and Sure Start funding. Other indicators, such as the rate of unemployment, teenage pregnancy, drug problems, truancy, school exclusions and free school meals all indicate pockets of deprivation similar to parts of inner city areas. The college was established as part of a comprehensive system introduced in 1973, and began life in what was formerly a girls' grammar school. From the beginning, the college was an integral part of the secondary education system of Scarborough, providing the sixth form for six local schools (one of them seven miles away in Filey). In 2000/01, there were 1,526 students studying at the college. Of these, 773 were full-time students and 753 were part-time, equivalent to 894 full-time students. Of the students enrolled, 82% were aged 16 to 18, 44% were male and 56% female. Some 97.6% of the students were white, with the other students being drawn from other minority ethnic groups. All courses offered fall into six of the programme areas given in the college performance report. All provision is council funded.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged teaching and students' achievements to be good in all six of the curriculum areas inspected. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- effective senior management
- effective quality assurance system
- good teaching across the curriculum areas
- good progression to higher education (HE) and employment
- excellent guidance for students from the careers team
- good individual support for students from teachers
- significant improvements in accommodation and resources since the last report

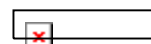
- high rates of retention on short courses and level 2 programmes for students aged 16 to 19
- good achievement of students in relation to previous attainment.

What should be improved

- curriculum area management structure
- sharing of good practices across the curriculum areas
- some teaching lacks challenge, stimulation and appropriate differentiation
- marking and the quality of feedback to students.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

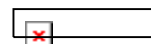


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Good. Teaching is good overall. Pass rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) and level 2 courses are consistently above the national average in most subjects. Retention rates in biology and physics are below the national average. Courses are well planned and there is good support for students.
Business administration, management and professional	Good. Pass rates are high. Much teaching is good, although insufficient attention is paid to meeting the needs of students of all abilities in lessons. Teachers work well as a team and give good

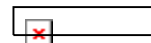
	support to their students.
Information and communications technology (ICT)	Good. There are very good pass rates and good retention rates. Teaching and learning are good, but the monitoring and review of learners' progress on full-time courses is inadequate. Students are well motivated in practical sessions and receive good support. Recent investment in information technology (IT) has been used to good effect in lessons for students aged 16 to 18. There is a lack of coherence in the management of IT.
Visual and performing arts	Good. Students' pass rates are high. Well-planned work provides challenging lessons for students who develop good practical, analytical and critical skills. Classroom and studio space is insufficient to adequately accommodate the number of students. Access to subject specific IT resources is inadequate.
Humanities	Good. Most humanities teaching is good or better. Students make good progress in developing their intellectual and study skills. Pass and retention rates at GCE A level have fluctuated in some subjects, but recent pass rates are mostly above the national average. Some aspects of the provision are more carefully evaluated than others.
English, languages and communications	Good. Provision in English and modern foreign languages is good. Teachers work hard and teach well so that their students are able to achieve good results in external examinations. Academic and pastoral support is particularly strong.

How well is the college led and managed?



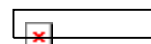
Leadership and management are good. The college is well managed, with governors and managers providing a clear sense of direction. Good strategic planning leads to continuing improvements. Financial management is good. There are good communications with staff. There are effective quality assurance procedures. The college actively promotes equal opportunities. The middle-management structure is not fully effective.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



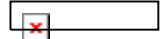
The college collects data on the ethnic and gender breakdown of its student body. It has recently started to monitor the progress and achievements of these various groups by curriculum area. A small number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds have been recruited. The college meets the needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities by providing appropriate support. There is no separate specialist provision for such students and they are successfully integrated with the range of courses on offer.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The college provides good guidance and support for its students on entry, during their time in college and in preparation for HE or employment. Students benefit from the wide range of expertise that is available to them. Careers guidance is particularly effective and designated pastoral tutors provide good individual support and monitor students' progress well. Some elements of the pastoral programme are insufficiently geared to the needs of individuals and currently, little attention is given to the world of work and trends in employment.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

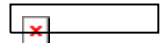
- good teaching by hard-working and helpful staff
- effective personal support
- good access to ICT equipment and facilities
- good advice on entry and support in settling onto courses
- good student relationships with staff
- effective monitoring of students' progress.

What they feel could be improved

- accommodation in students' common room
- wheelchair access

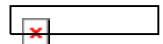
- key skills programme to meet individual students' needs
- co-ordination of coursework deadlines between different subjects
- access to specialist ICT resources in specific subject areas
- teaching methods in some subject areas
- pastoral tutors' expertise
- temperatures in the mathematics classrooms.

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



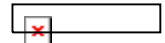
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	76	20	4
19+ and WBL*	86	14	0

Learning 16-18	70	27	3
19+ and WBL*	86	14	0

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



16-18 year olds

1. Overall, student retention rates over the last three years have been good. In all instances, for level 2 students and for two of the three years for level 3 students, course retention rates have been above the national average for sixth form colleges. In a number of instances, level 2 student retention rates have been in the upper quartile. Retention rates were below national averages in some subjects in some years, such as GCE A-level biology, English language, English literature, French, Spanish, performing arts and physics.

2. The overall pass rate at GCE A level has improved in two of the last three years. In 2001, the pass rate of 92.4%, and in 2000, the pass rate of 92.5% were both above the national average for sixth form colleges in those years. In 2001, the college entered 221 students for the GCE A-level examination in general studies. The pass rate, at 85.5%, lowered the overall pass rate for all subjects. If the results for general studies are removed from the calculations, the average pass rate in all other GCE A-level subjects rises to 94.5% in 2001, and 92.8% in 2000. In 2001, 24 subjects had pass rates which were above the national average and only 2 were below. Thirteen subjects had 100% pass rates. Of the subjects inspected, consistently high pass rates have been achieved in recent years in art and design, business, chemistry, computing, economics, geography, ICT, mathematics, media studies, photography and physics. Of the subjects inspected, only in law and sociology have there have been pass rates below the national average in more than one of the last three years.

3. The average university and college admissions service (UCAS) points score for each subject across the college was 6.1 in 2001, rising to 6.5 if GCE A-level general studies results are removed from the calculation. This compares favourably with results from other sixth form colleges. The average UCAS points score for each student was 20.4. Pass rates at higher grades (A to C) in several GCE A-level subjects were above the average for sixth form colleges in 2001. In art and design, all students who took the examination achieved passes at higher grades. In 11 other subjects, at least 70% of students who completed, gained passes graded at C or above.

4. In 20 GCE A-level subjects, students achieved grades that were better than those predicted by their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) performance. In only eight subjects is the converse true. Many students made real progress with their studies while in college. The college has carefully analysed the performance of female and male students. In most subjects, male students' GCE A-level grades are substantially better than their GCSE results would predict. Although female students in most subjects do not demonstrate as much improvement in value added terms, in nearly all subjects, they enter college with better average GCSE grades than male students, and they achieve well.

5. All first year GCE students completed GCE Advanced Subsidiary-level (AS-level) modules in line with Curriculum 2000 programmes for the first time in 2001. In the main, they were successful with a pass rate of 91.5%, and with 55% of candidates achieving passes at the higher grades (A to C). In a

few subjects, such as mathematics, pass rates were below the national average. Students have been very successful in the small number of General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced programmes run by the college, though in GNVQ advanced science, pass rates are declining. In 2001, 95% of students enrolled on advanced GNVQ programmes passed and 83% gained awards with merit or distinction.

