



Brooksby Melton College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[What students like about the college](#)

[What they feel could be improved](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Agriculture, horticulture, countryside and fishery studies](#)

[Animal care](#)

[Equine](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Information and communication technology](#)

[Performing arts and media](#)

[Health, social care and childcare](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

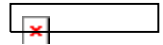
[Part D: College data](#)

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

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

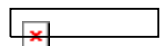
[Table 3: Summary of grades awarded to teaching by level](#)

Basic information about the college

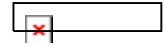


Name of college:	Brooksby Melton College
Type of college:	Specialist College
Principal:	Tony Gray
Address of college:	Brooksby Melton College Brooksby Melton Mowbray Leicestershire LE14 2LJ
Telephone number:	01664 850850
Fax number:	01664 855355
Chair of governors:	Peter Murphy
Unique reference number:	130754
Name of reporting inspector:	Annella Mochan HMI
Dates of inspection:	15-19 April 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

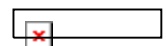


Brooksby Melton College is a specialist college that was formed in September 2000 from the merger of Brooksby College and Melton Mowbray College. The college operates from two main campuses, one of which is in the town centre at Melton Mowbray and the other which is six miles to the south in a 315-hectare estate at Brooksby. The estate includes a commercial farm, plant nursery and an equestrian centre. The college also has a 343-seat theatre and sports leisure centre in Melton Mowbray which are used extensively by the local community. The college offers courses in 12 of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) areas of learning. The college is an associate college of De Montfort University and provides higher education (HE) courses in animal science, equine science and sports management and performing arts. Work-based learning programmes are offered primarily in land-based subjects, agricultural service engineering and general engineering. Only further education (FE) courses, including work-based learning, were inspected.

In 2000/01, there were 3,620 enrolments by 2,491 students. Just over 33% of the full-time equivalent students were adults aged 19 or older. Of the adult students, 83% were part time, but only 9% of students aged 16 to 18 studied part time. Approximately 16% of enrolments were at level 3, 28% at level 2 and 27% at level 1. The college mission statement is to 'promote excellence in specialist and community learning'.

In 1998, Melton Mowbray College was placed in exceptional support by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and Melton Mowbray Further Education Corporation was dissolved in September 2000. Following the merger of Melton Mowbray College and Brooksby College a recovery plan was discussed, initially with the FEFC, and then the LSC. The Brooksby Melton College financial recovery plan was finally agreed with the LSC in March 2002.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be good in three of the eight curriculum areas inspected; agriculture, horticulture, countryside and fishery studies; animal care; and literacy and numeracy; and satisfactory in four curriculum areas. Provision in health, social care and childcare is unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses
- skilled management of the merger
- clear strategic direction from the college executive and governors
- strong and productive links with employers in most curriculum areas

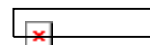
- good individual support for students
- specialist learning resources for the land-based provision
- good communications between the executive team and staff.

What should be improved?

- undemanding teaching
- health, social care and childcare provision
- students' punctuality and attendance
- procedures to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- teaching of key skills
- use of data for quality improvement
- monitoring of equal opportunities
- access for people with restricted mobility.

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

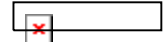
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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).

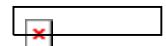
Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Agriculture, horticulture, countryside and fishery studies	Good. Provision in the community is good and is widening participation. There is a narrow range of courses for school-leavers. Retention and pass rates are high on some courses. Most teaching is good, but insufficient attention is given to reviewing teaching and learning and some course reviews lack rigour.
Animal care	Good. Teaching is well planned and effective, especially in practical lessons. Pass rates are high. Interesting assignments are used effectively to develop students' learning. There is a narrow range of provision with no short or part-time courses.
Equine	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on the full-time provision, but low on short courses. The broad range of programmes is widening participation. Links with industry are strong. There is much good teaching, but some teaching is insufficiently demanding and not all students achieve their full potential.
Engineering	Satisfactory. Most teaching is satisfactory, although it is good on agricultural service engineering and motor vehicle courses and pass rates are high. The standard of students' work is good. Students benefit from productive links with employers. In general engineering, there is insufficient monitoring of work-based learning and the progress of students is slow. Attendance and punctuality are poor on some courses.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Provision in the community is good and is widening participation. There is a narrow range of courses for school-leavers. Retention and pass rates are high on some courses. Insufficient attention is given to reviewing teaching and learning and some course reviews lack rigour.
Performing arts and media	Satisfactory. The standard of practical work in dance and technical theatre is good. Most teaching is good or better. Some lessons are poorly planned and are not managed well. Attendance is poor at many lessons. There were high pass rates in 2001, but low retention rates on the second-year national diploma in dance.
Health, social care and childcare	Unsatisfactory. Pass rates are high on some courses, but retention rates are low on many. Some lessons are insufficiently demanding and fail to engage students' interest, but teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers take too long to return students' marked work. Curriculum management is ineffective in eliminating unnecessary duplication of topics.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Most teaching is good or better. Teaching is well planned to meet the needs of individual students. Students make good progress. Some community venues do not have computers. The pass rate for students taking examinations is high.

How well is the college led and managed?



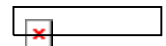
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college executive and governors have managed the merger well. Governors set clear strategic objectives and targets and monitor the progress towards them closely. Management roles and responsibilities are clear and communications across the college are good. The management of the curriculum across the campuses varies in quality. Quality assurance procedures are comprehensive, but they are not implemented consistently in all areas. There are some poor quality self-assessment reports and development plans. The lesson observation scheme is not having a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Links with employers are good in most vocational areas. The college promotes equality of opportunity effectively through a range of measures, but these are not always adequately monitored and reviewed. The management information system has been significantly improved and systems are in place to provide managers and staff with timely and reliable data on students' retention and pass rates.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college is committed to social inclusion and more courses have been offered for people who are under-represented in FE. A number of successful initiatives have been introduced. Equine courses are offered at nine centres and information and communication technology (ICT) training for farmers is provided across the county. Participation by adults in ICT training has been widened with the opening of a 'learning shop' in the town centre at Melton Mowbray. Programmes for adults who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills have been extended and family literacy courses are run in local schools. A number of young people from local schools who are disillusioned with education attend a variety of college courses. The proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in the community is low. The college identified the need to provide programmes in the community for people whose first language is not English.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



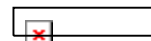
Pre-entry advice and guidance are good. The induction programme helps students to settle quickly into the college and their studies. There are appropriate support arrangements for residential students. The support for individual students is good. Most students with additional learning needs receive effective and timely support. Students' progress towards their learning goals is carefully monitored. The quality and effectiveness of tutorials is inconsistent. Careers advice and guidance meets the needs of students. College staff provide good support in the work place for work-based learners.

Students' views of the college



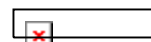
Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below:

What students like about the college



- friendly and enthusiastic staff
- relevant industrial experience of tutors
- individual help and support from tutors
- food in the refectory at the Brooksby campus
- facilities, equipment and college estate at the Brooksby campus
- information technology learning centre at the Melton campus
- being treated as adults.

