



Leyton Sixth Form College

CONTENTS

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

How effective is the college?

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

How well is the college led and managed?

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Students' views of the college

Other information

Part B: The college as a whole

Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Achievement and standards

Quality of education and training

Leadership and management

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Science and mathematics

Business studies

Information and communications technology

Health, social care and childcare

[Visual and performing arts and media](#)

[Humanities](#)

[English language and literature](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

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

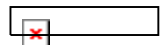
[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

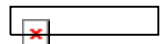
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Name of college:	Leyton Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Sue Lakeman
Address of college:	Essex Road Leyton London E10 6EQ
Telephone number:	020 8928 9000
Fax number:	020 8928 9200
Chair of governors:	John Lyons
Unique reference number:	130457
Name of reporting inspector:	Bob Avery HMI
Dates of inspection:	14-18 January 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



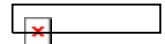
Leyton Sixth Form College is located in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, within the area covered by the London North Learning and Skills Council (LSC). There is another sixth form college, a large general further education (FE) college and three schools with sixth forms in the borough, which is classified as one of the most deprived in the country. Some 90% of students attending the college are from minority ethnic groups. The LSC classifies the relative deprivation of students at the college as 'very high'. The educational achievements of Year 11 pupils from local schools are low compared with national averages.

The college provides programmes in seven of the 14 curricular areas identified by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) for inspection purposes. In some of these areas, courses are provided from foundation to advanced level. In 2000/01, the college enrolled over 1,400 students aged 16 to 18 and some 700 aged 19 or over. Many of the adult students attend part-time courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), either during the day or in the evening at the college or at one of the two outreach centres. The main college is located on a single campus, where a major building programme has recently been completed, providing new accommodation and improved access for people with physical disabilities.

The last inspection of the college was undertaken by inspectors from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in May 1999.

The college's mission is 'to provide excellent and inclusive education for school leavers and to promote lifelong learning for all.'

How effective is the college?



Education and training are outstanding in visual and performing arts and media, good in health, social care and childcare, and satisfactory in science and mathematics, business studies, information and communications technology (ICT), humanities, and English language and literature. The main strengths and areas for improvement are listed below:

Key strengths

- good pass rates on many courses
- outstanding teaching in visual and performing arts and media
- very good guidance and support
- good accommodation and specialist resources
- very effective attention given to equality of opportunity by staff and students.

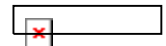
What should be improved

- retention and pass rates on some courses

- quality of teaching in some areas
- effectiveness of quality assurance
- clarification of the roles and responsibilities of middle managers.

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

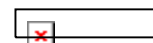


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	Satisfactory. Some lessons are carefully planned and teachers provide clear explanations of scientific concepts. In other lessons, the teaching fails to maintain the interest of the learners. Pass rates are good on the General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) science courses, but are low on some mathematics courses. Students are well supported during their courses, and many of them progress to higher education (HE) programmes.
Business studies	Satisfactory. Much teaching is good, although in many lessons, students do not achieve the standards expected of them. Retention and pass rates are good on most vocational courses, but are low on some GCE A-level courses. Some assessment practice is poor. Many students progress to HE.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In some lessons, teachers make good use of everyday examples to enliven topics. Insufficient attention is given to the wide range of students' abilities. Pass rates are very good on the first and national diploma courses, but poor on the GCE A-level computing course. Teachers provide good learning materials for students on vocational courses. The standard of some students' written work is low.
Health, social care and childcare	Good. There is much good teaching, although the links between theory to practice are inadequate in some lessons. The pass and retention rates are high on most full-time courses, but are poor on part-time National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses. Progression rates from level 1 to level 3 courses are good. Leadership is effective.

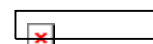
Visual and performing arts and media	Outstanding. Much teaching is very good and some is outstanding. Teachers pay skilful attention to equality of opportunity. There are outstanding pass rates on first and national diploma courses in performing arts, and on many GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and GCE A-level courses. Retention rates on many one-year courses are good. Students are able to access good specialist resources and are well supported throughout their programmes. The curriculum area is well managed.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Most teaching is satisfactory, and some is good. The retention and pass rates on GCE AS courses are good, and the pass rate on GCE A-level general studies is also good. The retention and pass rates on many other GCE A-level courses are below national averages. Many students progress to HE programmes. Tutorials are effective. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate.
English language and literature	Satisfactory. Most of the teaching is satisfactory or better. Most lessons are well planned. Many students respond confidently to teachers' questions, but in a minority of lessons, only the most confident do so. Retention and pass rates on GCE AS courses are good. The retention rates on GCE A-level courses are satisfactory, but the pass rates are low. Some lessons are too long. Students receive good support during their courses.

How well is the college led and managed?



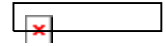
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers have set a clear strategic direction for the college, although some of their strategic objectives are not easily measurable, and progress towards their achievement is insufficiently monitored. The strategic plan gives insufficient prominence to raising standards and improving pass rates. Financial management is sound. Over the past two years, a building and refurbishment programme has been completed, which has improved the facilities for students. The college has increased the number of students enrolling on courses. Although students' achievements are satisfactory overall, quality assurance arrangements have had limited impact on improving retention and pass rates and the quality of teaching and learning. The college promotes and encourages good practice in equal opportunities. Over 90% of students are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups, including those in management roles, is growing. Relationships between students are friendly and harmonious. The college's middle management structure is complex and management responsibilities below the level of faculty manager lack clarity.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



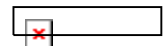
Promotion of inclusive education and widening the participation rates of the local community in FE, are strongly reflected in the college's mission statement, strategic objectives and range of courses. Courses are carefully planned to take account of the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of students. In many lessons, teachers promote discussion and understanding of moral, cultural and religious issues. Students value the safe and welcoming environment of the college. There is excellent provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The guidance and support given to students by staff is very good. Initial guidance provided to students is comprehensive and effective. Enrolment procedures are efficient. Tutorials are effective in helping students to identify weaknesses and to develop action plans to make progress. The identification and provision of additional learning support for students on foundation programmes is good, and is excellent for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but is less systematic for other students. Students make good use of the library and the resource skills centre. The range of enrichment activities is limited, although sports-related activities are extensive. Careers education and guidance are good, and many students progress from level 3 courses to HE programmes.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

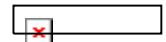
- friendly and supportive teachers and staff
- working with other students
- support provided by teachers and personal tutors
- quality of careers advice and guidance
- secure and welcoming environment
- accessibility of computers.