6. In 2001, for students on GNVQ level 2 intermediate programmes there was a pass rate of 96%, but only 21% of students at this level achieved merits or distinctions. The college tries to ensure that students who have not achieved a grade C pass in GCE English or mathematics have the opportunity to retake examinations. In 2000, pass rates at grades A* to C in English and mathematics were 58%, and 49% respectively, and 58% and 46% respectively in 2001. These pass rates are substantially above the national average. Students are able to retake these examinations throughout their time in college so that the percentage pass rates for students in the 2000 cohort had increased to 76% in English, and 54% in mathematics, for the 2001 examinations.

7. Attendance in the lessons observed was 87%, which compares favourably with the 84% average attendance for sixth form college inspections undertaken in 1999/2000. Students' attendance at each lesson is monitored and recorded on the college's 'tracking, attendance, notifying, grades, results and measurable skills' database. All teachers regularly put data into the system and pastoral tutors make effective use of the information in regular review sessions with their students. Attendance has improved in many areas. However, there were a few instances of erratic attendance and poor punctuality in some areas such as business and ICT.

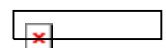
8. Students participated well in many lessons. There were examples of good practical work and written work in a number of curriculum areas. Students in media studies had developed skills in critical analysis and research and students of some humanities subjects had developed the capacity to work on their own and show initiative. In business, the work of some students on the GNVQ advanced programme was superficial. Although the numbers of students completing portfolio work and passing external tests in key skills last year was low, there was good use of ICT in assignment work, and in some humanities subjects at level 3, students demonstrated effective communications skills.

9. College managers and staff work hard to ensure that students' destination data is complete. The analysis shows that the majority of students achieve their learning goals. Last year, returns from students on advanced-level courses were 100%. Some 70% of students went to university, 63% directly and 7% after a gap year, 22% entered employment and 8% went to further courses in further education (FE). Of students completing intermediate courses, 78% continued their education and 22% went directly into employment.

Adult learners

10. The college makes provision for adult students in the form of short courses at evening and weekend sessions. Over the past three years, student retention rates on such courses has been very high, never falling below 96% overall and always in the upper quartile for comparative figures from comparable colleges. Retention rates on the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) course were excellent at 98%, although lower on integrated business technology (IBT) level 2, at 69%. Overall, pass rates in two of the last three years for which data is available have been above the average for comparable provision. Many students had demonstrably acquired new skills which would enable them to progress to more advanced courses or enhance their career opportunities.

Quality of education and training



good or outstanding in 78% of these and less than satisfactory in 3%. Learning was also judged as good or outstanding in over 71% of lessons and unsatisfactory in less than 3%. The best teaching was in visual and performing arts, humanities and English and modern foreign languages where outstanding or good teaching exceeded 80%. The average attendance at lessons across curriculum areas ranged from 91% to 84% with an average of 87%. The average class size was within the range 16.2 to 12.6, with an average of 13.8. Students' punctuality was poor in some areas such as ICT, especially at the start of morning sessions.

12. Most teachers are well qualified and demonstrate good knowledge of their subjects. Some, for example in business studies, have substantial experience as examiners. In modern foreign languages, most teachers are native or near-native speakers of the languages taught. In science, staff are well qualified and technically very competent. In some areas, however, teachers need to develop their knowledge and skills more fully. Across the curriculum areas, most teachers plan and structure lessons carefully and present them effectively and in a well-organised manner. Many teachers make imaginative use of good learning materials, for example, in modern languages and science.

13. The college is committed to the use of ICT in teaching. In some areas such as science and geography, it is used very effectively; in others it is not used much. In many lessons, teachers make good use of a stimulating variety of teaching methods and activities, but this is not the case in all lessons. Opportunities for enrichment are available in many curriculum areas, and include fieldwork, trips abroad, and work placements. Subject teachers carefully monitor students' progress and provide strong academic and pastoral support for students, giving willingly of their time outside lessons.

14. In some areas, effective action has been taken to make sure that the work is demanding enough for able students. In geology, for example, three students undertook a research project, which they presented to the Royal Society. In humanities and visual and performing arts, teachers have effectively developed students' critical and analytical skills. In other areas, the work was not sufficiently demanding for able students in all lessons. Overall insufficient attention is given to providing work which meets the needs of students with differing abilities. There is insufficient sharing of good practice within and across areas.

15. The college has well-qualified and experienced staff. Some 98% of teachers have degrees. All full-time teachers are appropriately qualified. Thirteen staff are qualified assessors. However, of the 24 part-time teachers employed, primarily on adult provision, over one third do not have a teaching qualification. Teachers are well supported in their work as part of a course or subject team. Many teachers regularly undertake some form of staff development. Last year, 85% of teachers attended external courses and all staff undertook some form of formal training. Training is related to the needs of teachers, and identified through the staff professional development review process. The college runs a range of internal training courses and supports staff to undertake external short and long courses. It has 'Investor in People' accreditation. In recent years the number of full-time teachers has increased. Team meetings are timetabled. Part-time teachers are well managed. Some staff share resources and good teaching practice, but this is not universal across the college.

16. Resources for learning are good. Since the last inspection improvements in college resources include a refurbished refectory, an extended learning centre, increased IT facilities and resources, improved access for those with mobility difficulties, refurbishment of classrooms and, most recently, the creation of a new business studies suite and provision of a sports hall. There has been heavy investment by the college in modern IT equipment. The IT facilities for students are good. The ratio of modern computers to students is 1:4 and there is a good range of up-to-date software. These facilities are widely accessible across the college and have a positive impact on students' learning. Adult students attending college during evenings or on Saturday mornings do not have access to the most up-to-date computers and technician support is not available. All computers are networked and have Internet access and full-time students have an e-mail account enabling them to submit work electronically for assessment by teachers. There are a number of learning resource areas across the college and a well-resourced central library and learning centre which students use well. This facility is not open for adult students during the evening or on Saturday mornings. The college is linked to a virtual interactive learning IT site hosted by a university in the region which enables

students and staff to access a wide range of subject-specific learning materials from their home and to undertake on-line assessment.

17. Most accommodation is good. A programme of continuing refurbishment and improvement has ensured that most areas of the college have been updated in recent years. The new business suite has replaced some outdated temporary classrooms. The new sports hall has just been completed and offers good facilities for students. Most areas contain relevant wall displays and, in some cases, examples of students' work. A few areas have relatively dull displays. The refectory is bright and well decorated, but at busy times soon becomes full. A students' common room provides a suitable social area for students but its appearance is drab. In media studies, there is insufficient space. The fabric of the building needs attention in a few places. Access to the college for students and staff in wheelchairs is mostly good. Lifts and ramps provide access to most areas in the college, with the exception of the lower floor in the arts building. This does not preclude access to specialist facilities.

18. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress and achievements are regular, fair and accurate. External moderators confirm teachers' judgements. Examination and assessment procedures for awarding body examinations are clearly set out in the staff handbook, as is the role of assessment in promoting learning. Assessments are usually thorough and appropriate for the level of course students are taking. Initial diagnostic testing of students' skills is inadequate.

19. Much of the marking of students' work is carried out to a high standard. One of the commitments given to students in the college handbook is that staff will 'provide clear deadline dates, set, mark and return work'. In the main, teachers fulfil this commitment and add constructive, critical and helpful comments to help students to improve their performance. Homework is set regularly and marked properly. Subject teachers regularly set assignments, coursework and tests. Some tests involve the use of assessment software from a virtual interactive site at a university. The scheduling of assignments across subjects lacks co-ordination and in some marked work the amount, of comment and guidance for students on how to improve is insufficient.

