



HARROW COLLEGE

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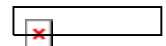
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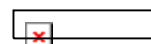
Basic information about the college



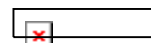
Name of college:	Harrow College
Type of college:	Tertiary College
Principal:	Dr Barbara Field
Address of college:	Harrow Weald Campus Brookshill Harrow Weald Middlesex HA3 6RR

Telephone number:	0208 909 6000
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Chair of governors:	Trevor Bumfrey
Unique reference number:	131864
Name of reporting inspector:	Tony Noonan HMI
Date of inspection:	14-18 January 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



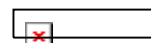
Harrow College is a medium-sized tertiary college situated in the outer London Borough of Harrow. It came into being as the result of the merger of Greenhill College and Weald College in August 1999. The merger was driven by strategic considerations, which included the need to improve the range and quality of provision to school-leavers, adults and the local business community and to reverse the drift of 16-year-olds to educational establishments outside the borough.

Harrow College is one of eight colleges in the London West Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area. The Borough of Harrow has a tertiary system of education. Staying-on rates for school pupils are high, at 85%. Unemployment is relatively low, except in some parts of the neighbouring London Borough of Brent. The college's vision is for Harrow College to be a centre of excellence and provide a focus for the development of new learning opportunities for the community.

The college is organised into a sixth form centre and a lifelong learning centre. Since July 2001, it has operated from two main campuses in Harrow-on-the-Hill and Harrow Weald, as well as approximately 40 outreach and community-based centres. The college offers a broad range of programmes for school-leavers and adults. In 2000/01, 55% of students aged 16 to 18 studied for level 3 qualifications and 30% for level 2 qualifications. The distribution of qualifications studied by adult students was more evenly spread between all levels. The bulk of the student enrolments in 2000/01 were in science, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), business, art and design, basic education and humanities curriculum areas.

There were 17,446 student enrolments in 2000/01, comprising approximately equal numbers of students aged 16 to 18 and adult students. In 1999/2000, the ethnic profile of the student population included 38% of students identifying themselves as white, 33% as Asian (the majority of whom were Indian) and 9% as black.

How effective is the college?



The college is effective in providing a broad range of courses that meet the needs of the local

to higher education (HE) and teacher training, and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Provision in business, computing and information technology (IT), leisure and tourism and sports, hairdressing and beauty therapy, art and design, social studies, English and English as a foreign language (EFL) was satisfactory. Provision for mathematics, and health and social care and early years, was judged to be unsatisfactory.

Key strengths

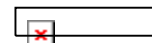
- clear strategic vision, following a successfully managed merger
- open and consultative management
- much effective teaching
- broad range of courses responsive to local needs
- strong support for students
- good rates of progression from one course to another and to HE.

What should be improved

- examination results on some courses
- quality of teaching in a number of curriculum areas
- accuracy and use of data on students' retention and pass rates
- delivery of key skills
- course provision in mathematics and health, social care and early years.

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

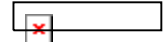


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Sciences	Good. Retention and pass rates on all level 2 courses are high. The teaching of practical work is good. A high proportion of students progress to science-related degree courses and many ESOL students move on to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and advanced courses. Low retention and pass rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) physics.
Mathematics	Unsatisfactory. The pass rate for GCE A-level mathematics is low. The standard of some students' coursework is also low. Lessons are sometimes poorly planned and taught. Course management is unsatisfactory. Students receive good individual support.
Business	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on GCE A-level business and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate courses, but low pass rates on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) administration and accounting courses. Retention rates on vocational courses vary considerably. In some lessons, the work was not sufficiently demanding for students. A high proportion of students progress to other further education (FE) courses or to HE. Teachers provide strong personal support for students.
Computing and information technology	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in ICT and GCE A-level ICT courses, but low pass rates on GNVQ A-level computing courses. Retention rates are generally in line with the national average and high on most part-time introductory programmes for adults. Students' technical skills are developed well. Teachers fail to meet the individual needs of students in some lessons.
Leisure, tourism and sport	Satisfactory. Examination results are good in GCE A-level physical education. Pass rates on GNVQ advanced and NVQ courses, however, are low. A high proportion of students progress from intermediate to advanced courses and to HE. On sports courses, practical demonstrations are used effectively in helping students to learn. There is some poor teaching of key skills. Work-based learners' achievements are poor.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are low on some courses. Accommodation and resources are good, although, the hairdressing salon is too small for some practical lessons.

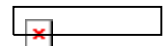
Health, social care and early years	Unsatisfactory. There are low pass rates on many courses and few work-based learners complete their modern apprenticeship frameworks. Pass rates on early years NVQ level 2 are high. There is much unsatisfactory teaching and curriculum management is weak. There is effective tutorial support for students.
Art and design	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high and improving, but pass rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses are low. Teachers set suitably demanding and stimulating tasks, and there is a good use of visits to enhance students' learning. Accommodation and equipment are good.
Performing arts, music and media	Good. Pass and retention rates are high on GCE A-level drama, media and AVCE media courses. The curriculum meets the needs of the local community. Teaching is lively and imaginative. Resources and accommodation for media are good, but there is poor accommodation for drama and music.
Humanities	Good. Retention and pass rates for GCE A-level government and politics are high. In 2001, there were also high pass rates in GCE A-level history, law and economics. Retention rates in GCE A-level law and economics are low. Most teaching is good. There are good relations between students and teachers and students' progress is monitored effectively.
Social studies	Satisfactory. In GCE A-level psychology, pass rates are high and much of the teaching is good. In sociology, however, some of the teaching is poor and only a low proportion of GCE A-level students achieve higher grades. Some social studies students produce coursework of a low standard. In many cases, students arrive late for their lessons.
English and English as a foreign language	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high on most courses. There are also high pass rates on GCE A-level English language and English literature courses. Much of the teaching is effective although, in some lessons teachers failed to check whether students had learned the material covered. There were some inadequacies in the management of EFL provision.
Access to HE and teacher training	Good. Retention rates are high on most courses. Pass rates on some professional courses were low. There was much good teaching. A high proportion of access students progresses to HE. There is a wide range of courses and flexible forms of study to suit the needs of adult students.
English for speakers of other languages	Good. There is a diverse range of ESOL provision and good progression routes for students. Most teaching is good or very good. The provision is well managed and resources, with the exception of some learning materials, are good.
Basic skills	Good. Pass and retention rates are high. Teaching is effective and well planned. The curriculum meets learners' needs, although progression routes are not fully developed. The adult learning centre is an excellent resource. However, there is inadequate access to suitable facilities at the Harrow Weald Campus. The provision is well managed.
Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. Retention and pass rates are high. Teachers and support staff are very effective in supporting students. Students have ready access to good college facilities and equipment, and a high proportion of students progresses to other courses. Teachers fail to extend some students in a minority of lessons. The provision is well managed.

How well is the college led and managed?



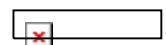
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The merger of two previous colleges in 1999 was well managed and Harrow College is developing a distinct identity. Strategic aims are clear. There is an open and consultative management style with good internal communication. The work of governors is effective. The quality assurance framework of the college is comprehensive, but is not having enough impact on raising the students' achievements. Information on students' retention and pass rates is not always accurate and is not being used effectively in some curriculum areas.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



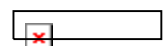
The college's approach to inclusion is good. The college has a wide range of courses that meet the needs of the local community. There is good provision to raise the basic skills of adults. A high proportion of ESOL students progress to further courses. Links with local schools focus on attracting school pupils to study at the college, and encouraging all students to do well in their GCSE examinations. The college's admissions process is comprehensive and it is described by students as welcoming. Students are well supported by teachers and other staff. Equal opportunity issues are dealt with sympathetically, although there is not enough monitoring and evaluation of equal opportunities policies. The college has strong links with schools for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and adult day centres. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good teaching and achieve well, particularly those with a hearing impairment.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students and trainees receive good support from tutors and other staff. The admissions process is effective and the college has strong links with local schools. Induction helps students to settle into their courses quickly. Teachers and other staff are supportive and friendly towards students. Guidance and advice on applying to HE are helpful and a high proportion of students progress to HE. There is good feedback on students' progress to parents and employers. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

Students' views of the college



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

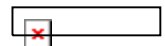
What students like about the college

- help and support from college staff
- pleasant and friendly atmosphere
- availability of ICT facilities
- wide choice of courses
- many sporting and enrichment activities.

What they feel could be improved

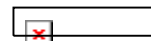
- social areas for students
- periods of time between some lessons
- price of food in the canteen
- amount of private study space.

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



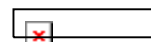
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	53	38	9
19+ and WBL*	71	24	5
Learning 16-18	49	36	15
19+ and WBL*	64	29	7

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 learners

Achievement and standards



1. Harrow College offers a broad range of provision from pre-entry level to level 4. There are: 35 GCE Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) and GCE A-level subjects; 18 AVCE and GNVQ intermediate courses; approximately 1,000 adult education courses and 7 access to HE courses; ESOL and EFL courses at all levels. Approximately 80 specialist courses are provided for students with a range of learning difficulties, including physical disabilities, hearing or sight impairment and profound disabilities.
2. The GCE A-level pass rate was 84% in 2001, a rise from 82.5% in the previous year. The average points score for each candidate was 12.3. Students achieve well in such subjects as GCE A-level business, ICT, English language, English literature, physical education, psychology, drama, media studies, history, government and politics, economics and law. Poor results were obtained in 2001 for some GCE A-level subjects, including mathematics, physics, computing, and art and design.
3. Pass rates on most GNVQ advanced programmes are high. Value added analysis, which compares the final results of students with their GCSE entry qualifications, indicates that students on all GNVQ advanced programmes achieved better than might have been expected in the light of their previous achievements. Pass rates for intermediate or foundation programmes are mainly below the national averages for similar colleges. The achievement of work-based learners is poor in health, social care and early years, and leisure, tourism and sports.
4. Students on most courses are set goals and targets that are reviewed regularly. GCE A-level students are set a target minimum grade for each subject at the start of their course. All students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those on access to HE courses have detailed individual learning plans that are regularly reviewed. Full-time students have an individual progress review with their tutor three times a year, using information obtained from subject teachers. These reviews are helpful, but resulting action plans often lack clarity and, in many cases, students' performance targets are not demanding enough. The extent to which target setting raises standards

is not monitored with sufficient care.

5. The overall attendance rate in the lessons observed by inspectors was 73%. This is low compared with that of other colleges and is slightly below the average attendance figure of 76%, given in the college's self-assessment report. During the week of the inspection, there were a number of external examinations taking place for GCE A-level, AVCE and GNVQ students, and this had an adverse effect on the attendance of students in some lessons. Nevertheless, the average attendance of students in some ICT, basic skills, and performing arts, music and media courses is poor.

6. Students' lack of punctuality for lessons disrupted learning in performing arts, music and media and social studies. Tutors maintain registers and there are rigorous procedures for reducing lateness and non-attendance. However, the procedures currently used by the college are clumsy and disruptive to some lessons. Some students prefer to miss the whole lesson, rather than arrive late and then have to complete the form that the college has developed for this purpose.

7. The standard of students' work varies substantially across different curriculum areas. Students carry out good practical laboratory work in science. ICT students use an extensive range of software packages with confidence. Art and design students produce exciting work that extends and develops their skills. Some students on the GNVQ intermediate health and social care course have a poor understanding of childcare development, whereas students on the NVQ in early years demonstrate very good powers of analysis on childcare issues. Attainment is low for some students of GCE A-level mathematics students, particularly those who find basic algebra difficult.

8. The proportion of students from the college progressing to HE is high. Experienced staff are helpful and understanding of students' widely differing aspirations and guide them sensitively in selecting the most appropriate course. The college is an associate college of Middlesex University and the University of Westminster and has close ties with several other universities. In 2001, 705 students applied for, and gained places at universities, representing an 85% success rate for those who applied. The proportion of students progressing from ESOL programmes is also high. For example, out of 119 students who completed the ESOL foundation programme in 2001, 93 students continued their studies on higher-level ESOL courses or other college courses.