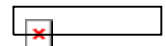
What they feel could be improved



- teaching and relevance of key skills
- absenteeism and punctuality of some students

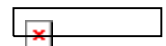
- decoration and maintenance of classrooms at the Melton campus
- access for people with mobility difficulties
- car parking
- some out-of-date equipment.

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

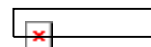


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	56	36	8
19+ and WBL*	68	29	3
Learning 16-18	52	36	12
19+ and WBL*	60	37	3

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

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. The college's data on students' achievements for 2001 are the first set of combined data following the merger of Brooksby College and Melton Mowbray College. In most curriculum areas, with the exception of some courses of more than one-year duration at the former Melton Mowbray College, the 2001 data on students' achievements were accurate. Historically, much of the data on students' achievements for the former Melton Mowbray College were not completely reliable, but for Brooksby College they were sound. It is therefore not possible to assess accurately trends in performance for the merged college.

2. At Brooksby College in 1999/2000, the pass rates for students of all ages on long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were well above the national average for specialist colleges. The retention rate was also above the national average for students of all ages with the exception of students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 long qualifications, where it was below. College data for the Brooksby campus for 2000/01 indicate that the overall retention rate for students of all ages rose and high pass rates were maintained for students aged 16 to 18, but the proportion of adults gaining their qualification fell. For Melton Mowbray College, for 1999/2000, much of the data on students' achievements are not reliable. For 2000/01, college data for the Melton campus show that, for qualifications at levels 1 to 3, the retention and pass rates are at or above the national average with the exception of the retention rate at level 2 and the pass rate at level 3, where it is slightly below.

3. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses.

16-18 year olds

4. Retention rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses improved from 66% in 1999/2000, to 89% in 2000/01. In 2000/01, only 66% of students aged 16 to 18, who completed their course, passed the examination, compared with 77% in 1999/2000. The number of students gaining high grades in 2000/01 was, at 45%, about the same as 1999/2000. Department of Education and Skills (DfES) figures for 2001 show that the average points score for students in the college taking GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) or A levels is 7.5. This is well below the national and local averages of 17.8 and 16.9, respectively. Pass rates in dance, theatre and dramatic arts and English language were good, but poor in mathematics, psychology and most science subjects.

5. The number of students aged 16 to 18 enrolling on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses declined from 256 in 1999 to 64 in 2001/02. In 1999/2000, on GCSE courses, only 66% of students aged 16 to 18 completed their studies. Some 43% achieved grades A* to C, a proportion which is below the national average. The retention rate fell in 2000/01 to 55% and the proportion of students gaining high grades was very low at 35%. The students currently enrolled on all GCE AS and A levels and GCSEs are studying them as an addition to their main course of study. There has been a decline in enrolments on GCE A-level courses by students aged 16 to 18, from 173 in 1999/2000, to 42 in 2001/02.

6. Prior to the merger in September 2001, the retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on national certificate and diploma courses at Brooksby College were well above the national average. In 1999/2000, 90% of students completed their courses and 94% gained their award. In the same period, for the small number of students on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced courses at Melton Mowbray College, the pass rate was very low. College data for 2001 indicate that retention and pass rates on GNVQ advanced, national certificate and diploma programmes are above the national average. The retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on first diploma programmes in land-based subjects are very high.

7. Few students aged 16 to 18 follow NVQ level 1 programmes, but for those who do the retention and pass rates are close to the national averages. In 1999/2000, the retention rate on NVQ level 2 courses was above the national average. However, the pass rate was below the national average and a significant number of students did not complete their award within the time agreed on their learning plan. In 2000/01, pass rates on NVQ level 2 programmes rose significantly to about the national average. In the same period, on NVQ level 3, the retention rate was high, but only 58% gained a full award.

8. In 2001/02, there are 159 learners on work-based learning programmes and the majority are aged 16 to 18. There are nearly three times more students on advanced modern apprenticeships than on foundation modern apprenticeships. Most work-based learners are on advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in either land-based subjects that include agricultural service engineering or general engineering. Of the 175 learners who started in the three years from 1998 to 2000, 62 were on foundation modern apprenticeships and 113 on advanced modern apprenticeships. The retention rates on these programmes are very high at about 95% and 84% for the foundation modern apprenticeships and advanced modern apprenticeships, respectively. Overall, the number of learners successfully completing the foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship framework is high.

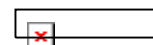
Adult learners

9. In 1999/2000, students aged 19 and over on GCE A-level courses were less successful than students aged 16 to 18. The retention and pass rates were low at 59%, and 56% respectively, and only 35% gained high grades. College data for 2001 indicate a significant improvement in both the retention rate and the pass rate, but this has been accompanied by a significant decline in adult enrolments from 70 in 1999/2000 to 22 in 2000/01. On GCSE courses, the retention rate for adults is low. In 1999/2000 and 2000/01, some 68% and 79%, respectively, gained high grades of A* to C, which are above the national average. A small number of adults enrol on access to HE courses and the pass rate is consistently high and most students are successful in gaining a place at university.

10. The pass rate for adults on national certificate and diploma courses is very high. From 1998 to 2000, all adults who completed their course achieved their award. However, over the three years, only 75% of students completed their course. For adults following NVQ level 2 and level 3 programmes at Melton Mowbray College in 1999/2000, the retention rates were good, but a very low proportion of students gained an NVQ award. Over the same year, adults at Brooksby College were more successful. Retention rates were very high on NVQ levels 2 and 3. All NVQ 3 students who were retained gained the award, but at level 2 only 60% were successful. College data for 2001 show that retention rates remained high on NVQ levels 2 and 3. However, only 62% of students achieved their award at level 2 and 54% at level 3.

11. Adults on programmes to improve their literacy and numeracy skills gain in confidence so helping them to progress in education. Overall, students are very successful in developing a wide range of skills that they are able to apply effectively either at work or in their personal life.

Quality of education and training



12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 113 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 60%, satisfactory in 34% and less than satisfactory in 6%. Teaching is better on level 2 and level 3 courses than on courses at level 1. Teaching is particularly good on agriculture and literacy and numeracy programmes, but poor on health, social care and childcare. Lessons in which the majority of students were adults, received the higher proportion of lessons graded as outstanding. The majority of lessons graded unsatisfactory were for students aged 16 to 18. In most curriculum areas, there is a good balance and no measurable difference between the quality of

and theatre, the college farm and estate to enable students to practice and develop their practical skills. In a significant proportion of lessons in some curriculum areas there was low attendance or, less often, students arrived late, resulting in the teaching and learning being interrupted. Most teachers dealt positively with these disruptions. Attendance overall was satisfactory. It was high in animal care, at 87%, but low in engineering at 71%. Attendance on level 1 courses was low, at 70%, but higher on level 2 and level 3 courses, at 82% and 81%, respectively.