What they feel could be improved

- consecutive lessons without a break

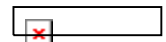
- limited social facilities
- lack of space for private and group study.

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

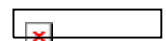


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	65	29	6
19+ and WBL*	38	62	0
Learning 16-18	61	33	6
19+ and WBL*	25	75	0

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



AS/A levels, Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCEs), first and national diplomas, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at intermediate and foundation levels, other vocational qualifications, including NVQs, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and ESOL qualifications. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and study full time. Many of the adult students are studying ESOL programmes at level 1 during the evening. The college recruits a proportion of its students from areas of high social deprivation, and inspectors took this into account when making judgements about students' achievements.

2. Much of the college's provision is at level 3. Between 1998/99 and 1999/2000, the overall pass rate for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 qualifications was at about the national average for sixth form colleges. Data supplied by the college for 2001 indicate that the overall pass rate at level 3 has been sustained. The overall retention rate for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses is close to the national average for sixth form colleges, although it declined slightly on most two-year GCE A-level courses in 2001. Analyses undertaken by the college to show how well students achieve at level 3 in comparison to their qualifications at entry to courses, indicate satisfactory progress overall. The small number of adult students on level 3 courses perform less well. Overall retention and pass rates for adult students have been consistently below the national averages.

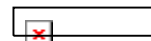
3. The pass rates for GCE A-level subjects paint a mixed picture. In visual and performing arts and media, pass rates are generally outstanding. In the sciences, the pass rate on the chemistry GCE A-level course has been consistently high. However, the pass rates on most GCE A-level courses in the humanities and in English language are below national averages, although in these areas, the pass rates on GCE AS courses are good. On level 3 vocational courses, in 2001, pass rates on the national diploma courses in performing arts and computing, and the diploma in childcare and education were outstanding. On the GNVQ advanced science and business courses, pass rates have declined to around the national averages.

4. In 2000, the overall retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 and level 2 courses were close to the national averages for sixth form colleges. For adult students, the overall pass rate on level 1 courses is good, but the retention rate is below the national average. On level 1 and level 2 qualifications, data supplied by the college for 2001 show that the retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on GCSE and GNVQ intermediate programmes have improved. The pass rate on the first diploma in performing arts has been consistently outstanding, and the pass rate on the first diploma course in information technology (IT) is very good. In 2001, the pass rates on the GNVQ foundation courses in business, and health and social care were outstanding at 100%.

5. Students' attainments in lessons are generally satisfactory or good. In visual and performing arts and media, and health, social care and childcare they are sometimes particularly good. In many lessons, students are confident in responding to questions. They work well in groups, and carefully consider each other's point of view. In a visual arts lesson, students' self-portraits demonstrated careful analysis and objectivity, and the standard of work was above that expected. In health, social care and childcare, most students on level 3 courses have developed good analytical and presentation skills, and participate well in discussions. In biology lessons, students produce good written responses to questions. However, in some mathematics lessons, some students lack the required numerical and algebraic skills. In English, some students demonstrate weaknesses of expression and sentence structure in their work. The standards attained in the key skills of numeracy, communication and IT are satisfactory on vocational courses. However, on some GCE AS/A-level courses, students rarely use IT in their work, and in science, some students are unable to use the Internet effectively for research. The progression rate of students from level 3 courses to HE is high. In 2001, 70% of students completing level 3 courses entered HE.

6. Students' attendance in most lessons is satisfactory, but absenteeism creates discontinuity in the programmes of a significant minority of students. Lateness to many lessons is commonplace.

Quality of education and training



7. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 136 sessions. The majority of lessons were attended by students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses. A small minority of lessons observed by inspectors was in the evening and attended predominantly by adults. Overall, inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in 63% of lessons, satisfactory in 31%, and less than satisfactory in 6%. The college has sought to raise the quality of teaching through a programme of lesson observations. The observers provide detailed evaluations, but their judgements are insufficiently rigorous, and grading has been over-generous. The recognition of weaknesses in the programme has caused the college to seek the help of an outside consultant to improve the rigour of the programme. In a few curriculum areas, such as health, social care and childcare, there are arrangements for sharing good practice between teachers. However, there are no arrangements to share good teaching practice more widely across the college.

8. Some very good teaching was observed on courses at all levels. Most teachers plan their lessons well, and ensure that students are clear about the learning objectives of the lesson. They use a variety of effective teaching styles which ensure that students are engrossed in their work, sustain their concentration, debate, discuss, and work together co-operatively. However, in a significant minority of lessons, teachers talk for too long, class management is weak, and learning is unsatisfactory. In a few lessons, the work begins from too low a baseline, or students are asked to undertake work for which they are ill prepared. In these lessons, teachers fail to stretch the more able students or help less able learners to make the progress expected of them. On occasion this leads to frustration or lack of commitment. Most teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and know their students well. Most students work diligently and contribute well to lessons. They listen to others, think about what they are saying and respect their views. A minority of students do not prepare for lessons or respond to questions. Lessons are of 95 minutes duration, and some students are unable to concentrate for that amount of time.

9. Teachers generally use appropriate resources, including detailed workbooks produced at the college and recently published textbooks. In a number of curriculum areas, teachers make insufficient use of ICT to enliven teaching and learning. The college is addressing this through the purchase of laptops and a training programme for teachers.

10. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress is good. Teachers use clear assessment criteria in assignments and marking. Most students are aware of what they need to do to succeed and improve their performance. Some marking of students' work is of exceptional quality, and most is good in providing helpful comments and action points. Assessment in a few subjects falls below these high standards. College procedures are not followed and records are incomplete.