16-18 year olds

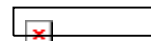
9. Students aged 16 to 18, studying for level 3 qualifications, form the largest group of students in the college. They account for 55% of full-time equivalent enrolments. There is a high retention rate for students following level 3 courses. At 83%, it is above the national average for similar colleges. The aggregated retention rates for level 1 and 2 courses in 2000 are 79% and 77%, respectively. These are in line with national averages.

10. Across the college, the pass rate for students aged 16 to 18 taking level 1 courses in 2000 was low at 52%. This is significantly below that found in similar colleges. Pass rates were 75% for level 2 courses, which is above the national average, and 70% for level 3 students, which is in line with the national average. Pass rates have shown an upward trend over the last three years at levels 1 and 2, but they have dropped slightly at level 3.

Adult learners

11. Retention rates for adult students are in line with those in similar colleges. Overall, retention rates for level 1, 2 and 3 students in 2000 were 82%, 76% and 77%, respectively. Overall, pass rates for adult students are significantly below national averages at all levels. There is an upward trend in level 1 and level 2 pass rates, but the level 3 rate has fallen from 52% in 1998, to 48% in 2000.

Quality of education and training



12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 255 sessions. Some 58% of the teaching was judged to be good or better, 34% was satisfactory and 8% was unsatisfactory. A relatively small amount of teaching was judged to be outstanding; it amounted to some 2%, predominantly in performing arts, music and media. Much of the good and very good teaching was in English and EFL, basic skills, psychology, ESOL, access to HE and teacher training, and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in most of the curriculum areas, but particularly in mathematics, business, leisure, tourism and sports, health, social care and early years, and sociology.

13. Teaching for adult students was judged to be good or better in a higher proportion of lessons than for students aged 16 to 18. There was also less unsatisfactory teaching for adults. Lessons with the highest proportion of good and very good teaching were for level 1 students. Lessons for level 2 students had the highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and less teaching that was judged to be at least good.

14. Students and staff benefit from well-maintained accommodation on both campuses. The quality of college buildings varies. There is some good purpose-built accommodation and some good refurbished accommodation, such as that provided by the design, art and technology building at the Harrow Weald campus. Other accommodation is less attractive; for example, the classrooms in the pre-fabricated buildings, in which a significant amount of teaching takes place. The adult learners' centre at the Harrow-on-the-Hill campus is an excellent learning environment, in which adult students can improve their basic skills.

15. There are some good specialist facilities in areas such as art and design, media studies and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Facilities are inadequate in performing arts and music, and there is a lack of sports facilities for leisure, tourism and sports students, who have to rely on external facilities. Many communal areas have attractive posters, for example, posters presenting cameos of former students. However, there is insufficient display of students' work in many teaching areas.

16. Learning resource centres are situated on the two main campuses. They contain a variety of resources, including ICT, audiovisual materials, books and periodicals. The centres provide suitable areas for group work and are well managed by professionally qualified librarians. Learning support advisers are available to assist students using ICT and other equipment. The lack of social areas for college students curtails the effectiveness of the learning centres, as students often use the centres inappropriately as meeting places. The private study areas in the learning resource centres are too small to cope with the demand from students. The college has invested heavily in computers for students, teachers and support staff. There are good up-to-date machines for students to use, most of which provide access to the Internet. Staff rooms have a number of machines, giving access to the college's intranet and facilities for sending and receiving e-mail. There is little use of ICT to promote learning within classrooms.

17. Teachers are generally well qualified and knowledgeable about their subject area. Over 90% of full-time staff have a teaching qualification and there are good opportunities for unqualified new staff to gain a teaching certificate. The college is committed strongly to support the professional development of all staff. Following the merger, a well-structured management development programme was initiated with an emphasis on developing unified teams across the formerly separate organisations. Teachers in business, EFL and leisure, tourism and sports have a need for commercial and subject updating.

18. Across the college, about one quarter of teaching is undertaken by hourly paid staff contracted through an employment agency, particularly in adult curriculum areas. Agency staff teaching EFL are not paid to be involved in course planning and review, which detracts from the smooth running of these courses. A high turnover of staff in the IT and health and social care curriculum areas has disrupted the continuity of teaching.

19. The college offers a wide range of courses and opportunities for progression to school-leavers and adults. In a minority of cases, there are gaps in the provision. For example, students on the City and Guilds visual basic course have no progression route to level 3 in this area of work. The college does not offer provision in some areas of learning, for example, in construction and engineering. Prospective students for these curriculum areas are directed to courses at nearby colleges. There is very little duplication of curriculum provision between the two main college campuses, apart from computing provision, business and science courses and GCSE English and mathematics courses.

20. The prospectus and other publicity materials are well presented. They give prospective students clear information about the college and the subjects on offer. Potential students are able to attend college open days and taster days, which they find helpful in deciding whether to pursue their applications.

21. The college has strong links with local schools and staff routinely visit them to talk to pupils about the opportunities for progression. Over 60% of the school-leavers aged 16 that continue into FE from Harrow high schools choose Harrow College. A school-link programme for disaffected pupils is designed to promote positive attitudes to learning and encourage these pupils to continue with their education and training at the college after they leave school. Another project entails college staff visiting schools to assist able pupils who are expected to do well in science, mathematics and English GCSEs.

22. Enrolment to the college is open throughout the year. Effective three-day induction programmes are held, during which full-time and many part-time students take initial assessment tests to identify any additional learning needs, particularly in communication and numeracy. Generally, students who need additional support receive it. However, this year almost half of the students started their course after the main induction week had finished and many of them were not tested. The college does not monitor or evaluate the effectiveness the additional support which it provides.

23. All full-time students are allocated a personal tutor. Students receive good support from their tutors and use them as the first point of contact when problems or difficulties arise. Arrangements for part-time students are inconsistent and less systematic. EFL students do not receive regular tutorials.

24. Feedback on students' progress to parents and employers is good. Parents with concerns are encouraged to contact tutors directly. Parents' evenings take place several times a year. Staff give generously of their time and the events are well attended. Employers receive regular information on their employees' progress.

25. There is good, extensive support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Appropriate arrangements are in place for wheelchair users. Individuals with hearing impairment are well supported, with signers available to help them in lessons. Students with dyslexia are not identified or supported so effectively, although staff development activities have been held and guidelines circulated to help staff identify students with this condition. Close links with social services, community organisations and parents ensure that the learning needs of individuals are met. For example, the college works with the charity organisation MENCAP, to identify opportunities for progression that may lead to employment for full-time students who have completed a work skill programme. Over the last two years, nine students with severe learning difficulties have progressed to employment through the partnership.

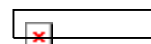
26. Students are increasingly seeking help and guidance from student services staff. The staff provide advice on a wide range of issues. They also arrange financial support and personal counselling, where necessary. There is regular monitoring of the service.

27. Assessment criteria for assignments and other coursework are clearly written and well planned. Students' work is marked regularly. The standard of marking is generally fair and accurate. Most teachers provide helpful comments to indicate to students how the quality of their work could be improved. Feedback to students is not as thorough in mathematics, business, access to HE, and teacher training. Insufficient homework is set in some subjects, for example, in social studies.

28. The college's internal verification procedures are effective. Common documentation has been introduced recently for all programmes of study. External verification reports are analysed carefully by the quality assurance manager. Course teams are then required to agree an action plan covering the findings of these reports, which is then monitored.

29. The college has insufficient links with local organisations. Work-experience opportunities are not available for students on some full-time courses. Work experience is arranged where it is mandatory, but vocational students in some curriculum areas, for example, in science and in health and social care, miss the benefits to learning that work placements bring.

Leadership and management



30. Leadership and management of Harrow College are satisfactory. The college was formed from the merger of the previous Greenhill College and Weald College in August 1999. The merger and the establishment of the new college were well managed. The strategic considerations driving the merger were reflected in the parity of esteem accorded to the staff of each college. Despite the tribulations inevitably stemming from such a venture, the college has made good progress in developing its own identity.

31. The two key factors driving the merger, the need to secure post-16 education in Harrow and the need to improve access to lifelong learning opportunities for adults, are apparent in the clear strategic vision of the college and in its organisational structure. Strategic objectives are used effectively by managers as the context for operational planning. From its inception, the college has been organised around two curriculum centres, the sixth form centre and the lifelong learning centre, each addressing the particular needs of key clients.

32. The college management team and departmental structure were operational from August 2000, with some subsequent changes to address specific areas. Inspectors identified some variations in the effectiveness with which departments and areas of learning were managed. Most were satisfactorily led and managed, but in a minority, such as health and social care and mathematics, inspectors judged that leadership and management were unsatisfactory. In basic skills, science, ESOL, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, leadership and management were good.

33. The principal and senior managers encourage open debate. Staff speak positively of the opportunities they have to speak freely with their managers. Internal communication is good, facilitated by organisational arrangements that are clear and uncomplicated. The principal holds twice-termly staff meetings and senior managers are strongly encouraged to meet staff and discuss issues with them. A staff bulletin and the college managers' weekly e-mail update are valuable sources of information. There is a comprehensive committee structure supporting the work of senior managers, heads of department and assistant heads of department and their staff.

34. Governors, many of whom were governors of the previous colleges, have worked well with managers and staff to help establish the college. They value the contributions of student governors. The work of the curriculum and quality committee of the corporation is particularly effective. It provides a valuable strategic focus for monitoring the quality of teaching, students' achievements and retention rates. It receives detailed written reports from senior managers, and members ask probing questions of areas of under-performance. They clearly understand the importance of their role in addressing the strategic objective of achieving continuous improvement and increasingly they understand the importance of their work in determining the make-up of the college's provision.

35. There is a comprehensive range of measures for quality assurance. The arrangements cover all parts of the college's curriculum, including work-based learning and teaching within the community. Self-assessment is at the centre of the college's improvement strategy. Departmental reports, which

contribute to the college self-assessment report, are informed by an internal scheme for observation of teaching and learning, course evaluation, student questionnaires and an effective complaints procedure. Teachers are observed in the classrooms, to assess the quality of their work. New teachers are observed early in their time at the college. Two hundred classroom observations were carried out in the academic years 2000/01 and 2001/02.

36. Staff development is accessible and used effectively to support staff to improve their work. The views of students are gathered and analysed systematically and the college responds well to any concerns that are raised. In the June 2001 students' survey, 77% of the students responding to the questionnaire indicated that they were satisfied with the teaching methods used, as compared with 65% in 2000. Quality assurance of the business support areas is underdeveloped. Service standards, against which performance can be measured, are being developed, but have not yet been introduced for all areas.

37. There are some imaginative approaches to improving quality. For example, 'focus' and 'beacon' teams have been introduced in teaching departments. The former, which are judged to be failing, are supported in their action plan for improvement by beacon teams, identified for their good practice. Recently, a number of advanced lecturer posts have been created to champion quality in teaching.

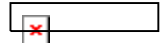
38. Not all of the college's quality assurance arrangements are consistently applied. The outcomes of self-assessment are insufficiently and inconsistently exploited with varying degrees of constructiveness. Many development plans are insufficiently detailed and performance targets are too generally stated. Evidence of target setting as a means of raising retention and pass rates is not always evident from reading the development plans. In some areas of learning, aggregated development plans omit key actions identified for some subject areas. The college's self-assessment report had many strengths and weaknesses with which inspectors agreed. Although there is extensive internal moderation of the judgements in the self-assessment report, there is no external review of these judgements.

39. There is no consistent trend of improvement in key areas of activity. Teaching and learning have not improved since the last inspection. Pass rates are above national averages for students aged 16 to 18, on level 3 courses, but they are below average for level 1 courses. Pass rates for adult students are significantly below national averages at all levels. However, in some areas, such as basic skills and access to HE, adults perform particularly well.