20. Students' progress is regularly and effectively reviewed. The college handbook gives an undertaking to students studying for GCE A and AS-level subjects that they will be informed of the grade that they 'would be expected to aim for in each subject'. This 'target grade' is based on GCSE results and calculated by reviewing the average grade that students with similar GCSE grades nationally have achieved in the past year. It is appropriately emphasised to students that this grade is a target and not a maximum. Twice a term, subject teachers inform all students of their revised projected subject grades based on their actual achievements and effort during the most recent review period. Pastoral tutors make use of this information to discuss each student's overall progress and prepare an 'agreed statement' with each student that includes an individual action plan. However, as yet, these individual action plans are incomplete. Parents are effectively informed of students' progress.

21. The college specialises in the education of students aged 16 to 19 and aims to maximise educational opportunities for them. It promises to provide a full timetable of lessons, pastoral support, general activities and times for private study. The college offers a good range of GCE A and AS-level courses, 31 in all, and three AVCE courses as single and double awards.

22. There are no obvious gaps in this provision, although some members of staff would like to expand the range of courses in their curriculum areas. Most students are content with current provisions. The college's approach is one of cautious innovation, appropriate at a time of major changes in the post-16 examination system. Courses in religious studies and photography are the most recent additions to the curriculum.

23. GCSE courses in English language and mathematics meet obvious needs, but vocational courses are limited to intermediate GNVQs in health and social care, business and science, and enrolments for these are decreasing. Currently, the college has identified as one of its strategic aims the provision of non-advanced courses. It is investigating vocational GCSEs and holding discussions with the local general FE college with a view to improving provision.

24. Since the previous inspection, and in line with its strategic aims, the college has introduced courses for adults as part of its lifelong learning strategy. A mixture of late afternoon, evening and Saturday courses (the latter with an associated childrens' club) attracts about 300 enrolments a term and clearly meets a real need in Scarborough. Courses in ICT, art and modern foreign languages are particularly popular. In all cases, the courses offered are accredited. These courses have good completion and pass rates and there are good progression routes. The college works well with a range of partners, including the area learning partnership and the widening participation group. It makes good provision for disadvantaged groups and it carries out valuable work in several centres in the town.

25. The college's priority has been to introduce Curriculum 2000 smoothly. Good planning and management of the curriculum has ensured that disruption has been kept to a minimum, with no changes to the structure of the timetable or to the allocation of teaching time for each course. The college now has a good working relationship with the local general FE college and there is no significant duplication of courses.

26. A strength of the current provision is the enhancement programme, appropriately named 'curriculum vitae plus'. This programme is compulsory for first-year and intermediate students and is also available to second-year students. It encourages them to pursue a range of sporting, musical, creative, community and other activities. It also aims to develop students' personal and social skills. The programme is well managed and begins with a 'fair' in September. Sessions on counselling, personal defence, costume and fashion and sign language and a chamber ensemble practice were successful in meeting the programme's aim and provided a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for students.

27. The programmes of most GCE A and AS-level students are sufficiently broad, although there is no insistence on students taking a contrasting fourth subject. Key skills provision has been modified in the light of the previous year's experience. Intermediate students work on all three key skills to level 2. The GCE A and AS-level students are expected to aim for level 3 in IT and communication. A separate IT course of two terms, and communications inputs in general studies, help students to improve their skills in these areas. There is no curriculum support for application of number but this is planned for advanced mathematics students. Some evidence for portfolios is provided from work in subjects. The college's current provision for key skills is a compromise and many students do not see their relevance. In a number of cases, students have taken and passed tests but have not yet had their portfolios marked. Students are also expected to take the GCE AS-level examination in general studies, for which some preparation is done in lessons for the lower sixth. Successful students are expected to take the GCE A-level examinations for which lessons are also provided.

28. Links with local schools for students aged 11 to 16, which are maintained by an admissions officer and a recently appointed schools links co-ordinator are very good. Many Year 10 pupils attend science days in the college, two schools bring Year 9 pupils for 'taster' days, all prospective students are invited to introductory days in college, and a small number of college staff teach a few lessons in secondary schools. Such initiatives ensure that both students and staff in the school have a good understanding of the college's curriculum.

29. The college's good provision of guidance and support is grounded in a clear rationale, cogent objectives and a sound overview of the needs of students. One of the vice principals manages provision in this area effectively and a number of staff have responsibilities for key areas such as pastoral tutoring, careers, counselling, student services and admissions. The college promises specialist help when needed, guidance on next steps, encouragement of social, cultural and recreational activities, a healthy, safe and secure environment and responsiveness. In most respects, the college succeeds in meeting these ambitious aims.

30. Guidance at entry to the colleges is objective and effective. Students are made aware of the full range of opportunities open to them at the age of 16. They receive a prospectus and good course descriptions. A well-planned sequence of presentations, visits to the college and interviews help to ensure that students are prepared for the transition from school and are placed on appropriate courses. There are clear criteria for accepting students onto different types of courses.

31. Enrolment procedures are efficient and formal assessment of some students' English and mathematical skills is supplemented by assessment assignments carried out in the first weeks of most courses. Recent developments include the identification of skills needed in the study of some subjects and an attempt to get students to identify their preferred learning styles. Both initiatives have implications for subject tutors' planning and practice. Induction in specific courses is handled well and there are some good course handbooks. For example, in economics, there are useful notes on units of work, resources, assessment, writing essays and revision techniques and a light-hearted account of reasons for studying the subject.

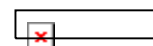
32. The college has a distinctive and largely effective tutorial system. Pastoral tutors meet their groups twice a week and have a major responsibility to help students settle in to the college, make progress, receive individual support and move on to HE, training or employment. Tutors also run the pastoral programme, which includes sessions on such topics as interviews, curriculum vitae, and healthy eating and disability. Tutors receive materials and session plans to help them with some topics. All the sessions seen were at least satisfactory and over half were good. Tutors helped students to prepare for interviews, develop self-confidence and understand the needs of others in the community. However, some topics are not relevant to all the students in a group and others need more mediation from tutors to show their interest. References for students for HE are well informed and detailed. Students appreciate the time and effort that go into the individual interviews and reviews, which form an important part of the tutorial programme. Many students feel that they can turn more readily to subject tutors for a wide range of guidance and support. Monitoring of attendance, using the college's management information system, is good. Record keeping based on review and action sheets is thorough.

33. Currently, the pastoral team operates separately from the rest of the college's guidance structure, which includes a number of key staff. For example, the college benefits from the services of an experienced and well-qualified counsellor, available three days a week. Some students make good use of such expertise, but others are sensitive about visiting the office, which is sited prominently next to the students' canteen. The learning development co-ordinator brings together a wide range of provision for students with needs relating to disability and skills. The college makes good provision for users of wheelchairs. It is developing a useful study centre, where students can receive specific help, usually with aspects of writing.

34. Careers guidance is excellent. The careers team, which includes visiting careers advisers, provides expert advice and guidance on employment, training, FE and HE. Their work is highly regarded by students. Staff run the well-established, work shadowing scheme and a range of voluntary activities. They also offer a programme of lunchtime advisory sessions for potential Oxbridge candidates and arrange a general HE evening. Students have access to a good range of information about HE and careers, but space for administration, interviewing and display of resources is inadequate. Careers advisers gave 170 individual interviews last year and see many more students in less-structured sessions. They carry out valuable work with students who are considered to be at risk of dropping out of college. However, they are not informed beforehand, as they would like to be, about students who decide to leave mid-year. There is a jobs club for students who are not intending to apply to university, but the pastoral programme currently offers little to inform students about the world of work and employment. Plans to improve provision in this area are in hand.

35. The well-established student council, has elected members. It represents the interests of the student body effectively and has responsibilities for areas such as welfare, charities and entertainment. It also provides an additional source of support and an important channel of communication with senior staff.