13. There are excellent opportunities for full-time students to undertake planned work experience. Work experience is an integral part of land-based courses. Placements are carefully selected and students are routinely monitored. Good use is made of the experience students gain on placement to enrich their classroom lessons. Many lessons are planned to incorporate activities that develop students' practical skills. Early morning routine duties on the commercial enterprises are an important part of the students' experience on land-based courses. These duties include stable management and work on the college farm and fish farm. Students work to industry standards that prepare them well for their work placements and enhance their employment prospects. In most classes, there is considerable emphasis on health and safety, but in a few lessons students did not wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

14. Work-based learning was observed in two of the curriculum areas. Teaching was good or better in all sessions observed. College staff work closely with employers and the co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training is good. Agricultural service engineering staff work closely with a major agricultural machinery manufacturer and students are taught using the most modern equipment available. Equipment from local farms and machinery suppliers is brought regularly to the college for students to undertake realistic tasks.

15. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified in their subject areas. Some 84% of full-time staff and 38% of part-time teaching staff have a teaching qualification. In a few areas, such as performing arts and media, a very low proportion of teachers have achieved a teaching qualification. There is no clear college policy to ensure that teachers update their industrial or commercial experience. There is a good level of staff development that is suitably focused on key priorities in teaching and learning. However, there is insufficient evaluation of the impact of staff development in contributing to improvements in quality. Most support staff are deployed effectively to help teachers and learners. However, there is no technical support for information technology (IT) in the evenings, which has resulted in some disruption to lessons. Relationships between teachers and learners are good and students speak positively of the support they receive from their tutors.

16. The Brooksby campus is conducive to learning. Accommodation is well maintained and most teaching rooms are pleasantly furnished and have appropriate teaching aids. Some poor quality temporary classrooms continue to be used for horticulture and fishery students. There is residential accommodation for 90 students on the Brooksby campus. Wardens organise a good range of social and recreational activities that are open to all students. Students have access to a well-equipped leisure centre on the Melton campus and a range of country sports at the Brooksby campus. Students are complimentary about the refectory facilities, particularly on the Brooksby campus. Significant improvements have been made to the Melton campus since the merger. The refurbished classrooms and well-equipped computer suites for teaching ICT courses are of a good standard. However, there is a significant proportion of drab classroom accommodation that is in need of decoration. People with restricted mobility are unable to gain access to some areas of the college.

17. Students at the Brooksby and Melton campuses have good access to up-to-date computers and the Internet. Investment in ICT has been high. There is a good ratio of computers to full-time students of 1:5. There are no computers in some community venues. The college intranet is easy to use and provides access to learning materials for some curriculum areas. The library at the Brooksby campus is bright and spacious with a good range of books, journals and videos. The careers information centre is well resourced. At the Melton campus the library is small, poorly located and uninviting, and provides a more limited range of learning resources.

18. In most curriculum areas, the monitoring of students' progress is effective. A range of assessment methods is used and there is a balance of practical assessment and assignments, presentations and tests. Most assignments are interesting, well designed and presented to a

standard format with clear grading criteria. Many assignments effectively integrate key skills. On most courses assessment is carefully planned and students are aware of assessment schedules. Most assessment is timely, rigorous and fair, and is carried out regularly. Most students receive good feedback on the standards they are achieving and how they can improve their work further. There is regular assessment of work-based learners and it is usually undertaken in the workplace. Apprentices' portfolios generally contain a range of testimonies, photographs and other diverse evidence. However, on some programmes such as horticulture, there is insufficient use of direct observation and over-reliance on witness testimony.

19. The college is committed to meeting the needs of individual students, employers and the local community. The college currently offers mainly vocational courses in 12 of the LSC areas of learning. In most curriculum areas, there is a wide range of courses with good progression routes. For example, students on foundation level courses in animal care and equine studies can progress to national diploma courses and then to Higher National Diploma (HND) and degree courses. The college has identified the need to develop entry and foundation level and level 2 provision in areas such as performing arts. The college has recently undertaken a strategic review of its provision, and no longer offers full-time GCE AS and A-level courses. Some GCE AS and A levels have been retained to provide additional qualifications for students on vocational programmes. Students are offered good opportunities to study for a range of additional awards related to their main qualification. These are valued by students and improve their employment prospects. All courses include enrichment activities, but participation by students on some courses is low.

20. Links with the local community, schools, and employers are effective. For example, the college works with a major agricultural machinery company to provide apprenticeship training nationally. The college is committed to widening participation and has introduced publicity for its provision in outreach centres and community venues. Work with local schools allows pupils to sample different curriculum areas and enables young people who are disillusioned with education to enrol on a course at the college.

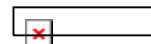
21. All prospective full-time and many part-time students are interviewed and receive an extensive range of information to help them make an informed decision about a suitable course. In some curriculum areas, there is an initial assessment of vocational competence which assists in placing the student on the most suitable course. Good induction programmes enable students to get to know the college and their course requirements quickly. The support and guidance arrangements in the college are good and are sensitive to equality of opportunity. Students' additional learning needs are determined through various initial assessments carried out either before the start of their course or during induction. Learning support is provided in various ways, including one-to-one or small group sessions. Where required, learning support assistants are allocated to help students in practical lessons. Support arrangements for work-based learners are good with two learning support tutors working with learners in the workplace. The take-up of learning support by those with identified needs is very high. Students' progress is closely monitored through a structured review process and personal tutors are kept well informed.

22. Full-time students have a weekly tutorial. Tutorials focus on the individual students' action planning and review and deal effectively with pastoral matters. Students' initial action plans do not always include the outcomes from the basic skills or key skills assessments. Students' progress towards their learning goals and qualifications is carefully monitored and recorded. Most students have a progress review with their tutor/course tutor at least twice each term. Full-time students are set targets, but these are not always sufficiently demanding. On most courses regular reports of students' progress and attendance are sent to parents or employers. There is an annual parents' evening that is well attended. The arrangements for monitoring part-time students' progress are less formal, but nevertheless generally effective. Students speak highly of the formal and informal support they receive from tutors, much of which is provided outside class time.

23. There are attractive and welcoming student services centres at Brooksby and the Melton campus. Staff are appropriately qualified and trained. Support is provided for a wide range of personal needs including careers advice and guidance, counselling and financial advice. The college has a good relationship with Leicestershire Careers Service and a link adviser holds careers interviews with students and makes useful contributions in tutorials. The college has recently

achieved accreditation from the Guidance Accreditation Board for the quality of student guidance it provides. The college has two nurseries providing 60 places and children of students are given priority.

Leadership and management



24. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college executive and governors have managed the merger of the two colleges well. There have been comprehensive reviews of finance, curriculum, staffing and the management structure. The college's corporate objectives and strategic plan give clear direction. Staff have a good understanding of the operational priorities that have been developed from the corporate objectives. Since merger, the corporation has spent considerable time and effort in developing and agreeing the college's recovery plan in addition to regularly monitoring the activities of the college. The recovery plan, agreed with the LSC, contains stringent financial targets in addition to key developments for the curriculum. Short-term targets have been successfully met, but it will be some time before the overall success of the plan can be determined.

25. Communications across the college are good. Staff consider that they have been well briefed on the developments required as a result of the merger. The views of staff contribute to the process of continuous improvement. Staff appraisal is completed annually and leads to a personal development plan that is linked to operational objectives.

26. Management roles and responsibilities are clear and are carried out diligently. In most areas of the college, curriculum management is effective. In a few areas, development of the curriculum, sharing of good practice, assignment planning and the quality of schemes of work show weakness. Management training is ongoing and valued by staff.