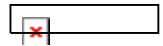
40. Equality of opportunity is promoted appropriately. Students study in a climate where the themes of self-respect and respect for others are stressed. Staff affirm a shared commitment to the values of the organisation, including equality of opportunity. There is a clearly stated equal opportunities policy. The equal opportunities committee actively reviews the policy and associated documents. At the time of the inspection, its priority was to ensure that the college met the requirements of recent disability and race legislation. The committee has also recently considered and recommended policies for staff and student codes of conduct, a parental leave policy and recruitment and selection guidelines. The college conducts an analysis of ethnicity for students at the admissions stage. However, there is no systematic monitoring of the implementation of the equal opportunities policy, especially at course and departmental level. Nor is there an implementation strategy to accompany the policy.

41. Inspectors found that a significant amount of the data on pass and retention rates provided for them by the college were inaccurate. They also found that staff in departments did not all understand the centrally produced college data. The college has recognised the need to improve the reliability of, and access to, management information on students. A new student record system was introduced in September 2001. It has improved the quality and accessibility of data to teachers and managers. Over 200 staff now have access to a growing number of data reports on students, to help them in their jobs.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Sciences



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on all level 2 courses
- good teaching in practical lessons
- very high proportion of students progressing to science-related degree courses
- successful preparation of ESOL students for GCSE and advanced courses
- good support for students preparing for examinations.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on the GCE A-level physics course
- insufficiently demanding work for students in some lessons.

Scope of provision

42. There are over 530 enrolments to GCE science courses. Students are mainly full time and aged 16 to 18. There are small numbers of adults students on some courses. Vocational courses at levels 2 and 3, GCE AS and GCE A-level biology, chemistry and physics are taught at both of the main college campuses. GCE AS and GCE A-level human biology courses, including a GCE AS evening course, are based at the Harrow Weald campus. The department welcomes students of all abilities, some of whom are immigrants or asylum seekers who speak little English when they join the

college. A certificate of achievement course, designed for students with English as a second language, enables the students to progress to a GCSE science course, which includes GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics.

Achievement and standards

43. Retention and pass rates on all level 2 courses are high. For example, retention rates on GNVQ intermediate science are consistently above national averages and pass rates for the last two years have been above average. The proportion of students achieving GCSE grade C or above in biology, chemistry and physics is well above the national average for similar colleges. All students entering for the level 1 certificate of achievement in the last two years have been successful, the vast majority achieving the highest grade of pass. Pass rates in GCE A-level chemistry were high in 2001, and in biology, pass rates and the proportion of students achieving higher grades A to C, are consistently high. Retention rates in GCE A-level biological subjects are low and, although retention and pass rates in GCE A-level physics rose in 2001, they remain average.

44. Levels of attainment in lessons are high. Students are attentive and keen to succeed. Their practical work and coursework assignments are mainly of a high standard and well presented. Much of the work is word processed, and sometimes accompanied by effective computer generated graphs, charts or spreadsheets. Attendance is good, but substantial members of students are late for some lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE biology (grades A* to C)	2	No. of starts	42	37	32
		% retention	90	95	75
		% pass rate	66	74	75
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	32	27	35
		% retention	81	81	80
		% pass rate	65	73	75
GNVQ advanced science	3	No. of starts	42	41	41
		% retention	79	83	76
		% pass rate	45	65	87
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	140	121	77
		% retention	69	63	70
		% pass rate	83	87	83
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	143	135	101
		% retention	73	66	73
		% pass rate	74	76	89
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	119	93	76
		% retention	60	53	72
		% pass rate	65	71	76

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

Quality of education and training

45. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and there is much good teaching. The teaching of practical science is particularly effective. Laboratory sessions are managed well, and there is due regard to safety. Students are given effective help when producing health and safety risk assessments. Additional learning materials are sometimes provided to extend the work of students who complete practical assignments quickly. Technicians provide valuable support to students during laboratory sessions. For example, in an exercise in which various test tube reactions were being compared in order to build up a series showing relative redox properties, the teacher and technician worked well together, helping students to improve their practical skills and interpret experimental results. Teachers refer students to appropriate web sites and encourage them to use IT in some practical assignments, for example, data-logging to determine the enthalpy change of neutralisation in chemistry, and a digital camera and heart monitors for work in biology. The use of IT as a resource in classroom teaching is less well developed. In some classes, teachers demand too little of students, teaching methods are unsuitable or teachers fail to check that students have understood what is being covered. Lesson plans are sometimes too brief and learning objectives too vague.

46. Teachers prepare students well for written examinations. In revision lessons students work with a range of learning resources, including flowcharts, examination question papers and prepared solutions to problems. Homework is set regularly. Assignments for practical work and for vocational courses are well designed. Work is marked fairly and accurately. Teachers provide students with written feedback on their work. In most cases, there is helpful guidance on how students can improve their work, but in some cases, teachers do little more than identify errors. On occasions, teachers ask students who have failed to complete their homework to attend a homework club, held at the end of the college day.

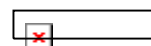
47. Almost all advanced level students go on to study science-related subjects in HE. A high proportion of them take degree courses in subjects such as dentistry, medicine, pharmacy and sciences. The college provides good opportunities for ESOL students who enrol on the certificate of achievement course in science to progress to GCSE and advanced study in the sciences. Currently, the department does not offer students work experience and it has developed few community or industrial links to support vocational science courses.

48. Most teachers are well qualified and experienced. Some have not received appropriate training for supporting ESOL students. Laboratories are dated in appearance but appropriately equipped for the courses taught. Libraries hold a good range of textbooks and other up-to-date science books and periodicals.

Leadership and management

49. The science provision is well managed. Most schemes of work are good. They usually include information on assignments, resources and teaching methods. Some GCE A-level physics and GCSE schemes of work are not detailed enough. Booklets for each course give useful information and guidelines. Assignment sheets include clear instructions, information on any calculations required, and consideration of experimental errors. Teachers work effectively in teams, however, regular opportunities for all teachers to meet and to share ideas and discuss good practice are few. Staff who have participated in staff development activities share the knowledge they have gained with other staff.

Mathematics



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

Strengths

- good individual and additional support to students
- good recognition of the language problems of some students.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates in GCE A-level mathematics
- low levels of attainment in many mathematics lessons
- inadequate planning and teaching of lessons
- unsatisfactory course management.

Scope of provision

50. The college offers GCE AS and A-level and GCSE mathematics courses. At GCE A level, a variety of pure mathematics, statistics, mechanics and decision module combinations are offered to cater for students' needs, interests and career aspirations. A few students take GCE A-level further mathematics. Most of the 1,500 enrolments to mathematics are in GCSE subjects and most of the students are aged 16 to 18. Recruitment to GCE A-level mathematics has fallen significantly, by 35%, over the last three years. At the Weald campus, GCE AS statistics has been introduced, without the pure mathematics module, to meet the needs of learners who have only the minimum entry qualification of a grade C in GCSE mathematics. The GCSE mathematics course is provided mainly for students wishing to raise their mathematics grade from a grade D or E. Many students at the Harrow-on-the-Hill campus, however, are taking GCSE mathematics for the first time. Application of number is offered at levels 1, 2 and 3.

Achievement and standards

51. GCE A-level mathematics pass rates have been significantly below national averages for the last three years. The proportion of students achieving high grades in 2001 was also low. Pass rates in GCE AS mathematics in 2001 were similar to the national average. In GCSE mathematics, the proportion of students achieving grades A* to C has been below the national average. However, the results of the November 2001 examination were good. Students were re-sitting the examination and, after only two months of further study, 50% had achieved at least a grade C. The retention rate for GCE A-level mathematics has steadily improved and is now in line with the national average.

52. In a significant proportion of classes, students' work was of a low standard. There were several examples, often in GCSE classes, of students showing good recall and building on work covered in previous lessons. Many advanced students, however, were struggling with basic algebra and were not confident about their mental arithmetic. They cope well with simple single-step calculations, but frequently find problems involving several steps difficult. Several of the students in GCE A-level

further mathematics are making elementary mistakes that are not to be expected of students at this level.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics (grades A* to C)	2	No. of starts	653	524	238
		% retention	71	80	76
		% pass rate	26	42	31
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	275	210	180
		% retention	62	61	79
		% pass rate	69	71	68

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

Quality of education and training

53. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but none of it was very good or outstanding. Lesson plans seldom contain more than a list of topics to be covered and references to where appropriate exercises can be found in the approved textbook. Most lessons consist of the teacher explaining a topic to the class and demonstrating how to solve problems, followed by students working through problems. Teachers give effective help to individual students. In some cases, they use realistic examples to develop students' understanding. For example, likening a geometric series to a frog jumping across a river in ever decreasing steps.

54. Much teaching is unimaginative and the range of learning activities too narrow. There is little use of IT to promote learning in mathematics. Teachers do not show enough enthusiasm for the subject. Advanced level students are not encouraged to read about or discuss the development of the subject as a whole. The learning resources centres hold a wide range of mathematics textbooks, but there are few of the many good books available on up-to-date and interesting aspects of mathematics.

55. Teachers are aware of the varying language abilities of the students and are careful to explain the meaning and use of words. Most teachers direct questions at the class to help students develop their ideas. In some cases, this leads to useful dialogue. Not enough questions are aimed at particular individuals, however, to ensure that they are thinking about the topic and to check that learning is taking place. Teachers' questions seldom invite students to think about the underlying mathematical concepts.

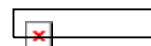
56. Staff are very experienced. They provide individual students with a lot of help. They have high expectations of students in terms of attendance and punctuality and they take prompt action if students fail to meet these expectations. Workshops in mathematics are provided to give learners additional support, particularly those aiming for the GCSE mathematics higher qualification. Students' progress is monitored through regular tests and homework, but much of the feedback on students' work is not detailed enough. There is not enough guidance on how students can improve their work.

Leadership and management

57. Course management is unsatisfactory. There are few procedures for improving the quality of teaching and effectiveness of learning. The management team has been in post for a relatively short time. It has started to implement strategies for ensuring that there are more consistent and effective procedures across the department and college sites. Attendance and punctuality are

monitored effectively. Schemes of work are now more detailed and written to a uniform format. However, they contain little reference to teaching methods or the development of skills. Staff meetings take place regularly, but there is little discussion of actions to improve the quality of teaching. Quality assurance procedures at departmental level are not thorough enough. There is insufficient analysis of performance data, on students' achievements and little attention to the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCE A-level business and GNVQ intermediate courses
- strong personal support for students
- high proportion of students progressing to other FE courses and to HE.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ administration and accounting courses
- low retention rates on NVQ level 2 courses
- too many lessons in which work was not demanding enough for students.

Scope of provision

58. Business courses offered at both of the main college campuses, include GCE A level, AVCE, and GNVQ intermediate. At Harrow-on-the-Hill campus, the college offers NVQs in accounting and administration at levels 1 to 4 and 1 to 3 respectively, the certificate in supervisory management, and professional courses awarded through the Institute of Legal Executives and the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply. There are also computer-based courses related to business. Overall, almost 1,000 students take business courses, a small number of whom are work-based learners taking accounting and administration courses. Many minority ethnic students and new arrivals to the United Kingdom progress to higher-level programmes, as their confidence and language skills improve.

Achievement and standards

59. Examination results in business studies at GCE A-level are consistently good. GNVQ intermediate students have achieved pass rates above the national averages for the past three years. However, levels of achievement on NVQ administration and accounting courses are currently below national averages, and pass rates in accounting are declining. Retention rates vary considerably across the NVQ courses. They are high on the level 1 administration course and average on the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) course at levels 3 and 4, but, at level 2, both these courses have retention rates which are significantly below the national average. Overall, students' written assignment work is good.