Leadership and management



36. The overall standards of management in the college are good. Governors and managers have set a clear direction for the work of the college. The college has addressed the main weaknesses identified in the report by inspectors of the Further Education Funding Council in March 1997. Provision is good in all six of the curriculum areas inspected. Retention rates are good and pass rates are satisfactory on a high proportion of courses and for the college as a whole. The overall quality of teaching, learning and attainment is good. Data held centrally on students' performances are reliable. Quality assurance arrangements are thorough and lead to improvements. There is active promotion of equal opportunities.

37. Since the last inspection the college has extended its range of provision and has successfully developed new courses for adults. A range of courses are marketed as lifelong learning provision and run for two evenings a week and on Saturday mornings. Part-time teachers have been recruited specifically for these courses and a dedicated manager has been appointed. These courses are well managed and levels of recruitment and retention and pass rates are good. There is only a small amount of provision for students aged 16 to 19 at level 2.

38. The college has developed its own management information system which satisfactorily meets the needs of managers and staff. Managers and staff have ready access on-line to data to enable them to monitor students' attendance and performance. An electronic registration system is used and teachers record attendance on a daily basis enabling staff and managers to have up-to-date information. Data produced by the management information system are reliable.

39. There are good quality assurance procedures which are implemented effectively. The college's 'quality committee' meets termly to review students' performance by course, using a set of standard performance measures including attendance, pass and retention rates. This is chaired by a governor and attended by the vice principal responsible for quality and curriculum. Staff carry out systematic formal reviews of courses annually. These are thorough and compare performance with national averages. The views of students and parents are considered. Course teams set targets for pass and retention rates. In some areas, these are insufficiently challenging. Targets for recruitment or the quality of teaching and learning are not set. A comprehensive programme of lesson observations is conducted annually. These observations are conducted by a line manager and grades are awarded. Reports from these observations are used to contribute to the course review process and also to identify staff training needs. Some staff also take part in voluntary lesson observations with their fellow teachers and this helps to disseminate good practice. The lesson observation programme has assisted in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

40. At the time of the inspection the college was compiling its third self-assessment report. Self-assessment is conducted annually and involves staff and governors. The most recent self-assessment report clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses and provides supporting evidence. It contains a detailed action plan which identifies specific responsibilities and time-scales. There is insufficient information on teaching and learning, and some aspects identified as strengths were in no way exceptional practice. Inspectors agreed with many of the grades in the self-assessment report.

41. Courses are well managed. Course teams meet regularly to review their courses. Although it has been in place for some time, the middle-management structure is not fully effective. Curriculum area managers have a potentially important role in the college which is not currently being fulfilled. They are responsible for staff and courses across a range of grouped subjects, but their role is unclear to some staff who, in some cases, refer directly to a senior manager to address an issue without reference to their middle manager. In most areas of the college, co-ordination and the sharing of resources between teachers is good. In some, however, for example, modern foreign languages which are taught in three distinct areas, there is no co-ordination between teachers and little exchange of resources. Overall, communications with staff are good. Weekly briefing meetings, termly staff meetings with the principal and regular team meetings ensure that staff are fully involved in developments in the college. A weekly staff bulletin and the staff e-mail system ensure that staff are kept fully informed. Part-time teachers employed on the college's adult evening and Saturday provision feel fully informed about developments and meet regularly to discuss issues. The college management team comprises the principal, vice principals and college administrator

and meet regularly. Curriculum area managers' meetings, which are chaired by the vice principal for curriculum and quality, are also held regularly.

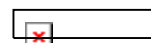
42. There is good strategic planning which leads to continuing improvements. Staff are fully involved in the development of the strategic plan and participate in a planning day to help determine its key objectives. The strategic plan for 2001/04 identifies four broad objectives, a series of specific measurable objectives and a detailed action plan. Performance against these objectives is reviewed annually. Targets are set for key college performance indicators, including retention and pass rates at college level. There are effective systems for monitoring performance. Senior managers review performance against the strategic objectives on a regular basis. The college has been successful in implementing its previous strategic plan and this has resulted in measurable improvements. For example, retention and pass rates have improved and facilities and resources have increased. Staff performance is not formally reviewed. Teaching performance is assessed, but this does not form part of the staff appraisal process. An annual programme of staff professional development reviews, conducted by a line manager, considers an individual's training needs, but does not review his or her performance. Staff are not set specific objectives.

43. There is good promotion and awareness of equal opportunities. The college takes measures to promote equal opportunities with students. Issues such as prejudice and disability awareness are covered in group tutorials. There are student representatives on the equal opportunities committee and an equal opportunities notice board in the reception area uses students' work to help raise awareness. Teachers are encouraged to promote equality through the curriculum. Equal opportunities are effectively monitored and the college is active in meeting students' needs. Students' achievements by gender, at course and college level, are reported on regularly. The equal opportunities policy is regularly reviewed and updated. Governors consider an annual report on equal opportunities. The equal opportunities co-ordinator has successfully managed staff training to raise their awareness of equal opportunities issues. Attendance by staff at these training sessions is good. The college has paid careful attention to meeting the access and other needs of students using wheelchairs, has encouraged students with sight impairments to undertake courses by providing sign language support and has provided facilities to meet the requirements of students with physical disabilities.

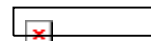
44. Governors and college managers have set a clear direction for the work of the college. Governors are actively involved in setting the strategic direction of the college. They participated in a strategic planning day earlier in the year to determine the key priorities for the college. They receive regular reports on the progress made towards achieving the associated operational plan. There is a strong link between the quality review process, the actions identified in the self-assessment report and the objectives in the strategic plan. There is regular, stringent monitoring of the academic and financial performance of the college by governors. Governors ensure that sufficient action takes place to address any concerns raised through this monitoring process.

45. Curriculum area managers are allocated budgets for materials and small equipment needs based on student numbers. The college administrator closely monitors expenditure. Financial management is good. Overall, retention rates are slightly above the average for sixth form colleges and pass rates are similar to those achieved in sixth form colleges. In all curriculum areas, the provision is good. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- good pass rates at GCE A level
- well-structured courses
- much good teaching
- good support for learners
- good pass rates at level 2.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some courses
- low numbers on vocational courses
- falling numbers at GCE A level.

Scope of provision

46. The college is a major local provider of GCE A-level courses in science and mathematics for students aged 16 to 18. There is a broad range of GCE A and AS-level courses in science subjects and mathematics, as well as vocational courses in GNVQ science at intermediate and advanced level. The GCSE mathematics course attracts a number of students who wish to improve on results gained at school to obtain a grade C or better. Since the introduction of Curriculum 2000, all subjects are modular.

Achievement and standards

47. Students' written work is well presented and organised. In some subjects students develop their use of IT to improve standards of presentation. GCE A-level students demonstrate good

understanding of their subjects. Practical skills are well developed and apparatus is handled confidently and safely. Some of the coursework of science students is of an outstanding standard. Most students are committed to their studies. A high percentage of students progress to HE.

48. Examination results are good in all GCE A-level subjects. In 2001, the percentage of high grades (A to C) achieved were all well above the national averages (shown in brackets) at 83% (64%) in chemistry, 78% (61%) in physics, 76% (57%) in geology and 74% (60%) in mathematics, respectively. In advanced GNVQ science, there has been a trend of diminishing pass rates. Results in GCSE mathematics continue to improve and are now 15% above the national average, but the pass rate on the new GCE AS-level mathematics course is disappointing, at 65%, some 6% below the national average.