27. There are good industry links in most vocational areas. There are industry liaison committees in several land-based curriculum areas that provide an informed view on curriculum relevance and possible developments. Students studying agricultural service engineering benefit from teachers that are aware of the latest technical developments through the close links with a major manufacturer of agricultural machinery.

28. The policies and procedures for quality assurance and self-assessment are comprehensive. The views of students, parents and, more recently, employers involved in work experience placements are gathered and used to consider revision of the quality procedures. All teaching teams and support teams are required to produce an annual self-assessment report and development plan for improvement. Teaching teams make comparisons of retention and pass rates against their own targets and national averages. Prior to the merger, staff at the Melton campus were not involved in self-assessment and this has resulted in variability in the quality of self-assessment reports and the subsequent development plans between respective areas and sites.

29. Other aspects of quality review include annual lesson observations for all teachers and a planned schedule for the internal audit of all curriculum and student support areas. The internal audits are evaluative, use lesson observation grades as evidence and also result in useful plans for improvement in delivery of resources for curriculum areas. The annual lesson observation grades are confidential to individual staff. They do not form a part of the annual appraisal unless staff agree to release them. The lesson observation system has not had a major impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning because senior managers have accorded the information a low priority.

30. The college promotes equality of opportunity through a range of measures. The operational objectives and curriculum reviews have identified the need for more entry level and level 1 courses to promote greater participation in education by the local community. All advertising material is

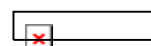
reviewed to ensure it promotes equality of opportunity and lesson observations identify any bias in learning materials or teaching activities. The learner support fund is used well to ensure students are not disadvantaged in attending courses by distance or childcare needs. There are effective systems for dealing with complaints and disciplinary matters.

31. There is an equal opportunities committee comprising a cross-section of college staff and two governors. The committee receives reports on the numbers of students categorised by gender and ethnicity. The committee discusses a range of issues such as the Disabilities Act and requirements of the Child Protection Act as it applies to residential students in the college. It closely and comprehensively monitors the provision of staff aspects of equality of opportunity. However, the achievements of students are not monitored against any gender or other groupings. There is inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in some work-based provision. An annual equal opportunities report prepared by the committee is discussed by the academic board and received by the corporation.

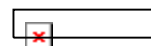
32. Management information data inherited by the merged college were not consistently reliable and the 1999/2000 data on students' achievements for the Melton campus have not been sufficiently reliable to be used to inform inspection judgements. The lack of reliable data also had an adverse impact on the ability of college managers and the corporation to review past performance and set targets for improvement. The college has made significant investments in management information systems and is now able to produce reliable data on student retention and pass rates. Systems are being put in place to provide managers with better and more timely access to student information. There remain some issues in fully tracking the assessment and progress of some work-based learners.

33. The corporation sets and reviews targets for retention and pass rates that encourage continuous improvement. The corporation also receives a range of reports on quality and academic performance from the academic board. The corporation closely monitors the college's recovery plan and progress towards the college's corporate objectives and strategic targets. The college has a sound financial framework with which to address the significant financial issues it faces. Operational plans are costed and financial priorities identified. Budgets are closely monitored and the monitoring information is timely and readily available to budget holders.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Agriculture, horticulture, countryside and fishery studies



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates

- good teaching

- effective use of the college estate and grounds for students' learning
- wide range of courses with good progression routes
- well-planned and comprehensive assessment on full-time courses
- productive links with employers
- good additional and pastoral support.

Weaknesses

- some poor learning resources
- insufficient work-based assessment in amenity horticulture
- ineffective action planning following students' progress reviews.

Scope of provision

34. In agriculture, horticulture, countryside and fishery studies the college offers a wide range of courses at intermediate and advanced level. Full-time courses include first diplomas, national certificates and national diplomas. Part-time courses include NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4. Students can choose to study from a range of Royal Horticultural Society qualifications. Foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships are offered for work-based learners. Students benefit from a good range of additional qualifications such as pesticides application, chainsaw use, forklift truck operation and first aid.

Achievement and standards

35. The retention rates on most courses are consistently high. Over the last three years, 1998/99 to 2000/01, pass rates on most full-time courses have been consistently high and often well above the national average. In 2000/01, the pass rate on national diplomas in agriculture, horticulture and countryside and on first diplomas in horticulture and countryside was 100%. The retention and pass rates on NVQ programmes are high. Retention rates on work-based learning programmes are high. Of the 54 foundation modern apprentices who have started training since 1998, only 13% left early. To date, some 25% have achieved their apprenticeship and 62% remain in learning. Students'

written work is of a good standard and students demonstrate good practical skills. Punctuality and attendance on full-time courses are satisfactory, but poor on some part-time courses. Progression into employment and HE is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in agriculture, horticulture, countryside and fishery studies, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First diploma in agriculture	2	No. of starts	9	8	13
		% retention	89	88	85
		% pass rate	88	100	82
First diploma in fishery studies	2	No. of starts	9	8	16
		% retention	100	100	88
		% pass rate	67	100	79
First diploma in horticulture	2	No. of starts	10	7	9
		% retention	90	86	89
		% pass rate	89	100	100
NVQ in amenity horticulture	2	No. of starts	10	13	7
		% retention	90	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	86
National diploma in fishery studies	3	No. of starts	23	24	22
		% retention	78	75	86
		% pass rate	100	100	95
National diploma in countryside	3	No. of starts	6	8	9
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	83	75	100
National certificate in horticulture	3	No. of starts	24	15	19
		% retention	100	80	84
		% pass rate	83	75	100

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

Quality of education and training

36. Most of the teaching is good or better. Schemes of work and lessons are well planned. Teachers have productive working relationships with their students. Teaching involves students in the college's commercial activities. The farm, estate and grounds are used effectively for teaching and learning. Horticulture students use the college grounds to map the location of shrubs on a mixed border as part of a design and maintenance assignment. The farm is used extensively to develop agriculture students' knowledge of crop and animal husbandry. These students work alongside a field agronomist to monitor arable crop growth stages and conduct small-scale field trials to compare the effects of pesticides on winter barley. Fishery students practice the netting of carp in commercial lakes. Countryside students benefit from practical activities linked to environmental management of the college estate. There is good promotion of health and safety, but in horticulture, the standard of dress and footwear in some practical sessions is too casual. Most students are involved in enrichment activities that include tours to study agriculture and horticultural

practices in different regions of England. Key skills have been satisfactorily included in courses. In some theory lessons, students spend excessive time copying from the whiteboard. Some learning materials, such as handouts, are poorly presented, with too much information in small print and few diagrams.

37. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and have good links with industry to update their knowledge. Horticulture facilities are good. A covered area allows students to work with soil regardless of the weather. Commercial glass houses give students good experience in propagation and associated plant care. Machinery and equipment are generally of an adequate standard, although some are outdated and do not reflect current commercial practice. Teaching rooms are of a good standard with the exception of those for fishery studies and horticulture that are in poor decorative order. There are sufficient books and journals to support learning. Teachers work closely with industry to give students access to resources not available in the college. Apprentices benefit from very good employers who provide individual support with on-the-job learning.