60. Around 70% of GNVQ business students move from one level of the course to the next and about 80% of GNVQ and AVCE students go on to HE after completing their courses. These are high proportions.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	*	40	11
		% retention	*	70	55
		% pass rate	*	31	100
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	113	67	74
		% retention	85	80	74
		% pass rate	78	82	82
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	11	55	85
		% retention	73	76	67
		% pass rate	88	68	56
AAT accounting intermediate	3	No. of starts	26	26	23
		% retention	85	81	83
		% pass rate	18	71	47
GNVQ/AVCE advanced business	3	No. of starts	152	167	162
		% retention	80	71	73
		% pass rate	71	72	81
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	260	215	157
		% retention	84	62	72
		% pass rate	81	90	92

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

61. Most lessons are well planned and effective. Teaching is particularly good on level 1 business courses. Teachers take care to develop the confidence of individual students. They make good use of students personal experiences in helping them to learn. Students who have work placements are able to draw on their work experience in linking theory to practice. Other students find it much more

difficult to generate good evidence for assessment and many of these students leave their course early. Some teaching was dull and uninspiring. In too many lessons, the work is not demanding enough or interesting enough for the students. Often, teachers present the key theoretical points without any reference to contemporary examples and illustrations. Many students have a poor record of attendance and punctuality.

62. The curriculum area promotes the college's policy of helping students who lack the traditional entry qualifications. Students are tested at enrolment to determine their individual learning needs and are well supported throughout their course. Hearing-impaired students, for example, receive effective support within lessons. Students with English as a second language, who sometimes struggle with grammar, also receive good specialist support. Individual progress of students is well monitored. Checks are frequent and regular. Full-time students benefit from twice-weekly tutorials and they keep good records of their personal development in student profile books. Attendance is well monitored and absences are followed up rigorously.

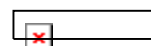
63. Students often receive extensive feedback from teachers on their assignments, but teachers do not always provide guidance on how students might improve their work. Students on NVQ programmes in administration have well-organised portfolios, containing good evidence of the competences they have acquired. Assessment in the workplace is thorough and constructive. On NVQ full-time programmes, students' experience on work placements is integrated effectively with other aspects of work. Students on GNVQ and AVCE courses display a positive attitude to their work and to the college. However, links with industry are underdeveloped. For example, few guest speakers are invited to the college and there are few visits arranged.

64. Teachers are well qualified, but many lack recent industrial or commercial experience and few have had the opportunity to update their subject knowledge. The quality of the teaching accommodation varies greatly, from the adequate temporary buildings used for some lessons to the excellent IT suites containing informative displays. The learning resource centres are well stocked with relevant business studies materials and are used effectively by students.

Leadership and management

65. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Managers produce self-assessment reports that are self-critical and contain realistic action plans. Effective marketing of provision has reduced the gender imbalance typical of many NVQ administration programmes. More male students are recruited than is normally the case. Strategies for ensuring effective collaboration on assignment writing are in place, but have not yet made an impact. Internal verification has improved, but is still not fully developed. Verifiers are not sufficiently involved in regular monitoring of assessment decisions in the workplace.

Computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AVCE ICT and GCE A-level ICT courses
- high retention rates on part-time introductory programmes for adults

- effective development of students' technical skills
- good technical support for specialist IT facilities
- good learning materials.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate and GCE A-level computing courses
- failure of teachers to meet the individual needs of students in some lessons
- lack of punctuality among students aged 16 to 18.

Scope of provision

66. Courses in computing and IT meet the needs of students of all ages. The full-time courses include GCE AS/A-level computing and ICT, AVCE ICT and GNVQ courses in ICT at intermediate and foundation level. Enrolment on these courses has been high and is increasing. Currently, there are almost 2,000 enrolments from 16 to 18-year-olds and around 800 adult enrolments. Full-time students can study a mix of academic and vocational programmes. Part-time courses for adults take place on both of the main college campuses, at varying times of day and for different periods of time. These include computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses, City and Guilds courses at levels 1 and 2, and an integrated business technology (IBT) stage 2 course. The opportunities for adults to study part-time at level 3 are more limited than for full-time students aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass rates on the AVCE ICT course are now well above the national average, having risen over the last three years. In 2001, 62% of students achieved a merit or distinction, significantly higher than in other similar colleges. Pass rates have been consistently above national averages on GCE A-level ICT. Students did well on the IBT stage 2 course where 71% of those who completed the programme passed. Pass rates for students on foundation GNVQ have been steadily rising, but remain low at around 20% lower than the national average. Retention rates are high on the GNVQ intermediate ICT course, but pass rates have declined, reaching 43% in 2001. The pattern is the same for GCE A-level computing. Retention rates are generally in line with national averages on full-time courses and high for adult learners on most introductory courses.

68. Students have very good practical knowledge and skills. They use an extensive range of application packages with confidence and creativity. Students at all levels use the Internet

effectively for research. The standard of most students' written work is satisfactory. Assignments are presented neatly and students use visual images well. The use of language is weak among some students whose first language is not English. Students aged 16 to 18 have a poor record of punctuality for lessons. Students arriving late often disrupt learning. Attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 7261 IT certificate (short)	1	No. of starts	468	335	177
		% retention	86	90	90
		% pass rate	57	64	72
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	742	96	84
		% retention	61	99	99
		% pass rate	38	34	28
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	34	98	96
		% retention	76	81	75
		% pass rate	23	38	*
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	104	120	164
		% retention	84	78	90
		% pass rate	75	59	43
City and Guilds 7621 IT diploma	2	No. of starts	208	144	121
		% retention	75	75	88
		% pass rate	45	63	75
GNVQ advanced/AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	87	151	177
		% retention	74	78	68
		% pass rate	79	67	88
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts			
		% retention			
		% pass rate			
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts			
		% retention			
		% pass rate			

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

* data not available

Quality of education and training

69. Nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory. Schemes of work are detailed and lessons are well planned. Teachers have extensive up-to-date knowledge of their subject. They make good use of this when giving explanations and using examples to which students can relate. They provide effective support for individuals in lessons. Teachers do not always have effective strategies for

dealing with latecomers to lessons, to minimise disruption and to enable the late arrivals to catch up and join in activities with the rest of the learners. In some lessons, teachers do not cater adequately for the range of students' learning needs. Tasks are too hard for some students to attempt or the students are unclear about what they are doing or why. In workshop sessions, students work at their own pace. Sometimes the pace is too leisurely, however, and without close supervision from teachers the students are not sufficiently extended.

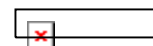
70. Learning is supported by good IT equipment and a wide range of up-to-date software. Technical support is effective and there is a fast response time when any technical problems arise. Teachers have developed good learning resources to support all courses, many of which are available to students in printed format as well as on the student intranet. Teaching rooms are satisfactory. Specialist IT rooms are well equipped, including several which have multimedia projectors. The open-plan IT centre at Harrow-on-the-Hill is often noisy and it does not provide a suitable environment for group activities.

71. Full-time students receive good personal support from their tutors. Students feel that their teachers are willing to listen to them. The progress of each student is monitored carefully. Teachers set and mark work regularly. Students receive detailed interim feedback on assignments and coursework which they find helpful in identifying how they might improve their performance. Errors in grammar and spelling are not always corrected.

Leadership and management

72. Course management is split between two departments in the college. Leadership in both departments is satisfactory. Staff teams are mutually supportive and communication is effective within teams. There is little collaboration between the two departments on areas of common interest and little sharing of good practice. The self-assessment is appropriately self-critical. Action plans are closely monitored, and this has led to recent improvements in course organisation and teaching. A high level of staff turnover since the merger has caused disruption to some students' learning.

Leisure, tourism and sport



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

Strengths

- good examination results in GCE A-level physical education
- effective use of practical demonstration on sports courses
- high proportion of students progressing from intermediate to advanced courses and then to HE
- effective use of work-based assessors in the work place

- successful partnership with a local football club to raise students' motivation.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GNVQ advanced and NVQ courses
- inadequate consideration of some students' learning needs
- insufficient development of vocational contexts for travel and tourism students
- unsatisfactory teaching of key skills.

Scope of provision

73. The college offers a wide range of full-time provision in leisure, tourism and sport. There are 249 full-time students. Courses include GCE AS and A-level physical education, GNVQ foundation and intermediate leisure and tourism, AVCE travel and tourism, and leisure and recreation. A number of GNVQ intermediate and AVCE advanced leisure and recreation students are selected to join a football academy that is run in partnership with a local football team. Intermediate students and advanced travel and tourism students may take as additional qualifications either the resort representatives certificate or the tour operations certificate. There are 13 work-based learners undertaking NVQ levels 2 and 3 in sport and recreation.

Achievement and standards

74. Retention and pass rates are broadly similar to the national averages on most courses. Pass rates in GCE A-level physical education are high, and a high proportion of students achieves grades A to C; 56% in 2001 compared with the national average of 36%. Retention rates are also high. Retention rates are high on the intermediate leisure and tourism course and the resort representatives and tour operations course. The rates were 97% and 96%, respectively, in 2001. Attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was low, at 68%, but was adversely affected by external examinations during the inspection week.

75. A high proportion of leisure and tourism students progress from one level to another within the college and go on to study in HE. In 2001, 59% of students progressed from the GNVQ intermediate to the advanced course, and 68% of the students from the advanced courses to HE.

76. Levels of achievement for work-based learners are low. None of the foundation modern apprentices achieved the framework in 2001 and only 33% completed the advanced modern apprenticeship (AMA) framework in the same year. None of the trainees have begun their key skills training. The college plans to deliver these through workshops which have yet to be set up. Most employers have work-based assessors and this helps to ensure that assessments are regular and appropriate.

A sample of retention and pass rates in leisure, tourism and sport, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation and leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	16	17	17
		% retention	88	71	59
		% pass rate	0	50	80
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	37	36	29
		% retention	81	63	79
		% pass rate	53	73	78
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	36	55	46
		% retention	81	73	81
		% pass rate	83	78	74
GCE A-level physical education	3	No. of starts	59	43	29
		% retention	90	67	77
		% pass rate	77	86	89

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

Quality of education and training

77. Most lessons are well planned. Teachers prepare work thoroughly, give clear explanations, provide effective guidance to individual students, and manage practical activities well. There are good relationships between staff and students. Teachers make good use of the personal experiences of students in developing work in the classroom and practical demonstrations help students to learn effectively. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons observed, teachers did not give enough attention to students' individual learning needs or failed to check what students had learned.

78. Students' work is of an appropriate standard. It is well organised and well presented, and good use is made of IT, particularly at level 3. Teachers mark work fairly and usually provide students with helpful constructive comments. Most students do not understand how key skills relate to their leisure and tourism studies and opportunities to gather evidence of the acquisition of key skills in assignments are missed. Advanced and intermediate students attend the same key skill lessons for application of number and communication, but the teaching fails to take account of the differing needs of the two groups.

79. Most full-time students undertake an initial assessment to determine their learning needs and the college offers appropriate additional support, as required. The extent to which students take advantage of this support and its impact on learning, however, are not evaluated adequately. Initial assessment is not provided for work-based learners. All NVQ learners attend work placements.

80. Students are generally well supported in their studies. Progress reviews take place each term and are used effectively to monitor the progress of students. Individual targets are set for students at each review although, in some cases, these targets are too vague and difficult to measure. Progress between reviews is monitored informally.

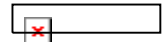
81. AVCE leisure and recreation students undertake work experience, but travel and tourism students do not. The college does not provide a realistic working environment for travel and many students have inadequate direct experience of the industry.

82. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified, but most have not undertaken recent industrial updating. There is a basic sports hall at the Harrow-on-the-Hill site, but this is mainly used for enrichment activities because of the distance to travel and difficulty of transporting students. The college has a small fitness suite and rents a good local sports hall.

Leadership and management

83. Courses in leisure, tourism and sport, and work-based learning in sport and recreation, are managed satisfactorily. There are regular course and team meetings at which aspects of provision and students' performance are discussed and actions set in train to bring about improvements. Communication between the college and work-based assessors is effective. Self-assessment at course level is insufficiently rigorous and reports are more descriptive in nature than evaluative.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- effective theory teaching
- teaching that meets the diverse needs of individual students
- good accommodation and resources
- effective team work amongst teaching staff.