49. Retention rates are below the national average in biology and physics. Retention rates in these subjects have greatly improved since the introduction of the new GCE AS levels, whilst good pass rates have been maintained. The number of students in intermediate GNVQ science is small, but pass and retention rates are above the national average. Across the curriculum area, there is a significant fall in the number of students on level 3 courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	110	105	112
		% retention	84	91	82
		% pass rate	45	48	57
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	12	15	9
		% retention	83	80	89
		% pass rate	100	92	88
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	79	68	34
		% retention	66	79	94
		% pass rate	92	98	97
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	106	85	90
		% retention	62	77	62
		% pass rate	85	94	89
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	47	35	26
		% retention	62	94	96
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	49	40	37
		% retention	61	79	62
		% pass rate	97	97	100

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

Quality of education and training

50. There is much good teaching. Teachers are experienced and well qualified and keep up to date in their specialist subjects. They set high standards and their enthusiasm promotes students' interest. In the best science lessons, teachers use a range of learning activities, supported by well-produced learning material, to help students develop different ways of learning. In a biology lesson

on the diverse nature of proteins, good use was made of IT to show the difference in structures. The teacher used molecular modelling to explain bonding more clearly and then set some written questions, to test whether learning had taken place.

51. Assessment is well managed. In chemistry, a teacher had produced an extremely useful study guide to help students to prepare for individual investigations. The external moderator praised the good research skills which had resulted and which were shown in some good project work.

52. Work is marked promptly and teachers provide written comments which, concentrating on strengths and weaknesses, help mistakes to be identified and rectified. Students respond positively and purposefully in lessons. They speak confidently about their work. Working in small groups, students in a geology lesson were looking at rock samples as part of an investigation. By the end of the lesson, they were able to identify rock types and clearly explain their different porosity. Assignments are designed to develop students' critical thinking. Recently, three geology students were invited to present their research findings to the Royal Society.

53. There has been little change in the methods of teaching level 3 mathematics since the last inspection. In most lessons, teachers still talk too much. Following initial expositions by the teachers, students' work on problems with teachers' support. In many lessons, teachers fail to vary the methods they use appropriately and little use is made of IT. Students identified as having weak numerical skills in GCSE mathematics are given one hour of extra taught support a week. A computer-based revision package is used to help students to consolidate what they have learned. Results are improving and are now 15% above the national average.

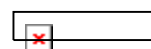
54. Students speak positively about the support they receive from teachers. Working relationships between teachers and students are good. All teachers encourage students to seek their help. Field trips and industrial visits widen students' experience and promote good relationships.

55. Teachers are well qualified in their subjects and many pursue personal interests related to their teaching. Science staff have developed an impressive range of study material on the college intranet as further resources for learning. Science technicians have the expertise to help in the practical work and group activities of large classes. Accommodation in science is good and there is sufficient access to computers. The mathematics department's accommodation is uncomfortable and does not provide a stimulating place in which to learn.

Leadership and management

56. All courses are well managed and staff are working hard to implement Curriculum 2000. Students are set minimum target grades on entry and their performance is frequently monitored to inform them of their progress. The analysis of students' progress is thorough in some subjects, but this is not the case across the whole curriculum area. The college strategy for monitoring attendance has led to improved retention rates. Courses are reviewed annually to identify weaknesses and respond to students' needs. For example, in chemistry, the practical assessments have been started earlier in the course to reduce students' workload prior to the end-of-year examinations. GCE AS-level mathematics modules have been re-ordered this year to give students a less demanding introduction to their level 3 work. There is effective leadership in individual science departments and most self-assessment reports are thorough. There is no established procedure which directly uses comparison of performance to make sure that the quality of courses is maintained.

Business administration, management and professional



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- much good teaching
- effective team working
- good support from teachers for individual students
- good learning materials.

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention in lessons to the needs of students with widely differing abilities
- insufficient use of students' experiences of work in GCE A and AS-level lessons
- targets for retention and pass rates set no higher than previous attainment.

Scope of provision

57. Business courses are offered at GNVQ intermediate level, GCE A and AS levels and AVCE level. Economics is offered at GCE A and AS level. These courses are provided mainly for full-time students. Keyboarding is offered as part of the college's enrichment programme. In addition, GCSE courses are provided for some local schools.

Achievement and standards

58. Pass rates on most courses are good. Students perform better than predicted on the basis of their previous qualifications. Over the last three years, all of the students who completed GCE A-level economics passed. Pass rates on GCE A-level business studies and on GNVQ intermediate have exceeded national averages in two of the last three years. Pass rates for GNVQ advanced business have been at the national average in each of the last three years. Pass rates for GCE AS-level business studies were high in 1999 and 2000. On GCE A and AS-level business studies and GCE A-level economics, the proportion of students gaining a high grade (A to C) is consistently high. The proportion of students gaining a high grade on GNVQ intermediate was lower than the national average in 1999 and 2000. Retention rates are at, or exceed, national averages.

59. There is good progression to higher courses. In 2001, 8 of the 11 students who achieved the GNVQ intermediate qualification continued at college to study at AVCE level. More than half of those who completed the GNVQ advanced level moved on to HE. Some 36% of those who completed a GCE A-level course, progressed to a business-related degree course. There is a wide range of ability on most courses. The written work of the best students is of a good standard. Students on several courses are confident in presenting and defending a case to other students and their teachers.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, management and professional, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	23	20	14
		% retention	87	90	79
		% pass rate	90	83	100
GNVQ advanced	3	No. of starts	23	24	27
		% retention	74	75	85
		% pass rate	94	89	91
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	61	61	51
		% retention	85	95	86
		% pass rate	98	100	93
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	13	14	18
		% retention	69	100	89
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

60. In 75% of the lessons, teaching was good or better. Teachers carefully plan lessons to maintain students' interest while involving them in a range of activities to develop their understanding and skills. Teachers explain new concepts clearly. Tasks set for small group work are appropriate. Teachers check that students are working productively and offer further guidance when needed. Good learning materials provide students with sound information and are a useful revision resource. Teachers use their substantial experience of examination marking at GCE A level to alert students to the expectations of examiners and offer extensive guidance on how to maximise examination marks. There are good working relationships between teachers and students. Teachers are readily available outside lessons to help students. Good use is made of visits to local businesses and visiting speakers, particularly on vocational courses.

61. Some teaching is unsatisfactory. In several lessons, poor planning resulted in a lack of time at the end of lessons for teachers to consolidate students' learning. In some long lessons, teachers fail to change the activity appropriately and students become restless. In several lessons, teachers set tasks which were too difficult for weaker students to complete in the time available, while students who had finished the work were left unoccupied. Some tasks set make few demands on students who are not encouraged to undertake wider reading and research other than through the Internet. In GCE A and AS-level lessons, teachers make insufficient use of students' experiences of work to illustrate business principles and practice. There are instances of poor management of group work. Students are aware of their own preferred learning style, but teachers do not take this into account.

62. Students' work is marked and returned promptly. Much of it is marked to examining board

standards. On some courses, teachers explain the grade awarded and provide students with full comments to help them to improve their performance. There is good use of real businesses in assignment work for vocational courses. Students' progress on their course is reviewed thoroughly by their teachers at appropriate intervals during the year.

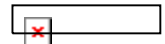
63. Teachers are appropriately qualified and hold teaching qualifications. Some have undertaken recent work placements. Part-time teachers have relevant commercial experience and use it to good effect to enliven their teaching.

64. Business courses have recently moved to a well-equipped suite of refurbished specialist classrooms. Vocational business courses make effective use of the computer facilities in the new multi-function rooms. Students have ready access to computers for work on their own.