11. Students applying for level 1 courses are given a thorough diagnostic assessment to determine whether the course is appropriate for them and to identify any additional learning support needs. During induction for level 2 and level 3 courses, competence in application of number, communication and IT is assessed, and predicted minimum target grades based on GCSE results are identified. However, the minimum target grades are not related to the specific subjects that students have chosen to study. Tutors review the progress of their students during meetings held with subject teachers each term. The monitoring of students' progress is generally good, and underachievement across subjects is identified and acted upon by tutors. Parents are given timely reports on students' progress, although some reports provide insufficient information on strengths and weaknesses and how to improve. Procedures for internal verification are good, and weaknesses identified by external verifiers and moderators are dealt with effectively.

12. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Just over 90% have a teaching qualification. Identification of personal and professional development needs is undertaken annually. Many teachers are supported in taking higher degrees. There is a high proportion of full-time teachers, and many teach on both day and evening courses.

13. The college has made extensive investment in its accommodation since the last inspection. Much accommodation is bright and attractive. There are good sports facilities. A large, purpose-built

sports hall, an all-weather pitch and playing fields enable students to take part in a wide range of sporting activities. Community groups and schools also use the facilities. An extensive range of sports and fitness sessions is offered. Access for people with restricted mobility is very good and there is only one small area of the college that is not accessible to wheelchair users. The allocation of classrooms is inefficient. Some rooms are too small for the numbers of students using them, and groups with fewer students are using larger classrooms.

14. The college library is well stocked. Support staff are experienced in working with the equipment and materials, and are able to offer good advice and guidance to students requiring assistance. However, at certain times, the library is overcrowded. In the learning skills centre, which is a drop-in facility, students work productively and express satisfaction with the provision. There is a wide range of good specialist equipment and materials available to learners. The media resources are wide ranging and computing software packages are up to date. The college has recently purchased additional computers for students. An information learning technology strategy has been in place since May 2000 and a target ratio of one computer to five students has almost been achieved. All computers are networked and have Internet access.

15. The college provides courses in seven of the 14 curricular areas identified by OFSTED and ALI for inspection purposes. In some of these areas, courses are offered from pre-entry or foundation level to level 3. The college provides some specialist courses that are not available at other local colleges, particularly in modern foreign languages, humanities and physical education. Managers, teachers and support staff take account of the diverse cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs of their students when planning the curriculum. The college works closely with local schools to provide appropriate courses and programmes. There are good links with community groups through outreach work. The college is planning to develop childcare provision for students and staff at the local playgroup next to the college, where some of the early years, care and education students are placed. Specialist presentations, open evenings and an annual open day are provided, at which the courses and programmes available are explained to potential students and their parents.

16. The implementation of Curriculum 2000 has resulted in key skills and general studies being included in all full-time students' study programmes. Some students are dissatisfied with these arrangements and find the additional requirements a burden. There is a limited range of enrichment activities which are not compulsory. However, there is a lively sports programme in which many students participate.

17. The guidance and support services for students are very good. Teachers visit many neighbouring schools to provide initial guidance for prospective students. An attractive and comprehensive prospectus and videodisc clearly explain the range of courses on offer. Summer schools are offered to prospective students to allow them to experience life at the college and the nature of the work to be undertaken in their chosen course of study. All staff involved in providing guidance and support services demonstrate a thorough understanding of the diverse needs of their students.

18. Enrolment procedures are efficient and supportive. Applications received for courses are acknowledged within five days. Most prospective students receive an interview at the college. These are conducted by staff experienced in guidance and enrolment, who are supported by subject teachers. All students wishing to enrol on pre-entry and foundation courses undergo a diagnostic test to ensure they are entered for the appropriate course and to identify additional learning needs. During their courses, students make good use of the learning skills centre, where teachers provide additional support in English and mathematics.

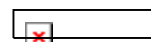
19. Overall, the help and support provided by tutors during the weekly tutorial sessions are good. These sessions follow a comprehensive programme set out in the tutors' handbook, which also includes service standards for pastoral care. Both the staff handbook and the tutors' handbook give detailed guidance on the procedures for monitoring students' performance. During the tutorial sessions, tutors help students to review their progress and to develop action plans for improvement. However, there are no systematic arrangements to measure students' progress towards their minimum target grades. Teachers use a well-designed and comprehensive referral form to inform tutors of any concerns they may have about students' attendance, punctuality and progress. In

some faculties, the use of these forms is not as effective as it might be. Students receive detailed, up-to-date and informative help in completing their applications for HE courses.

20. The support provided to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good. During their lessons, specialist teachers provide additional help and keep detailed records of the progress made. The provision is well managed and there are good links with special schools and other outside agencies.

21. The careers advice and guidance provided for students are effective. A two-day careers and progression event is held annually. In 2001, the event included 50 visiting speakers from universities and employers.

Leadership and management



22. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers provide a clear strategic direction for the college. They have a strong commitment to promoting inclusive education and responding to community needs. These commitments are fully reflected in the college's mission statement, strategic objectives and range of courses. The strategic plan sets out clear objectives, but some of these are not easily measurable, and progress towards achieving them is insufficiently monitored. The strategic plan gives insufficient prominence to raising standards and improving pass rates. Provision is cost-effective. The college operates within a tight budget and achieves broadly satisfactory results.

23. The college promotes and encourages good practice in equal opportunities. Over 90% of students are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups, including those in management roles, is growing. Relationships between students are friendly and harmonious. The college celebrates the ethnic and cultural diversity of its students and staff, for example, in its displays and publicity materials. There is a multi-faith prayer room. Students value the opportunity to mix freely in a safe environment. Most students are satisfied with college provision. The number of complaints last year was small, and all were satisfactorily resolved.

24. The governors are well informed about the college's financial position and monitor it closely. Financial management is sound. Over the past two years a successful building and refurbishment programme has boosted recruitment and markedly improved facilities for students. The new buildings were completed substantially within budget and on time. The monitoring of academic standards by governors is insufficiently rigorous. Although a member of the governing body sits on the college's quality assurance committee, there is no regular forum for other governors to discuss the standards achieved by students.