Weaknesses

- some low retention and pass rates
- inadequate size of the hairdressing salon
- unprofessional practices in some beauty therapy lessons.

Scope of provision

84. The college offers a good range of provision in beauty therapy, but provision is more limited in hairdressing. Courses are available for all age groups. There are 80 students aged 16 to 18 and 225 adult students. The college has responded well to the needs of the adult learners. On hair and beauty courses, 74% of learners are aged 19 or over. Full-time courses include NVQ at levels 1 and 2 in hairdressing and NVQ at levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy. Level 3 hairdressing is not currently offered, although it is planned to be offered again in September 2002. There has been an increase in beauty provision on both full-time and part-time courses to meet the needs of adult learners. This includes the International Therapy Examination Council (ITEC) beauty specialist diploma and the anatomy, physiology and massage diploma. Many courses offer starts at various points throughout the year. A new combined hair and beauty two-year, full-time course was started in September 2001.

Achievement and standards

85. Level 1 hairdressing courses have had 100% pass rates for the past two years. Part-time courses such as the aromatherapy diploma, reflexology diploma and the manicure certificate have pass rates at the national average or above. In 2000, none of the 10 students starting NVQ level 2 hairdressing completed the course, yet in 2001, 11 of the 12 students who started the course, completed it and 10 achieved the award, a far higher proportion than was the case nationally. Pass rates at NVQ levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy have been well below the national average for the past two years.

86. Retention rates are rising on most courses. In 2001, the majority of courses had rates which were at or above the national averages compared with low rates in previous years. Most learners reach satisfactory standards in their practical work and theory work. Beauty therapy portfolios are of a high standard and well organised.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	48	10	12
		% retention	85	0	92
		% pass rate	49	0	91
Beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	19	34	28
		% retention	63	76	86
		% pass rate	75	40	54
Beauty specialist diploma	2	No. of starts	27	30	48
		% retention	85	83	88
		% pass rate	65	60	57
Anatomy, physiology and body massage	3	No. of starts	80	90	72
		% retention	69	81	83
		% pass rate	73	53	47

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

Quality of education and training

87. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives that are shared with learners. A wide range of teaching methods is used to motivate and maintain the interest of learners. Teachers are enthusiastic. They check the learning of students regularly, by asking questions. The tasks set are appropriate. There is good use of small group work and learners work well with other learners. Students are encouraged to make presentations to develop their communication skills. Relevant videos are used well in practical lessons. Teachers' writing on whiteboards and flip charts is often too small to be seen by students clearly, and some of it contains spelling mistakes.

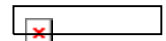
88. Teachers are sensitive to their students' learning needs. Many students speak English as a second language and these are given good additional support. One learner with hearing impairment and a dyslexic learner had support tutors to help them at all lessons. Visiting speakers and visits outside the college help in hairdressing and beauty therapy students to develop a better understanding of the industry. All full-time learners have some work experience.

89. Accommodation for theory and practical lessons is good. All the salons have been refurbished and they offer a commercial standard of accommodation, equipment and products. However, the single hairdressing salon is too small for the large of learners currently on the NVQ level 2 course. In consequence, assessment opportunities for this group of learners are inadequate. The beauty therapy salons are very spacious. Some learners are not always appropriately dressed. A number of them were wearing unsuitable footwear and clothing. Hygiene is not always considered. In one lesson, students continued to wear shoes whilst resting on beds.

Leadership and management

90. There have been many changes in the management and staffing of hairdressing and beauty therapy over the past three years. The lack of continuity has unsettled learners and contributed to the low pass rates on courses. There is currently a new management team. Staff are working well together and courses are being managed satisfactorily. Part-time staff are well supported and there are good staff development opportunities.

Health, social care and early years



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ level 2 early years courses
- thorough assessment and progress reviews
- effective tutorial support.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on many courses
- very low rates of completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- high staff turnover which has disrupted students' learning
- insufficient work experience for full-time students aged 16 to 18
- unsatisfactory leadership and management.

Scope of provision

91. The college offers full-time GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses in health and social care to 65 students. About 70 adult students take NVQ courses in early years care and education, and NVQ care at levels 2 and 3. Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA) and AMA in early years are also offered to 24 apprentices. The college has recently introduced an introductory part-time course to enable students to progress to NVQ level 2 early years.

Achievement and standards

92. Pass rates on many courses are low. None of the students on the GNVQ intermediate passed last year. Pass rates on the AVCE in health and social care have risen over the last three years, but they are still 17% below the national average. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 early years are above national averages. However, at level 3, pass rates have declined to well below national averages. Completion rates on FMAs and AMAs have fallen dramatically over the last three years and are very low. They have declined from 75% in 1999 to only 1% in 2001 for FMAs, and from 89% to 25% for AMAs. Retention rates are around the national average on most courses and are high on the GNVQ intermediate course. The retention rate on the current AVCE course is below the national average.

93. NVQ care students show a good understanding of the values underpinning the principles of care and apply these principles to practical settings, such as providing a bed bath for a client. NVQ early years students show good awareness of the multicultural aspects of working in early years settings and demonstrate very good analytical skills when discussing childcare issues. AVCE students are able to apply research methodology well and to analyse alternative research methods. GNVQ intermediate students' levels of attainment are those expected. Students lack the required depth of understanding of child development and are unable to apply their knowledge to childcare settings.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	12	10	*
		% retention	83	50	*
		% pass rate	30	60	*
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	14	21	12
		% retention	100	86	92
		% pass rate	79	67	0
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	21	24	19
		% retention	67	83	68
		% pass rate	50	55	62

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

94. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers failed to interest students or to get them to work effectively. Some lessons lack a sense of purpose. Topics were covered superficially, so that the skills of students were not being improved. In one lesson, in which students were learning to produce spreadsheets, the teacher asked questions only of a small group, while other students sat struggling to keep up with the work. Many students appeared confused and failed to produce the spreadsheets. There were poor levels of punctuality across a number of courses. Students on the GNVQ intermediate course do not benefit from work experience as part of their course and AVCE students have only one week of work experience during the two years of the programme. In consequence, some students are unable to relate theory to practical experiences.

95. In the better lessons, the work is more demanding and teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the care sector. In an AVCE lesson, the students analysed case studies effectively to identify the types of mental health disorders associated with particular behaviour. In a well-structured debate, NVQ level 3 students made confident and well-considered contributions, drawing on their own experiences to show how multicultural issues could be promoted in nursery settings.

96. Comprehensive systems are in place for the assessment of NVQ students' work. There are good links between the theory that is taught in college and work-based assessments. Procedures for monitoring students' progress are rigorous. Internal verification on GNVQ and NVQ courses is thorough. Inadequate time is allocated to assessors to complete the assessment in the workplace. At level 3, this has resulted in slow completion of the programme and achievement of the qualification. The assessment of key skills on many programmes is poor. Most foundation modern apprentices gain the NVQ component of the framework, but very few achieve the key skills components.

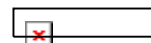
97. There is a thorough induction programme and students feel well prepared for their studies. Students receive good tutorial support and there is regular monitoring of their progress. All students, including those studying part time, have an initial assessment to determine if they have additional learning needs. Where need is identified, support is offered on an individual basis.

98. Most teachers and assessors have good professional qualifications and experience in the care sector. There are good staff development opportunities. Some staff have carried out updating at hospitals. There are adequate resources to support students in their studies. Students have good access to computers, but there is a shortage of childcare books on both college sites.

Leadership and management

99. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Teams meet regularly and comprehensive minutes are produced. However, high staff turnover, coupled with difficulties in recruiting teachers for the full-time courses in health and social care, have disrupted the learning of students on GNVQ and AVCE courses. For instance, some students have had four different teachers to teach the same subject. There is little sharing of good practice or resources and few students move between the full-time and work-based learning programmes. Key issues, such as low pass rates, have not been identified until recently. Quality assurance procedures have had only a little influence on driving up standards. The lesson observation scheme has had little effect on the performance of teachers.

Art and design



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

Strengths

- high and improving retention rates
- suitably demanding and stimulating tasks
- good programme of visits for students
- good accommodation and equipment
- responsiveness to the needs of the community.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses
- some poor student handouts
- failure of quality assurance to improve levels of achievement.

Scope of provision

100. The college offers a wide range of art and design courses, including levels 1 and 2 GNVQ, AVCE, and GCE AS and A levels in fine art and graphics. The curriculum area has around 340 full-time students. A pre-degree foundation course is marketed jointly by the college and the University of Westminster. It is successful in attracting students from families with little tradition of HE, many of whom progress to HE. Disaffected pupils from local schools attend the college on link courses. Many adults enjoy using the facilities for a wide range of courses, including interior design, pattern cutting, photography, ceramics and fine art.

Achievement and standards

101. Retention rates across most courses in this curriculum area are high and improving. For GCE A-level art and design, the rate is significantly above the national average in similar colleges. Pass rates are high on some courses, for example, the GNVQ advanced and the pre-degree foundation course in art and design. On other courses, such as the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses, pass rates are low and showing no sign of improvement.

102. On many of the courses, levels of attainment are high. Students produce exciting and thoughtful work that extends and develops their skills. Many students talk with enthusiasm and pride about their work. All AVCE students entered one assignment last year for a company-sponsored competition as a means of exploring professional practice. One student won an award and the prize-winning design was a chair designed to copy the lines and style of a particular type of shoe. The student worked with the company to modify and adapt her design and the chair will be placed in the company's headquarters. On the GNVQ intermediate course some work is of a low standard and/or poorly presented.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation art and design	1	No. of starts	30	18	19
		% retention	87	78	74
		% pass rate	46	43	36
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	49	31	30
		% retention	76	80	90
		% pass rate	68	50	52
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	70	66	59
		% retention	80	77	80
		% pass rate	69	66	83
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	104	95	75
		% retention	85	88	87
		% pass rate	69	74	55
Foundation studies (pre-degree)	3	No. of starts	22	38	21
		% retention	77	82	95
		% pass rate	82	100	90

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

Quality of education and training

103. Almost all of the teaching is satisfactory and much of it is very good. Many staff are professional practitioners and they use their skills and experience effectively in their teaching. Teachers are aware of students' differing skill levels and adapt their teaching to the needs of individual students.

104. There is a very good programme of visits, and the experience which students gain from the visits is used effectively. GCE AS graphic students, for example, used a trip to the British Museum as the starting point for a typography project. They were encouraged to use scripts ranging from the Rosetta Stone to medieval manuscripts in Latin and Arabic to influence their work.

105. Students particularly appreciate the opportunities to experiment with skills new to them, such as ceramics, photography and three-dimensional work. They are given some stimulating and demanding tasks, such as modelling a clay head so that it has the appearance of being half human/half robot. The students rise to the challenge and produce good work.

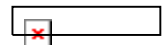
106. Assessment and monitoring procedures are effective. Students receive informative feedback on their work and are provided with useful guidance on how to improve their work. The quality of written handouts varies. Some are admirably clear and well laid out, such as those produced for GCE AS art history. Others are poorly presented and a few of them contain spelling errors.

107. The provision is housed in a light, airy building that is well equipped to offer students the chance to work in a range of artistic media. There are large metal and wood workshops, a ceramic studio with four kilns, a photography studio and darkroom, and spacious art studios. Facilities enable students to work with fabric and print, and there is good access to computing areas for graphics work. All rooms are large and there is plenty of storage space for students' work. Staff and students receive good support from five technicians, who each have specific responsibilities. There is a real sense of artistic endeavour within the building, but this does not spill over into public areas of the college and only a small amount of students' work is on display.