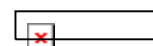
38. Assessments are well planned. Assignment briefs are interesting with well-defined tasks and clear grading criteria. The better assignments integrate the assessment of key skills. Assessed work is returned promptly and students find the feedback helpful. There is insufficient observation of assessors carrying out assessment of students' performance. Agriculture apprentices are regularly assessed by observation of their performance. Testimonies, photographs and other diverse evidence are used effectively. Oral questioning is used effectively to check apprentices' knowledge. For horticulture apprentices, there is an over-reliance on witness testimony, assessment visits are infrequent and there is little direct observation of their performance. Formal tutorials take place twice a term. Students set out their learning goals at the start of their course and subsequent tutorials are used to monitor progress. Students' action planning from progress reviews and tutorials is weak and tutors do not check that remedial work has been undertaken. The targets set are often imprecise and insufficiently demanding. Students do not value the target-setting process.

39. Initial guidance and information on courses are good. 'Taster' sessions are offered to enable students to sample the different courses to help them make an informed decision about the best course for them. Initial assessment is used well to identify the additional learning needs of students. Work-based learners are assessed on their knowledge of the industry and employers help identify vocational abilities. Where needed, tutors help students in theoretical and practical classes and visit apprentices in the work place to help them to write testimonies and interpret assessment standards. This is highly valued by apprentices, although some employers find the visits difficult to fit around commercial activities. Academic and pastoral support for full-time students are good.

Leadership and management

40. Courses are well managed. All staff are involved in the self-assessment process of teaching and course provision and accurately identify the actions required to improve provision. Internal verification is well managed with good records, although there is insufficient checking that standards comply with programme requirements in horticulture. Work-based learning is well managed in agriculture with good allocation of time for work-based visits to assess and monitor apprentices. In horticulture, insufficient staff are allocated to work-based learners. The promotion of equal opportunities and the combating of harassment and bullying are insufficiently promoted in the workplace.

Animal care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- high retention rates on first and national diploma courses
- well-managed and effective practical teaching
- effective use of assignments to develop learning
- good progression into continuing education or employment
- well-managed provision.

Weaknesses

- narrow range of courses
- poor teaching of key skills on the national diploma course.

Scope of provision

41. Full-time provision includes NVQ level 1 and level 2, first diploma and national diploma animal care. There is a strong demand for both the first and national diploma courses with high numbers recruited on to each. Students are offered the opportunity to take additional awards including GCE AS biology, City and Guilds pet store management and the safe use of veterinary medicines, but take-up of these courses is low. There are nearly 150 students enrolled on full-time courses, all but 6 are aged 16 to 18. There is no short course, part-time provision or work-based training.

Achievement and standards

42. The retention and pass rates on the first and national diploma are consistently above the national averages. The retention rate on NVQ level 2 animal care is below the national average. In 2001, the retention rate rose on the NVQ level 1 to just above the national average. Since 1999, all students who completed their NVQ level 1 and level 2 animal care course gained the award. Pass rates are high for those students entered for additional qualifications. The standard of students' work in theoretical and practical lessons is good. Attendance and rates of progression across the area are high.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ in animal care	1	No. of starts	7	2	16
		% retention	57	50	81
		% pass rate	100	100	100
NVQ in animal care	2	No. of starts	*	17	3
		% retention	*	65	67
		% pass rate	*	100	100
First diploma in animal care	2	No. of starts	48	58	36
		% retention	90	91	86
		% pass rate	95	94	97
National diploma in animal care	3	No. of starts	40	45	56
		% retention	95	89	84
		% pass rate	100	98	91

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

43. The majority of teaching is good or better. Lessons are well planned and effectively managed. A variety of teaching techniques in both theoretical and practical lessons are used effectively to involve all students. Practical teaching in laboratories and in the animal care unit is particularly well managed. Good use is made of real material for dissection and other laboratory practical classes. In one lesson, students working in pairs carried out a very comprehensive dissection of casualty lambs, first identifying all the organs then removing and examining them, with the teacher using directed questions to revise aspects of anatomy previously taught in other lessons. The small animal practical lessons combine hands-on experience with animals with practical tasks designed to reinforce previous learning. In many lessons, the standard of work is demanding. Students respond positively in class and demonstrate a high level of attainment. Teachers use good quality interactive or gapped handouts in classroom lessons and well-designed worksheets in outdoor practical lessons. The teaching of key skills to national diploma students is not well planned or managed effectively, resulting in some students making slow progress in developing their key skills.

44. Assignment briefs are clear with explicit grading criteria, which are used effectively to assess students' work. Assignments are realistic and are often related to students' work experience or examples from industry. Teachers provide detailed comments and constructive feedback on marked work. Many students make effective use of the Internet for research to complete their assignments. Good use is made of work-based assessments for NVQ level 1 and level 2 students. There is a comprehensive system of internal verification of assignments with effective feedback to assessors, but there is no internal verification of practical assessments on diploma courses.

45. There are effective systems for monitoring and recording students' progress. All students value the twice-termly, one-to-one tutorials with their tutor. Some students' action plans from tutorials are superficial and they are not always followed up systematically in subsequent tutorials. Learning support for students is good, especially on the NVQ level 1 course. All courses include well-organised and managed work experience. Students on work experience are carefully monitored and have regular visits and effective support from staff on the animal care team.

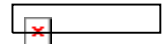
46. The animal care unit is about five minutes drive from the main campus. This makes integration of theoretical and practical tuition difficult. The unit contains collections of rodents, fish, exotics,

birds, lagomorphs, ferrets, goats, a grooming parlour and a small kennel block. There is no cattery provision, which precludes students gaining hands-on experience with cats during their practical lessons. All rooms are attractively decorated with relevant information about the animals painted on the walls. At the animal unit, students changing facilities are cramped. There is a good book stock for animal care in the library. Staff are appropriately experienced and qualified and make good use of their knowledge of industry in lessons.

Leadership and management

47. The course provision is well managed. There is an effective sub-division of the more popular courses into smaller teaching groups. Students' assignments are well planned, are effective in raising achievement and target dates for assignment work are adhered to. Course files are comprehensive. The self-assessment process is thorough and includes a development plan to improve the quality of the provision. The animal care unit is well managed with good attention to animal welfare.

Equine



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on first diploma and national diploma courses
- good practical stable management skills
- productive links with industry
- good range of provision that widens participation.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on short courses
- insufficiently demanding teaching
- inadequate target setting for individual students

- insufficient use of equestrian facilities to reinforce learning.

Scope of the provision

48. There is a good range of equine courses. The full-time courses offered are NVQ level 1 horse care and first and national diplomas in horse studies. The part-time and short courses on offer include NVQ levels 1 to 3 horse care, British Horse Society (BHS) stages 1 to 4, BHS preliminary teaching test and the BHS horse owner's certificate. These courses and others including the riding and road safety test, and health and safety at work are available as additional qualifications to students on full-time courses. Full-time and part-time courses leading to NVQ and BHS qualifications are offered as outreach provision at equine establishments across the county. The majority of learners at the outreach centres are adults. The outreach programme is helping to widen participation.