25. Communications within the college are very good. At all levels, staff are well informed about current issues through weekly briefings, e-mails and a termly newsletter. They make a genuine contribution to the development of policies and procedures in regular departmental and team meetings and through membership of a variety of working groups. There is effective teamwork and a strong commitment to the college's aims.

26. The college's middle management structure is complex and management responsibilities below the level of faculty manager lack clarity. There are five heads of faculty, four of which have subject responsibility, and the fifth has responsibility for student support services. The heads of faculties monitor and report on the work of departments. Within the faculties, some subjects are managed by curriculum co-ordinators, and others are managed by curriculum leaders or course leaders, each with different remits and responsibilities. Lines of accountability are over-complicated and responsibility for taking action to improve standards is unclear. The division of faculties into teams under different managers has made sharing of good practice across team boundaries more difficult.

Although some courses are well managed, the effectiveness of course management varies significantly, even within the same faculty.

27. The college broadly met its performance targets for 2000/01, and exceeded ambitious targets for recruitment in 2001/02. The setting of targets for retention and pass rates at department level is not always effective. Some inappropriate targets have been set for individual courses by senior managers. Some of the targets set for 1999/2000 were unrealistically high and were not met, but the more realistic targets for 2000/01 were achieved. The college has made changes to its target-setting procedures this year, and middle managers are more closely involved.

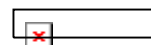
28. The quality assurance policy and procedures are well established, and clearly documented in the college's quality assurance handbook. Implementation is supported by a relevant programme of staff development. A useful framework for course reviews has guided and improved documentation. Reviews are validated by heads of faculty and audited by the college's quality assurance committee. Most reviews are thorough and well documented. In a few, weaknesses have not been identified, and there is insufficient indication of whether improvements have been made. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is insufficiently rigorous. College managers acknowledge this weakness and have identified the need for a more objective programme of lesson observations. Self-assessment reports vary widely in quality and usefulness. In some curricular areas, the reports fail to focus sufficiently on key weaknesses, including the need to raise pass and retention rates, and to improve teaching and learning. The response to the self-assessments is often unsystematic and has had little impact on improving quality and standards.

29. The senior manager responsible for quality assurance assesses the work of each subject area annually, and sets targets for improvement. Each area is awarded a single grade on the basis of retention and pass rates, which the quality assurance committee then validates. The process is insufficiently critical. As a result, although some under-performing subjects have been identified and successfully targeted for improvement, there is little action taken for those subjects where results are not improving, or where performance is marginally below national averages.

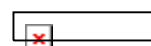
30. Since the previous inspection, managers have worked hard to improve the college's management information systems. However, weaknesses in the student information system remain, which affects the college's capacity to develop and implement thorough monitoring procedures. Support staff produce weekly reports on students' attendance and information on pass and retention rates. However, staff have little confidence in the system and, despite improvements, many are unwilling to use it because of failures in the past.

31. All staff have an annual training and development review at which their training requirements are discussed. Staff development opportunities are extensive. There is an effective programme of induction for new teachers. Major strategic objectives and initiatives, such as improving teaching, are supported by a programme of staff development which is well resourced. The college's self-assessment report appropriately identifies the need for a separate, more focused system of staff appraisal.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on GCE A-level science courses
- good retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate science course
- good progress to HE programmes
- very effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on many GCE A-level courses
- low pass rates on some mathematics courses
- inappropriate teaching methods in some lessons
- insufficient sharing of good practice among teachers.

Scope of provision

32. The college provides a range of courses in the sciences and mathematics, including GCE AS and A levels in physics, biology, chemistry and mathematics, and vocational science courses at intermediate and advanced level. Two GCE A-level chemistry syllabuses are offered to meet the differing needs of students. Students who do not meet the entry requirements for GCSE mathematics are able to study for the level 1 or level 2 application of number key skill qualification. Over 50 adults are studying GCSE mathematics during the evening.

Achievement and standards

33. Pass rates for GCE A-level biology and physics are good. Pass rates are particularly high in chemistry, where the grades obtained by many students are higher than those predicted on the basis of their performance at GCSE. However, retention rates declined on all GCE A-level science courses in 2001. In 2001, the pass rates on GCE AS biology and chemistry courses were satisfactory, at 86% and 82% respectively, but the pass rates on GCE AS mathematics and physics courses were low at 39% and 65%. The pass and retention rates on the GNVQ science course are good at intermediate level, and are satisfactory at advanced level. Pass rates on the GCSE

mathematics course have improved, but remain below the national average. Many students who successfully complete their courses progress to HE programmes.

34. The standard of work achieved by many students is good. In particular, students' coursework in chemistry shows that they have good communication and IT skills and have done independent research. Teachers mark students' work accurately, but do not always show students how to improve their work. Students are set attainment targets based on the qualifications they hold when they start their college courses. Teachers in biology and chemistry monitor the progress being made by their students carefully and seek to remedy any underachievement. The monitoring and subsequent actions taken by teachers in physics and mathematics are less effective.

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	251	201	202
		% retention	73	73	74
		% pass rate	13	32	36
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	89	69	97
		% retention	78	78	68
		% pass rate	82	94	94
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	74	77	91
		% retention	72	84	59
		% pass rate	100	98	100
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	169	92	114
		% retention	69	72	67
		% pass rate	64	76	77
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	54	44	47
		% retention	67	68	57
		% pass rate	81	84	88
GNVQ advanced science	3	No. of starts	19	29	35
		% retention	79	90	71
		% pass rate	93	88	75

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

Quality of education and training

35. Most teaching in science and mathematics is satisfactory or better. In the majority of lessons, most students are attentive and work effectively, often helping each other when appropriate. In many biology lessons, teachers introduce new topics carefully, and provide clear explanations and well-produced notes. Experimental work in chemistry is carefully planned to ensure that students remain motivated and develop appropriate practical skills. Students enjoyed a revision lesson on genetics, during which they took part in a well-planned and managed role-play exercise designed to reinforce their understanding of gene control. In some lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to the wide range of students' abilities of the students present. Some teachers talk for too long without checking students' understanding. In some physics lessons, teachers did not ensure that students had understood one topic before introducing another, and some students found it difficult to cope with the work. Teachers make too little use of IT to enliven teaching and learning. In one lesson,

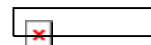
students were expected to use the Internet to search for information for a biology assignment, but most did not have the necessary IT skills to do this. In some mathematics lessons, the late arrival of some students hindered their progress. There are no formal mechanisms for sharing good practice among the teaching staff.