Leadership and management

108. Leadership and management in this area of work are satisfactory. Many course managers are new. Actions are being taken to raise standards. For example, when problems were identified in the assessment process for GCE AS graphics, strenuous efforts were made to redress these. Quality assurance procedures have yet to lead to improved levels of achievement on some courses.

Performing arts, music and media



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates in GCE A-level drama, media and AVCE media
- imaginative teaching

- responsive curriculum, meeting the needs of the local community
- good resources and accommodation for media.

Weaknesses

- poor accommodation for drama and music
- poor levels of punctuality and attendance
- insufficient collaboration between subjects.

Scope of provision

109. The college has developed a curriculum in performing arts, music and drama that is responsive to the needs of the local community. Around 480 full-time students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on a wide range of courses, that include GCE AS and A-level media, drama, film studies, music and music technology, AVCE qualifications in performing arts and media and GNVQ intermediate in media. There has been a significant growth in the number of media students on the GCE AS course, AVCE and GNVQ courses. GCE AS music technology was introduced just before the beginning of the academic year, 2001. The college has links with local schools and disaffected pupils come to college for an introduction to drama course. As a result of established links with the Harrow Young Musicians group, music students perform regularly at a number of top venues. In 2001, they gave a performance at the Royal Albert Hall.

Achievement and standards

110. Examination results are good on the majority of media, drama and music courses. Pass rates for GCE A-level media are consistently above the national average. There has been a steady rise in pass rates for the GNVQ intermediate media course and GCE A-level film studies. Students' grades in GCE A-level film studies are better than predicted on the basis of their GCSE grades. Retention rates for the vocational media courses are at or around the national averages.

111. In all subjects, standards of written and practical work are high. There is discipline and rigour in practical work. Teachers create a relaxed atmosphere for students to work in, but ensure that the work is suitably demanding. Students express their ideas and show a good understanding of their subjects. They participate in discussion with enthusiasm. In drama, the level of performance skills reflects an understanding of, and an appreciation for, performance conventions. Evaluation of students' work is well structured.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion	1999	2000	2001
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		year:			
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	*	23	35
		% retention	*	74	89
		% pass rate	*	59	77
GNVQ advanced media	3	No. of starts	19	20	22
		% retention	95	70	82
		% pass rate	61	86	72
GCE A-level drama	3	No. of starts	35	41	27
		% retention	77	83	70
		% pass rate	100	94	95
GCE A-level film studies	3	No. of starts	*	24	27
		% retention	*	67	70
		% pass rate	*	81	87
GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	59	71	58
		% retention	98	73	81
		% pass rate	95	96	94

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

112. Almost all the teaching is at least good and a significant proportion of it is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and well structured. Teachers ensure complex themes, exercises and texts are broken down into manageable sections, to help build and develop students' confidence and understanding. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and like to share their enthusiasm with students. Students are encouraged to be imaginative and to focus hard on the tasks they are undertaking. In one lesson, a group of initially unresponsive students were won over by the sheer enthusiasm and commitment of the teacher and gradually threw themselves into the creative process. Teachers have a very good relationship with the students and are prepared to give their time and energy to helping them. In two unsatisfactory lessons, a delay in allocating tasks led to long periods of inactivity for students. Attendance at lessons during the inspection was low, at 63%, and students lacked punctuality.

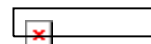
113. Students' progress is monitored effectively. Individuals identified as underachieving are directed to attend revision lessons and carry out other appropriate actions. Their parents are kept informed. Assignment briefs are clear and well written. In most cases, detailed marking and feedback indicate where standards have been met and what action is needed for students to improve their work.

114. The quality of resources and accommodation differs between curriculum areas. Media rooms are well equipped. A studio has both linear and digital audio and video-editing facilities, and interactive whiteboards. However, the consistent growth in the number of students studying media is placing an increasing strain on these resources. The stage space and drama studio are in need of refurbishment and currently provide students with a dull working environment. The music facilities have been upgraded recently, but there is still a shortage of resources and the secure storage of technical equipment is an issue. There are few examples of students' work or other forms of display in workrooms and studios.

Leadership and management

115. Courses are well managed at subject level. The drama and media teams have been identified as subject teams that achieve high pass rates. Staff are involved in drawing up action plans for sharing good practice.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- consistently high retention and pass rates in GCE A-level government and politics
- high pass rates in GCE A-level history, law and economics in 2001
- good monitoring of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates in GCE A-level law and economics
- insufficient guidance to students on how to take notes in lessons
- failure of some students to complete homework.

Scope of provision

116. The inspection covered GCE AS/A levels in economics, law, government and politics, and history. Economics and law are offered at Harrow-on-the-Hill and Harrow Weald campuses. Government and politics and history are available at Harrow Weald. The vast majority of students are aged 16 to 19. There are no evening classes in these subjects and they are not offered at GCSE.

Achievement and standards

117. Pass rates in GCE A-level law, history and economics are high. They have improved steadily

over the last three years. In 2001, they were 11%, 9% and 8%, respectively, above the national averages. Pass rates in government and politics are consistently above national averages. For example, in 2001, 94% passed the examination and 81% achieved grades A to C, which is well above the national average for students achieving high grades. Many students do better than would be predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. In law and economics, the proportion of students achieving high grades is also above the national average.

118. Retention rates for government and politics are consistently above the national average. Retention rates in economics have been below the national average in each of the last three years. In history, the 2001 retention rate fell to slightly below the national average. Retention rates in law were below average in 2000 and 2001.

119. Students' written work and their involvement in class discussions indicate satisfactory progress. In one politics lesson, the students demonstrated a sound understanding of race relations. In a law lesson, they were keen to be involved in a discussion about juries. However, in an economics revision lesson, some students' hesitant answers to questions revealed a lack of understanding of the topic. In one history lesson, some students failed to join confidently in discussions because they had not done the preparatory work. The standard of written work is high in some cases. In law and politics, students had undertaken a suitable variety of written work and teachers had made constructive comments on their scripts. Many students, however, do not complete their homework. Responses to the most recent student questionnaire showed that, only 59% of students felt that work was set and marked regularly. Inspectors' sampling of homework records for 2001/02 indicates that this remains a weakness.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	83	82	69
		% retention	69	68	68
		% pass rate	81	84	87
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	44	42	65
		% retention	81	58	55
		% pass rate	68	74	83
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	66	75	46
		% retention	80	84	80
		% pass rate	94	86	94
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	112	100	49
		% retention	83	83	75
		% pass rate	69	77	87

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

Quality of education and training

120. Most teaching was at least good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Learning objectives are made clear to the students at the start of most lessons. In several lessons, teachers provided relevant advice on how best to revise for examinations. This included advice on how to tackle particular questions, for example, advice on the importance of graphs in answering economics questions. In most lessons, plenty of ground is covered and the subject matter is of an appropriate level. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subjects. Topics are clearly and confidently explained. There is little teaching that might inspire the students, however, in some lessons,

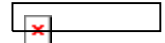
teachers did not do enough to draw individual students into discussions and sometimes students' understanding of topics was not checked. In one lesson, the tutor failed to deal effectively with inattentive students. In other lessons, teachers often failed to provide guidance on when and how students should take notes. Consequently, some students' notes were poor and other students failed to write anything.

121. Teachers are very committed to their students and relationships between staff and students are good. Students appreciate the time teachers are prepared to spend helping them outside lessons. Students also feel well supported by their personal tutors. There are opportunities for politics students to visit Brussels and for law students to visit the law courts. On entry to the college, students are given a target grade based on their GCSE results. Their progress is formally monitored against this grade in October and February. There are effective systems to identify students whose progress is unsatisfactory. The college is involving parents in issues relating to students' progress, punctuality and attendance. Lack of punctuality, nevertheless, remains a problem in some lessons.

Leadership and management

122. Managers have worked successfully with teachers to improve pass rates in humanities subjects. An appropriate focus on the quality of teaching has contributed to this improvement. Actions include the designation of beacon teams, which provide models of good practice and focus teams where there are concerns about teaching, learning or achievement. Action to improve retention rates has been less effective. Self-assessment reports produced by course teams fail to measure performance against targets for attendance, retention and achievement. Teachers with formal responsibility for subject management do not have clearly defined roles and some are more effective managers than others.

Social studies



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in GCE A-level psychology
- good quality teaching in GCE A-level psychology
- strong support for students from their teachers.

Weaknesses

- low standard of work from some students
- low proportion of high grades in GCE A-level sociology

- poor quality of teaching in sociology
- lack of punctuality by students.

Scope of provision

123. Full-time GCE AS and A-level courses in psychology and sociology are offered at the Harrow Weald and the Harrow-on-the-Hill campuses. The courses are very popular. Over 500 students are currently enrolled. One-year courses for adults in both subjects have been discontinued over the last two years, as has the GCSE sociology course.

Achievement and standards

124. The pass rate for GCE A-level psychology has been high for the last three years, exceeding the national average by between 6% and 15%. Pass rates for GCE A-level sociology have been around the national average for similar colleges, but the proportion of students achieving high grades in sociology is low. Most students achieve results broadly in line with what is predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. Provisional results for GCE AS in psychology and sociology indicate that a quarter of students failed to reach pass standard, although most students are hoping to improve their grades by retaking one or more modules. Overall, retention rates are broadly in line with national averages

125. The standard of some students' work was often low. Oral contributions made by students often indicate only a superficial understanding of basic social science concepts. Students' written work is competent, but usually no more than this. Standards of work of the more able students fall short of what might be expected. Students on GCE AS courses have not yet developed the requisite skills of analysis and evaluation. They have not learned to use social scientific evidence rigorously to substantiate their arguments. Too many students are late for lessons and this disrupts both their own learning and that of others.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	150	193	140
		% retention	75	73	79
		% pass rate	93	84	87
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	111	94	82
		% retention	63	78	66
		% pass rate	70	92	78

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

Quality of education and training

126. Teaching in social studies is purposeful. Teachers are enthusiastic and their students are usually responsive and enjoy their studies. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. Despite this,

courses and lessons are not always well planned. Strategies for meeting the needs of students of diverse abilities are not well thought out. Able students are given few opportunities to develop the social scientific skills of which they are capable. Teachers frequently ask students pertinent questions, but rarely expect the answers to be developed in any detail.

127. In psychology, there is much good teaching. Lessons are conducted briskly, and effective methods are used to ensure students develop a sound knowledge and understanding of psychological research and methodologies. A particularly effective lesson demonstrated the idea of 'classical conditioning', through a practical exercise that involved students imagining they were floating luxuriously in a warm sea, only to be rudely interrupted by music from the film 'Jaws'.

128. In sociology, there is some unsatisfactory teaching. In the weakest lessons, students were given inaccurate or vague definitions of concepts used in sociological research, without any examples to illustrate such concepts in practice. Students could not distinguish between the crucial methodological concepts of 'validity' and 'reliability' and were failing to acquire the rudimentary skills and knowledge necessary to interpret, analyse and evaluate sociological research. In one lesson, a reliance on a narrow range of out-of-date material on patterns of divorce meant that students were unable to engage in important contemporary debates about changing patterns of family life. In a session on the media, a very good exercise to help students to understand the concepts of folk devils and moral panics was not successful because students had insufficient understanding to apply the concepts.

129. Resources for social studies are good. The learning resource centres are well stocked, and students have access to appropriate journals. Although the college intranet holds some relevant materials, the use of ICT in the teaching of social studies is in its infancy. Teachers produce a wide range of good learning materials. However, these resources are not shared effectively between subjects.

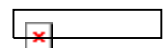
130. Homework is set regularly, but teachers do not set and mark enough written work and students do not receive enough written guidance on how to improve their performance. The monitoring of students' progress is not thorough enough.

131. Students value the high level of support that they receive from teachers both inside and outside the classroom, both on academic and pastoral matters. Social science teachers are sensitive to the diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds of their students, and teaching materials reflect this diversity.

Leadership and management

132. Course management is satisfactory. Teachers work effectively in course teams. However, teachers are yet to be convinced that they can improve students' levels of achievement by consistently and rigorously implementing the management procedures set up to achieve this objective.