Achievement and standards

49. The pass rates on the first and national diploma in horse care are high and well above the national average, but the retention rates are about the national average. Nearly all students entered for the riding and road safety test, and health and safety at work gain the qualification. In 2001, the retention rate on the preliminary teaching certificate was high, but the pass rate was very low. The pass rates for NVQ and BHS qualifications are low. In 2001, the outbreak of foot and mouth disease was a contributory factor to the low pass rates, because of it a significant number of students did not sit some examinations. Students on NVQ programmes often exceed the prescribed two years to achieve their qualification. Too little account is taken of prior attainment or current skill level when permitting students to take the course and students do not have individual assessment plans. Full-time students on early morning yard duties display good practical stable management skills. Students carry out tasks competently and at a commercially acceptable speed. Students work well in teams, especially when carrying out practical duties in the yard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ in horse care	1	No. of starts	*	*	15
		% retention	*	*	80
		% pass rate	*	*	58
Stage 1 horse knowledge and riding	1	No. of starts	33	20	16
		% retention	76	75	94
		% pass rate	100	67	27
NVQ in horse care	2	No. of starts	19	29	9
		% retention	89	86	100
		% pass rate	100	5	67
Stage 2 assistant grooms certificate	2	No. of starts	19	16	14
		% retention	79	63	86
		% pass rate	73	70	17
First diploma in horse	2	No. of starts	14	19	16

studies		% retention	86	84	81
		% pass rate	100	94	92
National diploma in horse studies	3	No. of starts	19	13	23
		% retention	63	85	70
		% pass rate	100	80	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

50. Much of the teaching in equine studies is good or better. Most lessons are well planned and practical riding activities are well organised and managed. Teachers carefully explain the aims of lessons and what students should be able to achieve by the end. In practical lessons, teachers give constructive feedback that motivates students and helps them improve their riding techniques and overall performance. Students' favoured learning styles are identified at induction, but are not always used effectively to ensure that individual students are taught in the best way. Teachers often devise insufficiently demanding work to enable individual students to achieve their full potential. In theoretical and practical lessons, teachers rarely involve the student in analytical discussion, peer-assessment or self-assessment. The lesson observation scheme has not had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. In one session, students worked in pairs to develop their lunging skills with one partner assessing the horse in order to develop a training programme for it. The teacher did not always develop the students' skills of evaluation and critical analysis by asking them to see the horse perform a variety of exercises on the lunge, even though they had covered these exercises in previous practical sessions. The teaching of adults on equine courses in outreach centres is good. The programme is flexible to meet the needs of individual learners and makes use of experienced members of the industry as part-time teachers. Students receive well-planned individual tuition that builds their confidence and attainment is high.

51. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Within the last academic year, many staff have undertaken a wide range of professional development courses including occupational and teaching skills, drug awareness, personal safety and counselling. The equine facilities are good with a suitable range of horses, equipment and riding arenas. The facilities are managed on a commercial basis. The commercial use of the facilities is not incorporated into the curriculum to widen students' experience and to reinforce learning.

52. All full-time students have regular tutorials. However, there is not enough use of individual action planning at tutorials and progress reviews to help students achieve their goals. Many full-time students have good practical equine experience on entry to the programmes, but insufficient use is made of this knowledge so that they do not achieve high standards. There is a good level of support for students who have been identified as needing additional learning support. The library is open on Saturday and a tutor is available in the library one evening a week to support outreach students.

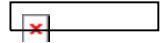
53. Assessments are well planned and students receive an assignment schedule at the start of their course. A wide range of effective assessment methods is used. Internal verification procedures are well documented and have led to improvements to assignments and assessments. The progress of some students is not rigorously monitored and some have been slow to submit assignments. The assessment and internal verification procedures for students on outreach programmes are sound.

Leadership and management

54. The equine teaching team meets each week and communications are good. Targets for retention and pass rates are set and progress towards them carefully monitored. Links with industry are good, through work experience placements and the use of equine establishments for the

outreach programmes. Course leaders are required to complete self-assessment reports and students contribute through student forums. Most reports have clear action points to improve the quality of the provision.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for apprentices in agricultural service engineering
- good standard of learners' work in agricultural service engineering
- good training for agricultural service engineering apprentices
- effective relationships with employers in agricultural service engineering
- high retention and pass rates on motor vehicle courses.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and punctuality on many courses at the Melton campus
- slow progress of many general engineering apprentices
- insufficient attention to some aspects of health and safety at the Melton campus
- insufficient analysis of data to monitor work-based learning

- weak target setting in the progress reviews of apprentices.

Scope of provision

55. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time provision in engineering from levels 1 to 3. Courses are available in agricultural service engineering at the Brooksby campus and motor vehicle and general engineering at the Melton campus. The general engineering provision covers electronics, electrical, mechanical, production, fabrication and welding. There are 126 modern apprentices. Some 79 of these are agricultural service engineers. These apprentices attend college for approximately 10 weeks in each year of their three-year programme. At the Melton campus, there are 42 students on full-time motor vehicle or general engineering programmes. Approximately 100 students, mainly adults, attend evening courses at level 1 or level 2 in mechanical or electrical engineering.

Achievement and standards

56. Since September 1996, a total of 119 modern apprentices have started a work-based learning programme and the retention rate is high. Only 19 apprentices have left the programme. The achievement of the full framework is high and most apprentices take approximately three years to complete. In the autumn of 2000, the college took responsibility for the training of 54 general and motor vehicle engineering modern apprentices who were previously with a local training provider. The progress of these learners has been slow and only three have completed their apprenticeship. Most of the production engineering apprentices have not had their key skills work assessed. In 2001, the retention rates for the City and Guilds level 1 progression award and the NVQ level 2 motor vehicle engineering were well above the national average. The pass rate on the NVQ level 2 motor vehicle engineering was also significantly above the national average. Retention rates on most other courses are close to, or higher than, the national average. The pass rate on the City and Guilds electrical installations part 2 and the national certificate in engineering are well below the national average. Attainment in lessons and in coursework on these two courses is less than satisfactory. Attendance is low and punctuality poor on many courses at the Melton campus and some staff do not challenge students who arrive late for lessons. Some evening classes start too early for many working adults.

Quality of education and training

57. Most of the teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers use visual aids to add interest, to promote discussion and to reinforce learning. Practical lessons in agricultural service engineering and motor vehicle link theory to practical application well. Service engineering learners are challenged and inspired by their tutors. Agricultural service engineering learners benefit from good quality on-the-job and off-the-job training. The training programme is very detailed and learners are clear about what is expected of them. Learners are attentive in lessons and demonstrate a high level of skill in practical workshops. The standard of learners' portfolios is particularly good. The quality of agricultural service engineering learners' work has been recognised by the industry awarding body and medals of excellence have been presented to learners at level 2 and level 3 for the last three years.

58. Much of the practical training in the college is in suitably equipped workshops that contain a good range of tractors and other agricultural machinery. The colleges' own training vehicles are supplemented by those belonging to local farmers and enthusiasts who allow learners to repair and maintain them. The college also receives the loan of new vehicles from an international agricultural manufacturer with whom the college has an excellent relationship. Learners are regularly involved in a range of complex maintenance and repair activities. In one session, level 1 learners confidently overhauled the front axle of a tractor and other learners split the engine and transmission unit of another tractor to renew the clutch and repair a faulty rear main oil seal. Teachers have effective and supportive links with employers. Agricultural service engineering learners benefit from attending

training days at the national training centre of an international agriculture machinery manufacturer.