36. The algebraic and numerical skills of some students on mathematics and physics courses are low. Teachers have responded by providing additional mathematics lessons to help those students who are studying GCE A-level physics, but who are not studying GCE A-level mathematics. Students speak highly about the support provided by their teachers, and teachers often provide help to students outside timetabled lessons. Students applying to study medicine at university, benefit from a scheme which enables them to meet students from local medical schools, including former students of the college. Teachers are well qualified and have a good knowledge of their subjects.

Leadership and management

37. All the staff are committed to equality of opportunity. Managers and teachers are sensitive to the cultural needs of students. For example, the chemistry safety policy acknowledges the head covering worn by many female Muslim students. Annual course reviews are lengthy and cumbersome. Self-assessment failed to identify some weaknesses in teaching and retention and pass rates. However, teachers recognised the need for better curriculum planning to support lower attaining students studying GCE AS mathematics and the department now offers different combinations of modules to meet their needs.

Business studies



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

Strengths

- good range of vocational and academic courses
- good retention and pass rates on vocational courses
- good progression to HE
- much good teaching.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on some GCE A-level courses

- low standards achieved by some students in lessons
- some poor assessment practice.

Scope of provision

38. The college provides a good range of full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18, including GCE AS and A levels in business studies, economics and accounting, and GNVQs at foundation and intermediate levels. The GNVQ advanced course has now been replaced by the AVCE. Evening courses for adults include NVQs in accounting at levels 2 and 3, and GCE AS business studies. There are 457 students aged 16 to 18 and 28 adult students studying for qualifications in business subjects.

Achievement and standards

39. Retention and pass rates on vocational courses are good. All students who started the GNVQ foundation course achieved the qualification. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate course is high and the pass rate has improved to about the national average. Pass rates on the GNVQ advanced course were good in 1999 and 2000, but declined in 2001. Its replacement, a two-year AVCE course, is not proving as successful. Of those who started the course in 2000, only 67% are still attending. Pass rates on most GCE A-level courses are less than satisfactory. Although the pass rate for GCE A-level business studies has improved recently, it remains below the national average. In 2001, only 33% of the students starting the GCE A-level economics course gained the qualification. The pass rate on the GCE A-level accounting course improved in 2001, but remains low. Many students who successfully complete level 3 qualifications progress to HE.

40. In many lessons, students do not achieve the standards expected of them, and have difficulty in completing the work set in the time available. Students' written work is generally satisfactory, although some of the work produced by students for accounting assignments was of a poor standard. Attendance in most lessons is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	*	*	18
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	100
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	36	37	63
		% retention	81	84	90
		% pass rate	66	61	75
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	135	114	75
		% retention	77	75	73
		% pass rate	59	68	73
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	48	35	38
		% retention	85	74	66

		% pass rate	61	79	50
GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	39	41	37
		% retention	82	73	73
		% pass rate	97	90	78

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

* data unavailable

Quality of education and training

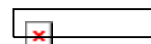
41. Most of the teaching is good. In many lessons, teachers skilfully explained complex business concepts, and provided clear instructions about the work to be carried out. These lessons were well structured, brisk and lively. Teachers checked students' work carefully and expected them to justify their answers and explain their reasoning. In a very effective lesson on the role of packaging as a sales tool, the teacher had brought in a large array of packaged products, which led to a lively and productive discussion about the sorts of messages that the different packages conveyed. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and in many lessons, draw on their own experience and that of the students to illustrate points effectively. In a number of lessons, humour was effectively used to hold the students' attention and to help them to learn. In one ineffective lesson, the teacher failed to give clear instructions to students, or to provide all of them with the information needed to complete their assignment.

42. Some assessment practice is poor. Teachers often fail to provide students with sufficient advice or constructive comments about their assignment work to help them make progress. Records of students' progress and the resulting action plans are often insufficiently detailed to be effective. Most teachers have teaching qualifications and other professional qualifications, and demonstrate awareness of current commercial practice. Some classrooms are too small for the number of students using them. Students have insufficient access to specialist business software and none of the general teaching rooms are equipped with computers.

Leadership and management

43. Courses are managed effectively. The self-assessment report is developed by course teams, drawing on their annual course reviews, and is appropriately self-critical. Managers have recognised that some of the targets set previously for retention and pass rates were unrealistic, and have introduced improved target-setting and action-planning procedures.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- very good pass rates on first and national diploma courses
- teachers' skilful use of everyday examples to illustrate concepts

- good learning materials for first and national diploma students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rate on GCE A-level computing course
- insufficient attention given to the wide range of students' abilities
- low standard of some students' written work.

Scope of provision

44. The college provides a range of computing and IT courses, from level 1 to level 3, including GCE A levels in computing and ICT, and first and national diploma courses. A GNVQ foundation course has been introduced recently. An evening class is offered in web-site programming. There are 266 students enrolled on GCE A-level courses and 396 students enrolled on other courses.