Leadership and management

65. Business courses are well managed. Teachers work well as a team, meeting regularly to plan and review courses. They prepare shared learning materials. Course leaders monitor students' attendance and find out reasons for absence. They check on students' progress and discuss measures that can be taken to support those who need it. The targets they set for retention and pass rates are low in comparison to previous pass and retention rates.

Information and communications technology (ICT)



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

Strengths

- very good pass rates
- good retention rates
- good teaching and learning
- substantial investments in IT resources.

Weaknesses

- lack of coherence in the management of IT courses
- lack of an established monitoring and review process on full-time courses

- poor time tabling arrangements for some classes.

Scope of provision

66. There are full-time GCE A and AS-level courses in computing and ICT for students aged 16 to 18, progressing from local high schools. A small range of part-time IT courses, ranging from introductory level to level 3, are offered to adults as part of the college's life-long learning, evening and weekend provision.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass rates on all courses are good and most are well above the national average. In GCE A and AS-level computing and ICT, pass rates are excellent. A significant proportion of students achieve high grades in GCE A-level computing. Most full-time students achieve higher grades than would be predicted by their previous GCSE performance. A significant proportion of full-time students progress to HE courses in computing.

68. Retention rates are good on all courses with the exception of IBT 2 where it was well below the national average in 2001. Retention rates in GCE A-level computing reached the national average in 2000 and 2001. Attendance at lessons seen during the inspection was 86%.

69. The standard of most students' work was good. All students demonstrated good practical skills. Adult students are enthusiastic about their courses. They are acquiring new skills which some hope will enhance or change their career prospects.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communication technology (ICT) 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	271	434	164
		% retention	100	99	94
		% pass rate	64	65	81
National open college network (OCN) short courses	1	No. of starts	*	187	308
		% retention	*	98	94
		% pass rate	*	90	93
IBT 2	2	No. of starts	*	6	32
		% retention	*	100	69
		% pass rate	*	83	86
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	21	18	21
		% retention	62	78	75
		% pass rate	85	100	100
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	50	37	28
		% retention	68	83	78
		% pass rate	97	97	95

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

70. Teaching and learning are good. Some 80% of lessons observed were good or better. Most lessons are well planned. However, schemes of work lack detail and do not indicate the expected learning outcomes or the methods of teaching to be used. Worksheets are consistently good. Excellent workbooks have been developed for each module. They are used to particularly good effect with part-time adult students to help them to study at their own pace.

71. In the best lessons, the teachers showed good levels of up-to-date subject knowledge and were able to use this to extend the experiences of their students. The teachers used praise, individual demonstrations, clear explanations and some innovative teaching methods, to capture the interest, extend the knowledge and develop the confidence of their students. For example, in one GCE AS-level ICT lesson, the teacher made excellent use of the college's on-line register system to demonstrate a computer concept.

72. In some less successful lessons, the teachers failed to ensure that all students were learning effectively, and did not take account of students' learning abilities or check their understanding of difficult concepts. Working relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers are committed to ensuring the success of their students. Most students are well motivated and show interest in their work. They appreciate the high levels of individual support given to them by their subject teachers within and outside lessons. Support provided by e-mail is increasingly popular with students.

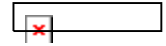
73. Assessment and recording forms for part-time adult courses are used appropriately and assessment practices meet awarding body standards. Achievement is carefully recorded to give lifelong learning managers an accurate picture of each student's progress. The monitoring and review of learners' progress on full-time courses is inadequate. The setting and marking of full-time students' work and the implementation of the formal progress reviews are not carried out properly by all teachers in accordance with departmental policy. Some marked work showed that teachers were not all using the same standards in the setting and marking of students' homework. For example, in some instances there was no evidence of the criteria used for assessment and no annotation to indicate areas of weakness and the action needed to address the problems encountered.

74. The college has made significant improvements to its IT resources recently. There are now two dedicated, specialist classrooms and one open-plan IT centre. The two newly upgraded specialist classrooms provide teachers with access to good resources that allow them to provide interactive demonstrations to their students. The IT centre is not a good place for teaching part-time students and key skills lessons. The noise from other classes, from students using the 'drop-in' facilities and from the general movement of people through and within the centre has an adverse effect on teaching and learning.

Leadership and management

75. The management of ICT, including full-time GCE A and AS-level courses, key skills and life-long learning provision, lacks coherence. There is no clear structure to ensure that cross-college curriculum and resource planning for ICT courses is effective. The lack of overall co-ordination makes it difficult to ensure that there is a good flow of information. This results in some inefficient and ineffective deployment of ICT resources and insufficient sharing of good practice. For example, one part-time evening class in web-page design was timetabled in the IT centre when the adjacent newly refurbished classroom with more appropriate hardware was not in use.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- good pass rates, excellent in art, media and photography
- good standards of students' work
- well-planned, effective teaching
- good development of students' critical, analytical and research skills.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates in GCE A-level performing arts
- inadequate specialist IT provision
- poor communications and planning between the different subject teams
- insufficient space particularly for art and design courses.

Scope of provision

76. Provision largely consists of GCE A and AS-levels in art, photography, media, music and drama. All students on these courses are full-time and aged 16 to 18. There is some OCN provision in pottery and silversmithing taken by part-time students aged 19 and over. There are 98 students on GCE A and AS-level art courses in painting, sculpture or textiles, while 32 students are enrolled on GCE AS-level art and design (photography). Another 150 students study GCE A and AS-level media, developing work on web sites, newspaper supplements, print adverts or moving image adverts. Performing arts has 61 GCE drama students, and 23 music students. The curriculum area also contributes to the enrichment programme, offering a drama club, an orchestra and courses in

costume and fashion, creative textiles, and pottery. There are a small number of OCN evening and Saturday classes.

77. New teachers are developing the range of options in art and design, which now include photography and textiles as well as fine art. The uptake of art courses by males has been low, but teachers encourage students of both sexes to take up courses, and the inclusion of photography has increased the number of students. Enrolment on GCE A-level music was low in 2000/01, but the introduction of GCE AS levels has seen a rise in numbers taking music and a doubled intake to art, photography, media and performing arts.

Achievement and standards

78. Pass rates at GCE A level are good, and excellent in art, photography and media where pass rates are consistently 100%. The percentage of high grades in art and photography is also excellent, at between 95% and 100% for the last three years, but it has been low, declining to 31%, in drama. Pass rates in the new GCE AS-level examinations were outstanding throughout with 100% pass rates in drama and music, 99% in media and 97% in art. The proportion of high grades achieved was excellent in art and design, drama and media. Students achieve grades much higher than those predicted from their previous examination achievements, but this is not the case in music and drama.

79. Retention rates at GCE A level are satisfactory. On the one-year photography course, the retention rate has been 100% for the two years it has run. On the media course, which has quite large numbers of students, the retention rate improved dramatically in 2000/01, to 85%, having been poor in the previous two years. Retention rates in drama are poor. The retention rate for GCE AS-level music was 100%.

80. The standards of work achieved in GCE A and AS-level lessons are good overall and very good in art and photography. Students in all areas respond confidently in class discussions, are able to analyse material, make measured judgements and explore ideas using appropriate vocabulary. Work developed in response to the critical studies element of art courses is very lively, creative, well researched and used to good effect in practical work. Instrumental work is good in music lessons and students worked well in aural exercises. Media students responded well verbally and were competent in written expression. Students work co-operatively and productively in media and performing arts group work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
National OCN (short)	1	No. of starts	7	47	21
		% retention	100	100	86
		% pass rate	60	40	83
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	54	35	46
		% retention	80	77	72
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level communication/media	3	No. of starts	43	34	48
		% retention	58	66	85
		% pass rate	96	100	100
GCE A-level music performance	3	No. of starts	12	14	6
		% retention	92	88	67
		% pass rate	90	83	100

GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts	3	No. of starts	10	26	24
		% retention	56	54	67
		% pass rate	80	100	94

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

Quality of education and training

81. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in their subjects, but some staff lack subject-specific IT training. They are committed and work hard to ensure that the courses are appropriate for the examinations to be taken. Work is planned well and there are good learning materials. In one GCE A-level media lesson, students were studying a unit on 'soap opera' using an excellent, comprehensive workbook devised by the teacher. There is a good range of enrichment activities, which students value. A chamber ensemble rehearsal, ably led by an enthusiastic teacher, included a number of students who were not doing music courses, but clearly enjoyed playing with others and developing their musical skills.