59. There is a good range of computerised teaching and learning materials for motor vehicle courses. In workshops, there is good integration of theoretical and practical work. Students' progress is effectively monitored. Motor vehicle workshops have an adequate supply of hand tools and equipment, but training vehicles are old and outdated and do not represent current industry standard. Attention to some aspects of health and safety in mechanical engineering and welding practical classes is inadequate. Teachers do not insist that students always wear protective overalls and footwear.

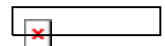
60. The progress reviews for work-based learners do not set clear targets towards the achievement of the NVQ and key skills. In general and motor vehicle engineering, workplace supervisors usually attend part of the review process, but they are not adequately informed about the type and level of work that the apprentices need to do. The records of progress reviews provide very little data on the progress made towards completion of the individual learning plan.

61. For all work-based learners there is insufficient use of assessment by direct observation in the workplace.

Leadership and management

62. Since the merger and acceptance of the contract for work-based learners in general and motor vehicle engineering, managers have developed a clear plan on how to improve the quality of the provision. However, the current good practice on the Brooksby campus is not yet replicated on the Melton campus. Managers of work-based learners in general and motor vehicle engineering are not adequately informed about the progress of learners. There is insufficient analysis of rates of learner progress, retention and achievement in all areas of work-based learning. Managers do not adequately monitor the performance of each area of work-based learning. There is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities for work-based learners.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rate on IBT stage 2
- high retention rate on City and Guilds 7261 level 2
- much good teaching
- very good community provision.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on CLAIT and City and Guilds 7261 levels 2 and 3
- narrow range of ICT courses for school-leavers
- some poor course reviews
- lack of technical support in the evening
- insufficient attention to review teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

63. The college provision for school-leavers is based on City and Guilds qualifications. Students can progress from City and Guilds start IT to City and Guilds basic competence in IT and to City and Guilds certificate, diploma and advanced diploma. This narrow range of ICT courses for school-leavers limits their choice of study at the college. Adults can choose from the same range of City and Guilds courses and are able to study full time or part time at the Melton campus or at the 'Learning Shop' in Melton Mowbray town centre. Students on the certificate in administrative and secretarial procedures study Oxford Cambridge and the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) word-processing, text processing and Integrated Business Technology stage 2 (IBT 2). Evening classes offered include computer-aided design (CAD), computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), IBT 2, European computer driving licence (ECDL) and Internet technologies. Adults can experience taster sessions in word-processing and spreadsheets and the range of online courses from Learndirect.

Achievements and standards

64. The pass rate on IBT 2 is well above the national average. The pass rate on CLAIT courses has been below the national average for the last two years 2000 and 2001. The retention rate on City and Guilds level 2 is high, but the pass rate at level 2 and level 3 is low. Many students aged 16 to 18 on ICT courses also enrol on GCSE mathematics and English to improve the grades they gained at school, but the retention rates on these courses are low. There are insufficient opportunities for computing students aged 16 to 18 to gain experience in the workplace. Secretarial students have planned work experience that is used effectively to gather evidence for their communications key skill portfolio. Students' work is of a good standard. Adults attending the Learning Shop achieve well and many progress from entry level to level 2 qualifications. Attendance for lessons is high and punctuality is good.

Quality of education and training

65. Teaching in computing and IT is mostly satisfactory or good. Teaching takes place mainly in IT workshops with a good level of tutor support. This approach to teaching and learning is particularly

well suited to the needs of adults. Many students aged 16 to 18 spend a lot of time in lessons working on their own and there are too few opportunities for them to work collaboratively in groups. In practical lessons, teachers give individual students a lot of help. The refurbished Learning Shop in the town centre is a pleasant study area and is equipped with high specification computers. The centre provides a rolling programme of induction to IT workshops and assessments are planned when students are confident of being successful. In a practical lesson, the teacher gave good individual support to adults who were using a variety of computer applications and also spent time giving detailed feedback on pre-assessment exercises in preparation for the final assessment. Verbal feedback was clear, indicated areas for improvement and encouraged students to think through the solution to problems logically. Most students produce work of a good standard. All full-time school-leavers are timetabled for key skills lessons. However, the arrangements to help students complete their key skills portfolios for assessment are not well planned.

66. The college has good specialist IT resources, but in some computer rooms the chairs are unsuitable. Paper-based learning materials are of good quality. There are some learning materials on the college intranet, but these are seldom used by computing students who rely mainly on their course booklets. Little use is made of the Internet for teaching and learning. There is no technical support available in the evenings for IT classes. Little use is made of data projectors for demonstrations in practical classes. Teachers are qualified and their staff development needs are agreed at appraisal, but not followed up as there is no planned programme for IT teachers to update their industrial experience.

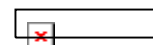
67. Assessment meets the needs of awarding body standards. Students' work is assessed against these standards. Teachers indicate errors clearly and give students constructive feedback on marked work. Adults in the Learning Shop have pre-assessment and mock assessment exercises that prepare them well for their final assessment. Internal verification procedures are sound.

68. Most students undertake an initial assessment for IT, literacy and numeracy to identify their additional support needs. The arrangements to provide learning support in lessons and workshops are effective. In the Learning Shop, students' work is reviewed weekly and their progress is carefully monitored and recorded. Full-time students have weekly tutorials, during which the previous week's targets are reviewed and new ones are agreed for the week ahead. The arrangements for tutorials are unsatisfactory. In one session, students queued at the tutor's desk for a brief tutorial and consequently the discussion did not remain private.

Leadership and management

69. Programmes in the Learning Shop are managed effectively and the quality of the provision is monitored carefully and conscientiously. Staff are required to monitor retention and pass rate targets within the course review process. However, there is wide variation in the rigour of course reviews and some have not been completed. Insufficient attention is given to reviewing teaching and learning and little use is made of feedback from students. A high priority is given to the needs of students with a disability or a specific learning need.

Performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on national diploma performing arts in 2001

- good standard of practical work on national diploma dance and technical theatre
- good teaching in performing arts and media
- wide range of level 3 courses in performing arts and media
- good range of additional qualifications.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance in many lessons
- some poorly planned and managed lessons
- insufficient development of students' key skills
- too few courses below level 3.

Scope of provision

70. The college offers four full-time national diploma courses in dance, drama, media production and technical theatre. The national diplomas in dance and drama replaced the national diploma in performing arts for those students starting in September 2000. The national diploma in media was introduced in September 2000 and technical theatre in September 2001. Additional qualifications offered to students include television and video competencies, Open College Network (OCN) performance skills and GCE AS and A-level courses in dance, drama and film studies.

Achievement and standards

71. In 2001, the pass rate for the national diploma in performing arts was above the national average. The retention rate of those students on the second year of the national diplomas in dance and media is low. However, there is some indication of improvements in the retention rate for students currently on the first year of these courses because the teaching has been adapted to meet students' needs. Pass rates on GCE AS and A-level dance, drama and film studies are slightly above the national average.