Achievement and standards

45. The pass rate on the national diploma course has been 100% for the last three years. On the first diploma course, retention and pass rates improved in 2001 and are both well above the national averages. Pass and retention rates on the GCE A-level IT course are broadly in line with national averages. However, the pass rate on the GCE A-level computing course has been consistently poor over the last three years. The college has acknowledged this weakness and has introduced more rigorous entry procedures. Some of the written work produced by students on the GCE A-level computing course lacks the depth of analysis required at this level. Most students are able to talk about their work clearly and articulately, and are skilled at using the Internet.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First diploma IT	2	No. of starts	17	19	19
		% retention	94	79	89
		% pass rate	94	80	94
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	46	37	57
		% retention	61	78	77
		% pass rate	64	67	57
GCE A-level IT	3	No. of starts	36	46	56
		% retention	83	83	73

		% pass rate	93	84	83
National diploma computer studies	3	No. of starts	17	20	37
		% retention	94	100	70
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

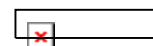
46. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers explain the aims and objectives of lessons clearly. Many also explain technical concepts clearly, and enliven topics by making good use of real life examples. In one lesson, students effectively related IT concepts to the business analysis of a large retailing organisation. In another lesson, students made good use of the Internet whilst undertaking an assignment to plan the travel arrangements for people attending a wedding. Teachers frequently emphasise and reiterate basic concepts and important technical terms during their lessons. However, some teachers give insufficient attention to the wide range of abilities among students in the class. Students of lower ability are often left struggling to cope with the work, while more able students are not given enough to do and become inattentive. In a minority of lessons, teachers did not cover the topic in sufficient depth, and students failed to reach the required standard.

47. Students studying for first and national diploma qualifications have access to good course materials on the college's intranet. The materials include articles about computers, reference manuals for equipment, and photographs taken by students showing, for example, how to use a logic probe. There is a very good range of modern computer hardware and software available to students. Accommodation used by computing students is modern and bright. All teachers are appropriately qualified. Assessment of students' work is good. Homework is set regularly and teachers provide helpful comments and suggestions on how students might improve the standard of their work.

Leadership and management

48. The curriculum area is soundly managed. Teachers meet regularly to review their courses and to monitor progress towards the targets in their action plans. Realistic procedures have been put in place to improve the GCE A-level computing pass rates. Academic tutors have been identified to oversee the progress of students who have different teachers for each module of their course. The outcomes from the college's lesson observation scheme are not used to improve the standard of teaching and learning.

Health, social care and childcare



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on full-time courses
- good teaching

- good progression rates
- good leadership.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on NVQ courses
- inadequate links between theory and practice.

Scope of provision

49. There is a broad range of courses in health and social care. Full-time courses, aimed primarily at students aged 16 to 18, include GNVQs, the AVCE in health and social care, and the certificate and diploma in childcare and education. Part-time courses, aimed primarily at adult students, include NVQs at level 2 and 3 in early years care and education.

Achievement and standards

50. The pass rates on most courses are good, and a few are outstanding. The pass rate on the diploma in childcare and education has been consistently outstanding for the last three years. In 2001, all students who started the GNVQ foundation course in health and social care gained the qualification. Retention rates on most courses are at least satisfactory, and some are well above national averages. The demand for NVQ courses is low: only 14 students were enrolled on such courses completing in 2001, and pass rates were poor. Many students aged 16 to 18 progress from the GNVQ foundation course to level 2 courses, and the majority of students from the certificate in childcare and education course progress to the level 3 diploma course, with the remainder gaining relevant employment.

51. The standard of most students' work is good. Written work demonstrates a satisfactory or good understanding of subjects. For example, at foundation level, students demonstrate a particularly good understanding of human growth and development, and assignment work shows satisfactory competence in the use of IT. Students on advanced level courses are able to analyse and synthesise information in the way that would be expected at this level. Attendance in most lessons is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	22	15	17
		% retention	77	93	100
		% pass rate	82	86	100

GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	34	37	17
		% retention	88	78	88
		% pass rate	90	76	83
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	*	*	17
		% retention	*	*	76
		% pass rate	*	*	85
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	14	19	21
		% retention	79	79	76
		% pass rate	82	87	85
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	29	37	22
		% retention	83	73	82
		% pass rate	100	100	94

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

52. Teaching in most lessons is good or better. Many lessons are well planned and teachers ensure that students achieve the learning objectives which have been set. Many teachers structure their lessons so that students of all abilities are able to make progress. Students are encouraged to improve their thinking, speaking and listening skills. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. In one lesson, students from the first year of the diploma in childcare and education analysed creative work they had completed earlier in the day. They used analytical and communication skills to successfully identify which early learning goals had been covered by the activity. Teachers often make references to practical workplace activities to help students understand theoretical concepts. However, in some lessons, such references were insufficiently precise or too infrequent to be helpful. For example, in one lesson, students' understanding of technical words and terms was held back by the lack of practical illustrations. Teachers include issues relating to race, gender, disability, confidentiality and dignity in their lessons.

53. Most of the accommodation is good and well equipped with teaching aids. Rooms are light and airy and well maintained. Students have access to computers, but teachers rarely use IT in their lessons. Some teachers lack vocational qualifications and experience. Most assessment is thorough and fair. Students' assignments are marked well and comments made by teachers help students to improve their work. Internal verification is rigorous, well recorded and includes very constructive feedback to assessors. All full-time students are set target grades, but the college system has not been adapted to meet the particular needs of vocational qualifications.

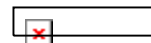
54. The weekly tutorials are informative and supportive. Reviews of students' progress take place once a term. Tutors produce a helpful bulletin that keeps students up to date with information about assessment requirements. However, the progress being made by students on level 2 and 3 courses during learning support sessions, is not considered during their reviews. Students receive appropriate help in developing key skills.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are good. Teachers work effectively in teams. There are regular team meetings that include a standing item on raising standards. Actions are agreed and deadlines specified. There are effective procedures for sharing good teaching practice. There are accurate records of assessment outcomes, achievements and destinations for all students on full-time

courses. Teachers have succeeded in arranging many effective work placements for students. Links with community organisations are being extended.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on many courses
- very good teaching
- attention given to equality of opportunity
- very effective guidance and support for students
- well-managed curriculum.

Weaknesses

- declining retention rates on some two-year courses.