82. The development of skills in critical analysis is evident throughout the subjects, is effective in media, and is a particular strength in the teaching of the critical studies element of art and design courses. In a GCE AS-level art lesson, a teacher very effectively used Munch's 'The Scream' to engage students in discussion of the expressive elements of painting, introducing specialist vocabulary and encouraging confident analytical and imaginative responses.

83. Students are positive about the quality of the teaching they receive, and in most lessons they worked enthusiastically and were interested and stimulated by the work. They have no standardised independent learning plan or assessment documentation. Regular assessment tutorials ensure that students are clear about their progress and development.

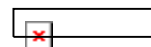
84. The teaching block housing drama and a media room are not wired for computers. The performing arts studio is quite well equipped, but storage is inadequate and there is no digital sound system. All the media editing and computer equipment is together in another block, which creates access problems. Imaging and desktop publishing software appropriate to work at this level is not available on either the media or IT room computers. This adversely affects the quality of the layout and advertising work produced. Art and design is well equipped, but lacks space for the number of students opting to do it and this affects the scale and scope of the work which students can produce. There is not enough storage. Textiles and sculpture share the same room and there are difficulties in displaying work for examination moderation. There is only one digital camera and little photography software. These deficiencies hinder the appropriate development of this aspect of the subject.

Leadership and management

85. Leadership in the curriculum area is weak and communications are inadequate. There are no team leader meetings to develop and share ideas, plan joint activities, develop the curriculum or share resources and expertise. This results in insufficient co-operative working. For example, one of the art staff has good graphic and computer design experience relevant to the media course, which media staff lack, but this expertise is not shared. However, communication within individual course teams is good, ensuring effective planning of work and support for students. There are good links between staff in the curriculum area, local schools and the Yorkshire Coast College, and this facilitates entry and progression. Students were positive about a 'taster' session held prior to enrolment.

86. Staff development is readily available, but staff cover is not supplied, and this makes it difficult for staff to take up training opportunities. Self-assessment of courses is effective. Accurate data provided by management and information systems enables effective monitoring of targets and their achievement.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- many good and improving GCE A-level pass rates
- good development of students' intellectual and study skills
- imaginative use of IT in geography teaching
- through monitoring of students' academic progress
- excellent progression to HE courses in psychology.

Weaknesses

- inadequate written feedback on some students' assignments
- superficial assessment of some aspects of provision
- provision not well suited to the needs of adult students.

Scope of provision

87. The college concentrates its provision at GCE A and AS-level by offering courses in history, law, geography, psychology and sociology, mainly to full-time students aged 16 to 18. Psychology remains the most popular subject, particularly at GCE AS level. Declining recruitment to GCE A-level courses in sociology and geography was reversed in 2001. However, in 1999 and 2000, a significant number of students discontinued GCE A-level courses after the first year's GCE AS-level examination. In 2001, there were about 650 enrolments on GCE A and AS-level humanities courses, two thirds of whom were following the recently reformed GCE AS-level courses. The

college offers no humanities courses below level 3. Nor is there any provision in the evenings. Very few adult students join daytime classes where the timetable is not well suited to those who wish to study part-time.

Achievement and standards

88. The standards of students' work are consistently good. Students display effective study techniques and come well prepared for their lessons. Attendance and punctuality are good. Students develop appropriate intellectual and study skills. They are encouraged to think analytically and present reasoned arguments both orally and in writing. Psychology students show awareness of the ethical dimension of their subject. Law students improve their debating skills and their knowledge of the criminal justice system by taking part in the Bar national mock trial competition.

89. Most GCE A-level pass rates are generally at, or above, national averages. They have been consistently high in geography and psychology. In GCE A-level sociology, high pass and retention rates in 2001 came after two years of poor retention rates and below average pass rates. In addition, the proportion of sociology students who gained good (A to C) grades in 2001 was high, at 85%. Pass and retention rates in history fell below average in 2001, after two years when pass rates were good. The pass rate in law improved to slightly above the average in 2001, but this was accompanied by a marked decline in the retention rate. In recent years, two law students achieved GCE A-level results which placed them in the top five nationally. On GCE AS-level courses in 2001, pass rates were good, ranging from 90% to 100%. However, in 1999 and 2000, pass rates were mainly low for GCE AS-level students who did not proceed to GCE A-level examinations. In 2001, one in seven college students progressed to HE courses in the humanities or social sciences. Of these students, 50% began degrees in psychology.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	112	114	122
		% retention	65	82	87
		% pass rate	94	89	97
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	38	19	21
		% retention	42	53	95
		% pass rate	81	80	100
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	44	39	43
		% retention	80	82	70
		% pass rate	94	94	80
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	28	32	33
		% retention	68	97	73
		% pass rate	68	65	88
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	41	29	14
		% retention	85	90	86
		% pass rate	100	96	100

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

Quality of education and training

90. Teaching is well planned. Lessons have clear objectives and students know what is expected of them. Teachers have an assured grasp of their subjects, and they use it to engage students' interest. Students' previous learning is confirmed and new work is set in context. Attractively designed handouts are used to help students learn. Students are required to respond when videos are shown. Geography teachers use computers imaginatively. In a homework assignment, students e-mailed an analysis of population data to their teacher. The marked work was returned to them in hard copies. In class, excellent computer-generated presentations help students to interpret representative statistics and learn the use of new techniques.

91. All staff have teaching qualifications and most have relevant degrees. Recent professional development has contributed to teachers' effectiveness. Teaching takes place in adequately furnished and equipped specialist classrooms, some of which have stimulating wall displays. The geography classroom contains computer monitors to enable students to follow computer-generated presentations. Overall, the learning resources are good. In several subjects, well-developed sites on the college's computer network provide students with a variety of materials which enable them to work on their own. There are up-to-date textbooks and web sites for most subjects on the college's computer network. Law students make good use of a constantly updated legal textbook designed for GCE A and AS-level students. Textbooks are up to date. The library book stock is appropriate in law, psychology and sociology, but many history and some geography books are out of date. There are useful additional collections of books held in subject areas.

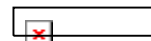
92. At half-termly intervals, teachers monitor effectively the overall progress of their students, who are also encouraged to evaluate their own performance. Through individual discussion with their personal tutor, students contribute to the production of an agreed statement. Good records are kept. This provides a realistic view of students' performance and how it might be improved. Parents receive regular information about their children's progress and are invited to meetings with subject teachers and personal tutors. Teachers use a variety of suitable methods to assess students' progress. Assessment is well judged to take account of the needs of students at different stages of their course. GCE A-level students showed a sharp awareness of the standards that were expected when they marked sample essays using the assessment criteria set by awarding bodies. Teachers set work at different intervals and a lack of co-ordination in the setting of work between subjects has led to its uneven distribution. Teachers grade the work they mark in a confusing variety of ways. It is not always clear how marks have been awarded. Feedback on written work is often inadequate in its brevity and there is a lack of sufficient guidance about how students might improve their performance.