English and English as a foreign language



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses

- high pass rates on GCE A-level English language and English literature courses
- much effective teaching.

Weaknesses

- failure to check learning in some lessons
- many EFL students opting not to take EFL qualifications
- inadequacies in the management of EFL provision.

Scope of provision

133. The English and EFL provision are popular. English mainly caters for students aged 16 to 18. Over 300 students are enrolled on GCE A-level courses and nearly 600 students are taking GCSE English. EFL attracts mainly adult students. These are 75 students taking intensive 15-hours a week courses in EFL and approximately 350 students on shorter EFL courses.

134. GCE A levels are offered in English language, English literature and English language and literature. The GCSE course takes place over one year and the GCE A-level courses over two years. Some evening courses are taken mainly by adult students. EFL is available from elementary to advanced level. Most courses are part time and take place over one term.

Achievement and standards

135. Retention rates on all courses are high. In GCE A-level English literature and the preliminary English test they have been well above the national averages for the last three years. Students have been particularly successful in GCE A-level English language and English literature, with high pass and retention rates in both subjects over the last three years. The proportion of students gaining high grades in GCE A-level English literature, however, was low in 2001. Pass rates for GCSE English have improved steadily over the last three years. In 2001, 62% of students achieved A to C grades, 16% higher than the national average for similar colleges.

136. In EFL, only about 40% of students who enrol on a course choose to enter for the examinations and so have the chance to obtain the qualification. Those students who do enter perform well. For example, on the preliminary English test in 2001, 77% of students passed. The remaining students do not achieve any recognised qualifications, although many improve their skills and progress to the next level of course.

137. Levels of attainment in both English and EFL are satisfactory. The oral fluency of most EFL students is appropriate to the level of the course they are taking. English students show an awareness of technical language and good reading skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and English as a foreign language, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Preliminary English test	1	No. of starts	187	198	205
		% retention	90	94	94
		% pass rate	*	*	*
First certificate in English	2	No. of starts	316	332	351
		% retention	88	96	94
		% pass rate	*	*	*
GCSE English (grades A* to C)	2	No. of starts	579	550	206
		% retention	74	71	80
		% pass rate	38	41	62
Certificate in advanced English	3	No. of starts	151	218	200
		% retention	90	89	89
		% pass rate	*	*	*
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	107	114	112
		% retention	95	82	82
		% pass rate	93	93	97
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	53	72	36
		% retention	94	90	86
		% pass rate	86	97	87

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

* data not available

Quality of education and training

138. Many lessons are taught well. The aims of the lesson are clearly set out at the beginning. In English, teachers provide meticulous support in helping students to understand and explore passages of text or ideas. EFL teachers give clear instructions for individual tasks and then carefully check to ensure that students have understood. Some lessons are lively and stimulating; teachers set interesting and varied tasks that capture the enthusiasm of students. In a GCE A-level English lesson, students explored the poem 'Kubla Khan'. They worked in groups, reading the poem aloud to help them understand it, and then produced lists of questions that they would like to ask the poet if that were possible. EFL students enjoyed and learned much from a lesson in which the teacher introduced greetings through Punch and Judy puppets.

139. In some less successful lessons, students failed to find small-group activities interesting and lost their concentration. In others, teachers were satisfied by superficial responses to their questions. In some lessons, one or two students were allowed to answer most of the questions, or the teacher failed to check whether students understood what was being covered. EFL teachers failed to provide suitably demanding tasks for the more able students.

140. There are clear policies for the setting and marking of homework and these are implemented consistently. In English, homework mostly takes the form of writing essays and students receive helpful feedback on their work with constructive suggestions on how they might improve it. Written

feedback to EFL students is sometimes limited to one word or phrase. English coursework is managed carefully. Students are encouraged to choose topics that draw on their particular interests.

141. Teachers provide a lot of help and guidance in and outside lessons and students speak highly of the support they receive. There are no formal monitoring procedures or tutorials for EFL students. In both English and EFL, students have the opportunity to participate in a range of visits which help develop their ideas.. Enrolment arrangements for EFL students are appropriately flexible. Students can join classes at any point in the year and staff are available to interview students in the daytime and the evening. Students commented that they were made to feel welcome at these sessions. Good diagnostic assessment ensures that students are placed on the most appropriate course.

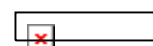
142. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. English staff are up to date with their subject and the syllabuses they teach. There is not enough opportunity for, particularly the hourly paid teachers, to update themselves in their subjects. Lessons take place in well-equipped and well-maintained classrooms. There is good access to specialist equipment, although there is little use of ICT. EFL teachers do not make enough use of overhead projectors, for example, to support the teaching of grammar. In some GCSE lessons, students are working from photocopied material which is of poor quality.

Leadership and management

143. The English provision is well organised. Staff meet regularly and have clearly defined areas of responsibility. The performance of students is reviewed carefully and specific actions are taken to address underachievement. At the moment, the provision for students with low GCSE grades who need to improve their skills is not entirely satisfactory. The students are following a demanding programme that combines GCSE English and the key skill of communication at level 2.

144. There are inadequacies in the management of EFL courses. Many students complete courses without taking the final examination to try and obtain the qualification. Permanently employed teachers of EFL meet every week, but the large numbers of hourly paid staff do not routinely attend these meetings. There are no schemes of work, and learning is planned on a week-by-week basis.

Access to HE and teacher training



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

Strengths

- high retention rates
- much good and very good teaching
- high proportion of students progressing from access courses to HE
- wide range of courses and flexible forms of study.

Weaknesses

- low levels of achievement on some professional courses
- some superficial comments from teachers on students' work.

Scope of provision

145. The provision attracts 400 adult students. There is a one-year, full-time access to HE modular course which enables students to follow a common core of key skills in English, psychology and humanities and IT, together with specialist units in the vocational pathways of nursing, teaching, IT, law, business and mathematics. Two-year, part-time courses in all vocational pathways are also available. A short pre-access course focuses on developing study skills and so prepares adults for returning to studying.

146. Part-time professional courses are available to students wishing to develop their skills as teachers and assistants. There are 140 part-time students enrolled on these courses. Courses include the certificate for literacy and number support assistants, the initial certificate in teaching basic skills, the certificate in specific learning difficulties, the City and Guilds certificate for teachers in further and adult education and the certificate in English language for teaching assistants. The college is also a centre for the post-compulsory certificate in education franchised from the University of Westminster, which attracts students from neighbouring boroughs as well as Harrow.

Achievement and standards

147. Pass rates on the access to HE courses compare well with national averages, particularly on the access to nursing and health course. Most students progress to HE. Considering that many students enrol with few formal qualifications and underdeveloped language skills, the standard of work is high.

148. Some of the professional courses have low pass rates that are partly caused by the failure of students to submit portfolio work. Students on the teacher education courses maintain good professional journals in which their personal and professional development is recorded.

149. Students are highly motivated. They show great tenacity and discipline in following their studies. Many are starting a new direction in life, some after having been made redundant, others now that their children have grown up and become independent. This is reflected in the high retention rates on most courses. In some cases, courses have a 100% retention rate.

A sample of retention and pass rates in access to HE and teacher training, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Access to nursing and health	3	No. of starts	65	44	150
		% retention	100	85	90
		% pass rate	57	66	84
Access to teaching	3	No. of starts	30	15	22

		% retention	93	100	85
		% pass rate	86	50	69
Access to humanities	3	No. of starts	64	52	51
		% retention	69	58	67
		% pass rate	36	38	43
Certificate in English language teaching to adults	3	No. of starts	22	25	21
		% retention	95	88	93
		% pass rate	95	0	87
City and Guilds 7305 certificate for FE and adult education	3	No. of starts	60	61	63
		% retention	93	88	95
		% pass rate	60	73	44
City and Guilds 7307 certificate for FE and adult education	3	No. of starts	60	76	49
		% retention	92	93	100
		% pass rate	0	49	36
City and Guilds 9281 initial certificate in teaching basic skills	3	No. of starts			
		% retention			
		% pass rate			

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

Quality of education and training

150. Most of the teaching is good or very good and none is less than satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and well managed. Where handouts are used they are usually of good quality. Teachers use question-and-answer techniques thoughtfully, often using the white board to record students' responses. During a teacher education lesson, the notion of the 'reflective practitioner' was discussed and a strong professional empathy was developed between the teacher and the students. Students are accustomed to purposeful work in small groups.

151. Considering that lessons are often of three-hours duration, a blend of different activities often works well. For example, a lesson on food science began with the teacher describing the chemical breakdown of food, followed by a 'molecular modelling' activity by students. After watching a well-chosen film on the alimentary system, practical work was carried out in the laboratory.

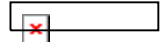
152. Systematic monitoring of students' progress and regular tutorial support are integral to all programmes. However, there are significant differences in the quality of teachers' feedback on students' marked work. The written comments provided, in some cases, are superficial. Marking criteria are not attached to all assignments as required by the validating body. Where work experience is part of the course, teachers ensure that the students are thoroughly prepared beforehand. Staff are well qualified. They have academic and vocational backgrounds appropriate to the programmes offered.

Leadership and management

153. Courses are well managed, although too many of the professional students fail to submit portfolios on time, which adversely affects pass rates. Quality assurance procedures are effective. Managers and teachers have high expectations of students and this inspires and motivates students. There are some very small teaching groups, and some specialist modules in the access to HE course only recruit very low numbers, which raises issues of the cost-effectiveness of some of

the provision. There is some appropriate staff development activity, but it is not related to any development plan. There are regular team meetings, but actions decided upon are not always followed through.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- much good teaching
- diverse range of provision
- good progression routes for students
- good resources
- well-managed provision.

Weaknesses

- some poor-quality learning materials
- some poor off-site facilities.

Scope of provision

154. The college offers a very diverse range of ESOL courses. Part-time ESOL courses are available at seven different levels and full-time courses at five levels. External accreditation is also available at a range of levels in science and IT. Students can take NVQ level 1 units in business and job-seeking skills. These courses enable students to progress to other mainstream courses within the college. Currently, there are 144 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses and 45 on part-time courses. Some 282 adult students aged 19 and over are enrolled on full-time courses and 1,225 on part-time courses.

155. There has been considerable expansion of ESOL provision. The college is developing its community links and courses take place in local schools and in a variety of community venues as well as at the main college sites. A course for students with mental health problems has been developed and a further one is planned, at a local hospital. Strategies such as open learning are being developed to accommodate the large waiting list for courses.

Achievement and standards

156. Levels of achievement in external examinations are generally high. Pass rates on level 1 courses are generally above the national average. The Associated Examining Board (AEB) literacy short course is particularly successful, with a pass rate of 96% in 2001, which is 18% above the national average. Students from a range of backgrounds achieve college certification. Pass rates on ESOL courses offering external accreditation in science, IT and business are high. Pass rates on the university entrance test, however, are low. Retention rates are at, or just above, national averages. Most students' attainments within lessons are appropriate to the level of course they are studying. There is often a good level of spoken English. Many students' folders reveal a high standard of work.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English for speakers of other languages, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
ESOL generic	1	No. of starts	1,183	1,409	1,454
		% retention	63	66	67
		% pass rate	92	97	97
AEB literacy (short)	1	No. of starts	314	321	237
		% retention	99	100	100
		% pass rate	76	79	96
Pitman higher intermediate	2	No. of starts	86	17	59
		% retention	99	100	100
		% pass rate	48	35	56
Northern Examination and Assessment Board (NEAB) university entrance test	3	No. of starts	118	111	117
		% retention	66	68	75
		% pass rate	37	51	*

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

* data not available

Quality of education and training

157. Most teaching is good or very good. Nevertheless, teaching was only satisfactory in a significant proportion of lessons. The better lessons are well planned. Activities are appropriately varied, demanding and enjoyable. In one beginners' lesson, students were describing physical feelings such as being hot or tired by miming to each other. Afterwards, they all responded enthusiastically to the teacher's questions, both orally and when asked to write on the board. Some teachers make good use of audiotapes, for example, to illustrate the use of tenses. Adult students work on their curriculum vitae as a means of improving their written English. The materials chosen by the teacher were relevant to the students' background and experience. In some lessons, the teaching was unimaginative, learning activities lacked purpose, tasks were not explained clearly, and students did not understand what was required of them and were, therefore, unable to complete

their tasks.