Scope of provision

56. The college provides a good range of courses aimed primarily at students aged 16 to 18. Courses include GNVQ intermediate art and design, first diploma in performing arts, national diploma in performing arts, GCE AS and A levels in fine arts, media, design and technology, graphic design, fashion and textiles, performing arts and photography. There are 542 students on courses in this curriculum area.

Achievement and standards

57. There are outstanding pass rates on many courses, including the first and national diplomas in performing arts, and many GCE AS and A-level courses. The pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate course has improved and is now above the national average. Although retention rates on most courses are at, or above, the national average, they declined on some two-year courses over the

last three years. Statistics provided by the college show that these rates have improved in the current year.

58. Students produce work of a good standard in workshops and studios. They develop a high level of confidence through assignments and performances. Attendance rates in lessons are high. Many students who complete their courses progress to higher level courses within the college or to HE programmes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	16	18	16
		% retention	88	78	94
		% pass rate	64	71	93
First diploma performing arts	2	No. of starts	22	18	17
		% retention	73	78	76
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	67	57	64
		% retention	82	67	73
		% pass rate	95	97	100
GCE A-level graphical design	3	No. of starts	20	19	20
		% retention	90	84	70
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	19	21	20
		% retention	74	81	75
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

59. Much of the teaching is very good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons well, and make effective use of reference materials and visual aids. Notably, lesson plans include alternative approaches to accommodate the different cultural backgrounds of students. Teachers have developed excellent professional relationships with their students and much emphasis is placed on confidence building and recognising individuality. Students develop good practical skills and a sound theoretical understanding of their subject. Skills in time management and working with others are also developed effectively. This is most evident in performing arts and media, where much of the practical work is in groups, and co-operation, mutual respect and trust are fostered effectively and used to the benefit of the whole group. In a GCE AS performance studies lesson on the development of American music, students discussed, with confidence, the writing and performance of 'Summertime' from Porgy and Bess. The teacher skilfully led the students' discussion on the cultural conflicts of the period.

60. There are good specialist resources. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. The support provided by technicians is good. The department is accommodated in a recently refurbished building that provides a stimulating environment for teaching and learning, but some rooms lack effective ventilation and sufficient storage space. There is good accommodation for performing arts and music, although lack of storage space for equipment spoils an otherwise good rehearsal hall.

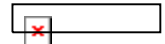
61. Assessment procedures are effective and meet awarding body requirements. Coursework is marked regularly and students receive helpful written comments on their work. Grades are properly recorded and internal verification is thorough. Students are kept informed of their progress and are given regular advice and guidance on how to improve the standard of their work.

62. The support and guidance provided to students is very effective. Rigorous admission procedures ensure that students choose the most appropriate course. Much work has been done to improve induction programmes and an effective tutorial system has been established. Feedback from students shows high levels of satisfaction with academic guidance and pastoral care.

Leadership and management

63. The courses are well managed. Staff teams monitor the quality of their courses carefully. The self-assessment process is thorough. Effective use is made of available finances to improve the working environment and equipment to the benefit of both teachers and students.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on most GCE AS courses in 2001
- high pass rate on GCE A-level general studies
- strong tutorial support
- comprehensive workbooks in many subjects
- good progression to HE.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates on many GCE A-level courses
- poor attendance and punctuality in many lessons

- insufficient use of IT in the curriculum
- inadequate quality assurance.

Scope of provision

64. The college provides GCE AS and A-level courses in a wide range of humanities subjects, including psychology, sociology, history, geography, law, philosophy, government and politics. All full-time students include GCE AS and A-level general studies within their courses. A small number of adult students study law, psychology and sociology in the evenings.

Achievement and standards

65. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 has enabled the college to provide an interim step towards GCE A levels for full-time students. The average retention rate on GCE AS courses of over 85% in 2001, is a significant improvement on the retention rates during the first year of traditional GCE A-level programmes over the previous two years. The pass rates on many of the GCE AS courses and on the GCE A-level general studies courses are good. However, the retention and pass rates for many other GCE A-level subjects are below national averages. In 2001, over 70% of students who successfully completed GCE A-level humanities programmes progressed to HE.

66. Students' work during lessons is generally of an appropriate standard. In many lessons, students express their views clearly and confidently in debates and discussions. In one general studies lesson, a group of students engaged in a well-informed discussion on the introduction of the Euro, and its impact on commerce and industry in Britain and the rest of Europe. Law students, considering aspects of offences against the person, were able to understand difficult legal concepts and to use appropriate technical vocabulary accurately. In some lessons, the more confident students dominated the discussions and less confident students failed to participate. Students' written work is generally of an appropriate standard. It is usually well presented, but students rarely use IT to produce their assignments.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level general studies	3	No. of starts	*	*	272
		% retention	*	*	64
		% pass rate	*	*	81
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	86	82	76
		% retention	76	82	72
		% pass rate	53	58	52
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	37	63	38
		% retention	89	70	71
		% pass rate	82	76	71

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

67. Overall, teaching in humanities subjects is satisfactory, and some is good. Most teachers plan and structure their lessons well, and ensure students are able to participate in the learning activities. They use exposition, debate and group work to give variety to lessons. For example, in one very effective history lesson, the teacher used a well-planned sequence of appropriate activities which kept students busy and attentive for the full 95-minute period. Teachers often use questions effectively to check that students have understood what is being taught. In a sociology lesson, the teacher used careful questioning to encourage students to think about possible topics and research methods for their forthcoming assignments. However, in some lessons, group work was insufficiently focused, and students were not clear about what they had to do. Due to some poor planning, some teachers did not control discussions adequately, leading to a lack of clear conclusions. In a few lessons, the tasks set were insufficiently challenging, and students lost interest quickly. In some lessons, teachers failed to reinforce learning before moving on to the next topic. Teachers have produced comprehensive workbooks for many modules which contain relevant learning materials, questions, bibliographies and prompts.

68. Assignments set for students are appropriate. They vary in complexity and require students to develop the necessary presentation skills. The assessment criteria are clearly set out and students understand what they need to do to achieve a high grade. Marked work is generally returned to students promptly, often with supportive and constructive comments. Teachers are careful to correct errors of spelling and grammar, and give students useful advice on essay construction.