93. Students are given careful guidance to help them choose their GCE A and AS-level courses. For a few students, the need of additional learning support is not identified early enough, and some students fail to take advantage of the support offered. Students meet their personal tutor twice a week and their attendance is carefully monitored. Students value the time most tutors give to discussing their individual needs, and in particular the frequent opportunities available for discussion of applications to HE. Some students felt at a disadvantage if they had to change personal tutors during the time when their applications were being prepared. Not all tutors were effective in addressing students' individual needs through the tutorial programme.

Leadership and management

94. Courses are well managed. Thoughtful planning in response to the reforms of the GCE A-level curriculum has resulted in some very good schemes of work and resources. Course reviews ensure careful analysis of data on students' achievements. Action plans have successfully addressed weaknesses identified by this process. However, course reviews do not consider some data, for example, those on students' views, sufficiently deeply in order to improve the provision. Nor is enough information gathered to make a thorough assessment of teaching and learning. Action plans rarely build on strengths or seek ways of raising standards.

English, languages and communications



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

Strengths

- much good teaching
- very good academic and pastoral support
- improvement in pass rates to well above national averages
- imaginative use of resources in languages.

Weaknesses

- retention rates below national averages on four level 3 courses
- differentiation and assessment practices in languages
- no sharing of good practice between departments offering languages.

Scope of provision

95. The provision in English caters for some 245 students. The vast majority are full-time studying on GCE A and AS-level courses in English language, English literature and GCSE English. Approximately 107 full-time students are enrolled on GCE A and AS-level courses in modern foreign languages, and a small number are studying on level 1 and level 2 language courses. All classes are offered to students aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 and over. Enrolment numbers are dwindling on level 3 language courses. Progression to GCE A-level language courses following GCE AS-level is low at around 40%.

Achievement and standards

96. Standards achieved by students in lessons are at least satisfactory and are good in over a third of the lessons. Standards tend to rise as the students progress through their courses and gain more confidence in their powers of expression and in analytical skills. This is clearly reflected in their written work, which shows marked and systematic progress over time as students learn from the detailed comments and suggestions for improvement which teachers write on students' work. From the outset, in oral work, in pairs or groups, students learn to arrive at analytical judgements that are

supported by evidence from the relevant source. They show increasing knowledge of literary and linguistic concepts and acquire the specialist terminology to express themselves appropriately in discussion and in writing. Students participate well in lively lessons. They make good progress in learning as they test their opinions and conclusions on one another and their teachers. A spirit of co-operation and collaboration pervades in classrooms. In one lesson, students in preparation for GCSE English delighted in their newly found ability to distinguish similes from metaphors. In a GCE A-level literature class, students demonstrated how well they had prepared themselves for the lesson by analysing several extracts on the historical background to 'Richard II' in good detail. In a GCE AS-level English language lesson, students learnt swiftly about accent and dialect as a result of thorough discussion in class, helped by entertaining and memorable examples on a video. Good humour often facilitates serious learning and rapport with staff is very good. Students clearly enjoy their studies and this contributes to their good attendance.

97. Retention rates on four GCE A-level courses were below national averages. The retention rate for GCE A-level Spanish fell well below the average in 2001. Pass rates on all GCE A-level and GCSE courses have improved steadily and consistently over the last three years. The pass rate in GCE A-level English language reached the national average in 2001. In all other subjects, pass rates surpassed national averages. GCE AS-level results were good in English language and literature, but did not meet teachers expectations in French and German. There are good pass and retention rates on level 1 and level 2 language courses for students aged 19 and over.

98. Much work has been done in the college on analysing how students are progressing in relation to what they have previously achieved. On most English courses students achieve higher grades than might have been expected with particular progress being made in GCE A-level English language.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	58	35	62
		% retention	62	94	84
		% pass rate	28	58	59
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	53	49	58
		% retention	60	55	64
		% pass rate	84	74	95
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	34	24	34
		% retention	53	83	69
		% pass rate	89	95	100
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	40	33	15
		% retention	73	69	73
		% pass rate	66	91	100
GCE A-level German	3	No. of starts	23	16	8
		% retention	78	81	88
		% pass rate	78	100	100
GCE A-level Spanish	3	No. of starts	11	15	11
		% retention	73	86	30
		% pass rate	63	83	100

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

Quality of education and training

99. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Staff have considerable expertise. In English lessons, all teachers use the same methodology which encourages students to make as many contributions as possible, individually and in pairs and groups. Most students respond enthusiastically to this approach and give of their best. Teachers work hard to get the best out of their students. They give freely of their time outside the classroom to help students. For example, GCSE students receive assistance with spelling and university candidates receive guidance on extending their reading. There are also opportunities for enrichment activities, such as theatre visits and attending university sessions. Language students are able to benefit from weekly workshops. The English department has produced some new learning materials. One booklet based on 'Measure for Measure' was particularly useful in helping students to arrive at their own analysis of the major and minor characters and to contrast it with statements by established literary critics. In modern languages, teachers are fluent in the language being learned and use it extensively in the classroom. The imaginative use of such resources as the Internet adds topical interest as well as providing language practice. However, the poor location of computers in a corridor is far from ideal. Trips abroad and foreign exchanges help to engender the considerable enthusiasm that exists for learning languages.

100. Both formal and informal assessment record keeping is thorough and detailed. Teachers know what students need to do to improve and students themselves know how they are doing. Regular reviews contribute significantly to this. Work is regularly set, marked and returned, often with comprehensive written feedback. However, in modern languages not all the teachers use the same practices for assessment or for meeting the needs of students with differing abilities.

Leadership and management

101. The three course leaders share leadership in English. This arose out of the situation in the spring of 2001, when the newly appointed head of department could not continue because of ill health. The three course leaders meet formally every week and informally every day so that the provision is effectively managed. The staff, including the two recent appointees, work extremely hard together to promote students' high success rates at GCSE and GCE A level. A previous weakness in leadership of the GCSE English course has been remedied. The management of level 3 language courses is competent. However, the role of the curriculum area manager does not include responsibility for evening and enrichment provision. The lack of structural links between the three departments offering languages hinders the spread of good practice.

Part D: College data

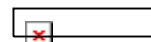
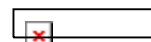


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	0	71
2	5	10



3	75	5
4/5	0	0
Other	20	14
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	830	175	20
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	27	0	1
Business	181	337	10
Hotel and catering	0	0	0
Health and community care	53	72	3
Art and design	361	75	9
Humanities	2,625	201	57
Basic education	0	0	0
Total	4,077	860	100

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	1999/2000	2000/01	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01
1	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	23	28	62
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	96	100	98
	National average (%)	81	82	*	70	74	**
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	82	82	70
	National average (%)	63	70	*	61	68	**

2	Starters excluding transfers	226	216	210	11	17	65
	Retention rate (%)	81	88	85	55	88	82
	National average (%)	79	82	**	71	75	**
	Pass rate (%)	93	89	95	100	87	75
	National average (%)	78	77	**	68	70	**
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,837	1,588	2,800	53	46	45
	Retention rate (%)	76	83	84	40	72	62
	National average (%)	78	80	**	65	69	**
	Pass rate (%)	78	84	91	95	67	96
	National average (%)	83	82	**	61	63	**

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 (1998/1999) 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 (1998/1999) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

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

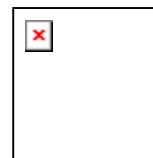
* too few students to provide a valid calculation

** not available

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3(advanced)	77	20	3	99
Level 2 (intermediate)	87	13	0	15
Level 1 (foundation)	60	20	20	5
Other sessions	0	0	0	0
Totals	78	19	3	119

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