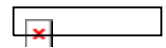
158. Teachers mark students' work in a clear and constructive way, and provide good verbal feedback to students. Students value the support they receive from teachers. All students receive an ESOL induction booklet and there is a common induction schedule and tutorial programme. All students are assessed at interview and placed on appropriate courses. There are individual learning plans and targets against which to measure and record achievement and progress. However, the procedures for measuring and recording progress are not being followed consistently.

159. Resources are generally good. There are learning centres with computers, a language laboratory and paper-based resources. There is also a dedicated IT room. There is little use of ICT to promote the learning of language. Some teachers rely heavily on work sheets, some of which are of poor quality and out of date. The accommodation and resources available at some community venues for ESOL lessons are poor. In one lesson, there were not enough full-size tables and chairs for the students present. Some community venues have crèche facilities that are much appreciated by students. All teachers are well qualified. Most staff receive training in the new ESOL national curriculum, including the hourly paid agency staff.

Leadership and management

160. Courses are well managed. Communication between staff is effective. Regular formal staff meetings focus on planning and the sharing of good practice. Staff have worked closely together in implementing the new ESOL curriculum and are developing a shared bank of learning resources. Agency staff receive payment to attend team meetings and staff development sessions. They feel valued and supported. A member of staff has recently been appointed to oversee the development of new community provision, which was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

Basic skills



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates
- effective, well-planned teaching
- responsiveness of the curriculum to the needs of students and the wider community
- accessible and well-resourced adult learning centre
- effective managers who have high expectations of staff.

Weaknesses

- inadequate access to suitable facilities at Harrow Weald campus
- underdeveloped progression routes.

Scope of provision

161. The college offers a range of Open College Network (OCN) and City and Guilds courses. These include OCN accredited courses at entry levels 1 to 3 in literacy and numeracy, and City and Guilds wordpower and numberpower courses. Open college accreditation is used on the pre-access course and the open learning induction programme. During the last academic year, over 300 students were engaged in study, some on short courses, such as the family learning programmes. The majority is enrolled at the adult learners' centre. Students follow individual learning programmes at the centre, where the flexible nature of the provision enables them to attend for short or longer sessions, depending on their circumstances.

Achievement and standards

162. Adult students achieve well. While attendance can be irregular, often because of domestic or work commitments, retention rates are high. Where information is available on performances nationally, for example, on family learning programmes, the retention and pass rates compare favourably with national averages. Students are encouraged to move from one level of study to the next, which helps motivate them and helps give them a sense of achievement. As progress is made and achievement validated, many individuals make significant gains in skills and confidence. The open learning induction programme has above average retention rates, partly because of the excellent interview process and effective monitoring of progress subsequently. The OCN literacy and numeracy provision enables students to gain accreditation in basic skills. Pass rates are high, but retention rates less so. In many cases, this is because adult students leave for a time, often to return to study later when personal circumstances allow.

163. The retention and pass rates for students on the volunteer training programme are high. Trainees work alongside the basic skills staff. A significant number of the students go on to other courses within college, for example, to access to HE and business studies courses. Others move into work or gain promotion at work. Progression routes, however, are underdeveloped.

164. The standard of students' work in literacy and numeracy is high. Students are well motivated and they often make significant progress over a short period of time. They are encouraged to engage in discussion, to read in order to obtain information and to write for a specific audience. They make effective use of IT in order to improve the presentation of their work.

Quality of education and training

165. Students benefit from good teaching. The basic skills provision is based firmly on the needs of the students. There is a very good match between individual students' aspirations and what they do in lessons. A mature mother of five with limited language skills has made significant gains. She has acquired OCN and City and Guilds awards and intends to move on to a GCSE programme. The programme of study has been relevant to her needs, and has accommodated some periods of absence arising from domestic difficulties.

166. Applicants are interviewed thoroughly before being admitted to courses. There is an accurate assessment of need. Students agree a clear plan of action with targets, and progress is monitored carefully. Students know what they have to do to improve and feel they are partners in planning their course of learning.

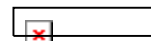
167. The family learning programmes provide good opportunities for adults in the community to study locally. In one well-taught programme, eight young mothers worked on everyday situations with which they were experiencing difficulties. They all had children in the school where the session was based and they wanted to be able to communicate effectively with the staff. Parents now feel more involved with the school and many intend to carry on studying. In particular, they appreciate the opportunity to use a crèche for their young children who are not of school age. This work is a good example of collaboration between a number of agencies, to enable adults who would not normally attend college to do so. Teachers recognise that such work is vital in the wider community in order to enable families to learn to speak for themselves and to feel they are not excluded.

168. The staff are well qualified and undergo regular training. They work effectively in teaching areas that are suitable for adults, and which are well resourced with access to IT. The Harrow Weald campus has few such facilities and student numbers are low. The Harrow-on-the-Hill adult learning centre is a model of good practice. Its success is built on good teaching and meticulous initial assessment and induction programmes. There are wide opportunities for adults to study and retention rates on existing courses are high. Teachers have excellent listening skills and they provide well-planned and effective opportunities for students to develop speaking and writing skills. They make good use of time and resources. In a well-planned, well-organised numeracy session, students took great delight in handling the Euro and converting it to different currencies. Students enjoy coming to college. They value the opportunities for learning and are very positive about using the centre.

Leadership and management

169. The basic skills team is well managed and expertly led. There are weekly team meetings, at which useful information is disseminated and there is opportunity for discussion. The recent initiatives in community work and the setting up of the adult learning centre are exciting developments. The team is aware that the work is developmental and they are in a secure position to build on their success.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates
- very effective teaching and support staff
- ready access to good facilities and equipment at the college

- high proportion of students progressing to other courses in FE colleges
- carefully planned lessons and work experience
- well-managed curriculum.

Weaknesses

- failure to extend some students in a minority of lessons
- inadequate behaviour-management plans
- failure to share good practice across the range of provision.

Scope of provision

170. The college offers a good range of discrete full-time courses for 38 young people with moderate and severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Part-time provision is available for around 250 adults, including those with profound and multiple disabilities, and those recovering from mental illness. Discrete full-time courses include pre-entry and entry level programmes, such as an access to FE course, a two-year skills for living programme, a skills for work course as well as a foundation training course.

171. Full-time students participate in enrichment activities and can acquire a range of additional qualifications and awards, including sports proficiency certificates, GCSE art and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The courses are popular and student numbers are increasing relatively quickly. Of the 17 classes being offered for part-time adult students in college or community venues during the inspection, students were aiming for qualifications in basic skills or life skills in 9 of them.

Achievement and standards

172. Retention and pass rates for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are at least high and often very high. Students' performance on externally assessed courses has been consistently above the national average at pre-entry and entry level, and there are 100% pass rates on many courses achieving 100% success. Attendance and punctuality are good. Students respond enthusiastically to the demands made, and the high standards set, by staff. The programmes promote positive attitudes to study and encourage students to try to achieve their full potential. Over the past two years, students with a range of learning difficulties have been entered for GCSE art and all have achieved grade C or above.

173. The standard of work in students' folders and the standard of students' practical work are high.

Students have produced some excellent portfolio work, which shows the development of their ideas following frequent visits to galleries and places of artistic interest. Students and staff are conscientious in maintaining the files and work diaries that are used to record and review students' progress. Programmes successfully develop students' basic skills and independent living skills. Many students join in group activities and decision-making and activities with increasing confidence and maturity. A high proportion of students progress to other courses in FE. A number of courses help improve the job skills of students and prepare them for employment.

Quality of education and training

174. Teaching for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Teachers and support workers are enthusiastic and committed to their work. They combine effectively to help students reach the objectives specified in their individual learning plans. Students' self-advocacy skills are encouraged and developed throughout the provision. Lessons are well planned. Teachers set suitably demanding tasks and provide good support for students. Teaching methods and learning materials are skilfully adapted to meet the needs of individual learners. For example, the planned content of a tutorial for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties was immediately changed to deal with a conflict between two students, which had occurred the previous day. The teacher swiftly prepared a worksheet for group discussion containing drawings of a number of conflict situations. With the help of support workers, students discussed their reactions to the situation. Some students, who were finding the discussion of personal relationships difficult, were calmed down expertly by staff and persuaded first to listen quietly and then to contribute to the lesson. With sensitive and skilful staff intervention and excellent teamwork, students were able to successfully identify constructive behavioural responses to conflict situations.

175. In a small minority of lessons, the teaching is not sufficiently lively or imaginative to hold students' interest and attention. On occasions, teachers fail to ensure that students participate effectively in activities or fail to monitor students' progress. Some practical sessions were too long for students' attention spans. The college is beginning to enrol students with a range of behavioural difficulties, but it has not yet developed effective behaviour-management plans for individual learners to help staff to manage behaviour and learning effectively.

176. Considerable emphasis is placed on preparing students for employment. All full-time students undertake regular work experience. A work experience co-ordinator organises work placements, trains students for independent travel and regularly visits employers to assess students' progress and performance. The college works with a national voluntary agency in a funded project to obtain employment for students at the end of their course. Full-time courses help students with the transition from school into college, as well as offering clear progression routes to other discrete courses, mainstream provision, training and employment.

177. Students have ready access to a range of good specialist facilities for art, pottery, manufacture and IT. Formal student reviews are undertaken twice a year and involve parents, carers and external agencies as appropriate. There is not enough display of the work and achievements of students in classrooms and across the college.

Leadership and management

178. The leadership and management of this area of provision are good. Teachers and support workers are committed to improving students' learning opportunities and to maintaining high standards. Teams meet regularly to review the progress of students and to develop common approaches to assessment and course documentation. Their work is underpinned by shared values. Thorough schemes of work and individual learning plans help to support learners. Staff are encouraged to update their knowledge and skills. In conducting their self-assessment, staff and managers fail to make reference to specific measurable targets and there is little investigation of trends in performance.

Part D: College data

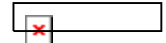
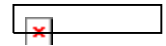


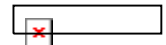
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	9	23
2	30	17
3	55	17
4/5	0	2
Other	6	41
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	4,019	1,263	31
Agriculture	19	38	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	0
Business	706	478	7
Hotel and catering	175	80	2
Health and community care	132	633	4
Art and design	759	346	6
Humanities	2,797	2,140	28
Basic education	382	3,479	22
Total	8,989	8,457	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/ 2000	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000
		1	Starters excluding transfers	397	411	788	1,100
	Retention rate (%)	90	85	79	93	81	82
	National average (%)	81	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	36	49	52	58	39	49
	National average (%)	59	62	66	62	63	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,289	2,264	2,155	705	735	705
	Retention rate (%)	81	77	77	87	77	76
	National average (%)	76	76	77	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	51	72	75	48	55	55
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	4,230	3,503	3,508	1,101	998	846
	Retention rate (%)	87	81	83	83	78	77
	National average (%)	77	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	68	71	70	52	49	48
	National average (%)	71	72	73	64	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	0	2	1	131	126	71
	Retention rate (%)	**	**	**	98	84	83
	National average (%)	83	84	80	84	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	**	**	**	50	53	42
	National average (%)	64	65	70	58	61	60

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 1997/98 - 1998/99: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention

and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

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

* data not available

** too few students to provide a valid calculation

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)	59	34	7	138
Level 2 (intermediate)	46	41	13	63
Level 1 (foundation)	65	26	9	23
Other sessions	75	21	4	31
Totals	58	34	8	255

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