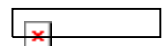
69. Students speak highly of the support they receive from teachers and personal tutors. Group tutorials are used to cover such things as preparation for work, health issues and applications for HE programmes. Students have termly individual tutorials to discuss their progress. Careers and progression advice is effective. Attendance and punctuality were poor during the week of the inspection. However, the registers for the autumn term revealed higher levels of attendance in other weeks.

70. All humanities teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Some classrooms are too small for the number of students using them and limit the range of learning activities possible. Most rooms have relevant displays such as posters, exam board requirements, students' work and articles from newspapers and journals. There are sufficient books in the library for all subjects, although a small number are out of date. There are sufficient computers for private study, but none is available for use in classrooms.

Leadership and management

71. There are weaknesses in the management of humanities courses which have resulted in an insufficiently coherent approach to quality assurance, and considerable variation in the quality of schemes of work. Lesson observation is insufficiently developed. Course teams do not address the quality of teaching and learning in their self-assessment reports and have failed to appreciate the importance of the low retention and pass rates on many GCE A-level courses. Subject and curriculum area teams have recently begun to meet regularly. Minutes are kept and the teams are beginning to pay more attention to quality assurance. All staff demonstrate a high level of awareness of equality of opportunity in their course planning, and in the way they conduct lessons.

English language and literature



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on GCE AS courses
- confident student responses during class discussion
- good personal support for learners
- good accommodation, materials and resources.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GCE A-level courses
- some ineffective teaching
- some excessively long lessons.

Scope of provision

72. The college provides GCE AS and A-level courses in English language, English literature, English language and literature, and GCSE English. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and study full time. The GCSE English course is also offered to adults during the evening.

Achievement and standards

73. The retention and pass rates on the newly introduced GCE AS courses are good. However, the pass rates on GCE A-level courses in English language and English literature have declined over the last few years and are below national averages. Retention rates on two-year courses are broadly in line with the national averages. Many students completing GCE A-level courses achieve lower grades than those predicted from their GCSE results. The proportion of students gaining the GCSE English qualification improved in 2001, following the introduction of more demanding course entry requirements.

74. Many students are able to express their ideas fluently and with an appropriate use of illustrative examples. Their written work shows that they are encouraged to develop and express a personal response to literature, although the work of some students is undermined by weaknesses in sentence structure.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	205	204	177
		% retention	71	72	80
		% pass rate	41	43	56
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	42	43	35
		% retention	71	70	86
		% pass rate	89	73	73
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	78	74	64
		% retention	84	80	80
		% pass rate	89	83	78

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

Quality of education and training

75. Most of the teaching in English is satisfactory or better. Most lessons are well planned and learning objectives are made clear to students. Teachers help their students to develop analytical and language skills through well-managed group work. They orchestrate valuable discussions and ask penetrating questions. Many students' responses are confident and display a sophisticated understanding of the subject. In a lesson on editorial writing, the teacher skilfully used the responses to a mock examination question to point out common errors. Students are familiar with the assessment criteria for their courses and use them to plan their work. They devise individual action plans to assist them in preparing for the final examination. In some less effective lessons, only the more confident students answered questions. Students usually work in the same groups and so miss opportunities to interact with a wider range of fellow students.

76. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Their breadth of knowledge allows most of them to teach across the range of English courses. The teaching is well supported by an extensive, relevant book stock and attractive study packs produced by teachers. Classrooms are attractive. Students have adequate access to personal computers to undertake research and word process their assignments, but teachers rarely use IT to enliven their teaching. The duration of many lessons is too long, resulting in some students becoming inattentive. Students often have to attend consecutive long lessons without a break.

77. Syllabuses and texts are well chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of students. The range of works studied includes writing by black and Asian writers, as well as classic English texts. This combination elicits a good response from students. Teachers' annotations on students' work generally identify areas for improvement in a helpful manner, and assessment is at an appropriate level.

78. Students appreciate the good academic and personal support provided by their teachers. Students on advanced level courses receive additional lessons to introduce appropriate linguistic and literary skills, concepts and terminology. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of their students and, in GCSE lessons, teachers are beginning to focus more formally on their differing needs. Teachers review students' progress regularly and thoroughly. Progress is formally reported to parents three times a year.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management of the English courses are sound. Teachers work closely together to review and improve their courses. A review of courses on which results were poor has resulted in the withdrawal of some evening courses and an increase in entry requirements. Some of the targets

set for pass and retention rates have proved to be unrealistic.

Part D: College data

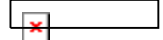
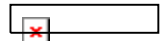


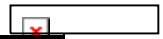
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	6	52
2	14	14
3	66	7
4/5	0	0
Other	14	27
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	2,438	214	33
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	0
Business	431	62	6
Hotel and catering	102	24	2
Health and community care	98	28	2
Art and design	456	11	6
Humanities	3,533	121	45
Basic education	197	251	6
Total	7,255	711	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+		
		1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 00	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 00
		1	Starters excluding transfers	202	275	416	407
	Retention rate (%)	87	71	82	86	34	69
	National average (%)	78	81	82	72	69	74
	Pass rate (%)	80	86	81	68	69	93
	National average (%)	69	71	77	67	75	76
2	Starters excluding transfers	881	658	824	203	160	67
	Retention rate (%)	86	77	78	65	66	70
	National average (%)	79	80	82	71	71	75
	Pass rate (%)	92	87	80	75	77	70
	National average (%)	84	85	82	75	77	77
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,501	1,625	2,278	91	110	153
	Retention rate (%)	84	77	77	64	53	58
	National average (%)	77	78	80	62	65	69
	Pass rate (%)	82	79	84	59	59	51
	National average (%)	86	85	85	69	71	74

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 1997/8 - 1998/9: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

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

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	64	30	6	103
Level 2 (intermediate)	61	30	9	23
Level 1 (foundation)	60	40	0	10
Totals	63	31	6	136

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2002. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

School inspection reports are available on the OFSTED website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