72. Overall, standards in performing arts and media are satisfactory. Some students present or perform work that is of a good standard for the level and stage of their course. For example, in one dance class, first-year students worked individually on complicated movement sequences and then in pairs to create imaginative performances. First-year technical theatre students were able to work with minimum supervision preparing for a forthcoming production at an outside venue. First-year national diploma media production students completed a witty and well-edited video involving a series of shots in different locations. Students' key skills are not well developed and teachers do not include them in their planning for vocational areas. Students do not see the relevance of key skills. Much of the written work on the national diploma in drama does not show sufficiently high analysis and evaluation, is not well organised and makes little use of ICT.

Quality of education and training

73. Most teaching in performing arts and media is good or better. It is particularly strong on the national diploma in dance, GCE AS film studies and national diploma in technical theatre. Sound technical teaching in a practical dance class enabled students to work on their own to develop complex movement sequences. In a GCE AS film studies class, students were encouraged to make confident and thoughtful contributions to a group discussion about representation in the film 'East is East'. In a national diploma technical theatre class, the teacher effectively reviewed the lesson and checked that learning had taken place. However, a significant minority of lessons are poorly planned or managed. In weaker lessons, the planning did not identify how the learning objectives were to be achieved. A question and answer session was the main activity for long periods of time in many theory lessons. Unless students wished to make a point or were asked a specific question by the teacher, the only way that the teacher could check learning was by scrutinising students' notes, this was seldom done. In some practical classes, there was poor transition from one activity to another. In one drama lesson, first-year students were asked to perform in a series of exercises involving voice and movement. The purpose of this work was not explained, students had fun but learned little. A rehearsal for a musical theatre production by second-year drama students was disjointed and did not follow a logical sequence even though it was to be presented the following week. At one stage the main group of students took an unauthorised break. There was poor attendance in 40% of the lessons observed and these absences adversely affected the learning of other students.

74. Teachers have relevant experience in the performing arts or media industries. This practical knowledge gives credibility to the advice they give to students. For example, in two separate media lessons, the teachers gave relevant and valuable advice on how to be effective with clients. Less than 25% of the teaching staff have any teaching qualifications.

75. There is sufficient specialist equipment for students to develop their practical skills. However, there is very little digital equipment for media and performing arts courses. Except for the theatre and dance studios, accommodation is often drab and uninspiring. There are few displays of work in classrooms to encourage students to share and present their written work in interesting ways. The exception is for dance where displays in the corridor are attractive and interesting for other students.

76. Assessment is carried out effectively. The feedback is usually helpful in identifying the reason for the grade and teachers make encouraging comments to help students improve their work. Teachers rarely comment on key skills in assessed work. Insufficient consideration is given to developing students' communication skills. Internal verification checks that standards are consistently applied, but is often carried out too late on the course.

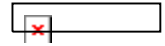
77. Prospective students receive effective guidance. Auditions and interviews are held to exchange information and assess the prevailing standard of the applicant. Students receive effective tutorial support and tutorials are held twice a term. In tutorials, individual students review their progress with their tutor and set personal targets for the next meeting.

Leadership and management

78. There are regular team meetings, but not all result in clear action points to be reviewed at the

next meeting. Staff are becoming more involved in the self-assessment process, but it is still not sufficiently rigorous. Communications between staff are good. Appraisal identifies staff development needs and is valued by staff as it enables them to set personal targets for improvements. The curriculum on offer is being reviewed and there are plans to introduce level 2 courses for full-time students.

Health, social care and childcare



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on some courses
- thorough internal verification.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most courses
- insufficient demand on students in many lessons
- ineffective course planning and co-ordination
- slow return of students' assessed work.

Scope of provision

79. Most of the courses currently offered were introduced at the beginning of, or during the academic year, 2001/02. Two new full-time courses started in September 2001, GNVQ foundation health and social care mainly for students aged 16 to 18, and the access to nursing course for adults. Other courses introduced for adults include NVQ level 3 in early years, education and in care; introduction to counselling and certificate in counselling skills; and introduction to childminding practice. The care department also runs first aid at work courses. In 2000/01, the national diploma course in early years failed to recruit sufficient numbers to run it viably. Only the first diploma care, the national certificate and diploma in early years and the NVQ level 2 care have one or more completed intakes of students. At the time of the inspection, there were a total of 126 students of whom 39 were full time.

Achievement and standards

80. Data on students' achievements prior to 2000/01 are unreliable. Trends are difficult to identify. Over the last two years the pass rate on the first diploma care was 100%. In 2000/01, the pass rate on the NVQ level 2 in care was also well above the national average at 78%. In the same year, the pass rate on the national diploma in early years was 100%. Many of these high pass rates are marred by retention rates that are often significantly below the national averages. In 2000/01, the retention rate on the national diploma in early years was only 67%. The retention rate on the first diploma in care fell from well above the national average in 1999/2000, to below in 2000/01. The retention rate in the current year indicates improvements on both the first diploma in care and the NVQ level 2 in care. In the three other full-time courses, including the national diploma in early years, the retention rate is well below the national average. Students' assessed work matches the expected standard for the course. Student attendance for lessons is high. A wide range of relevant work experience placements prepares students well for employment. Relatively few students progress to HE.

Quality of education and training

81. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, content was demanding and teachers introduced a variety of learning activities to maintain students' concentration. Some teachers skilfully used questions to involve all students and use feedback from small group work to reinforce the learning of key points. In a lesson on nursing studies, the teacher used these methods to help students understand the difference between health education and health promotion. The teacher introduced the self-empowerment model. To test and reinforce their understanding of the model students, in small groups, used a case study to identify the key factors involved in tackling the problem being presented. In many lessons, the content was insufficiently demanding to stimulate critical thinking. Presentation was often laboured and students lost interest and ceased to actively participate. In receiving feedback from small group work, the teacher merely recorded the responses on the whiteboard without checking students' understanding. Students then copied the notes from the whiteboard and there was very little learning and knowledge was not extended sufficiently. In one lesson, after students had carefully completed a gapped handout, the teacher distributed another replicating the notes students had taken. The quality of schemes of work is variable and some are unsatisfactory. Some are just lists of topics to be covered.

82. Internal verification is implemented thoroughly. Many part-time teachers are inexperienced in assessment. All student assignment briefs are verified and a much higher than normal sample of work is assessed. This has contributed to the maintenance of expected standards. Marking of students' work contains detailed and constructive comments. However, there is considerable delay, well beyond the agreed time in many instances, in the return of students' assessed work. This tardiness affects both the tutor's and the student's knowledge of how well the student is progressing. Students generally value the support given by course tutors. Tutorials focus on updating student action plans and identify the work that students need to complete to be successful.

83. With the introduction of new courses students have achievable routes for progression. The provision meets a need in the local community. Some students found their transfer to courses other than the ones for which they had originally been accepted a disrupting experience. This was compounded by having frequent changes of teachers and delayed starts to units of study while part-time staff were appointed.

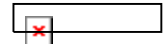
84. Teachers are knowledgeable in their specialist subject areas. The ratio of full-time to part-time teachers is high. Some classrooms are drab and most lack any display. The room used for a counselling course hampered learning. Insufficient attention is given to allocating the most appropriate rooms to match the needs of the provision.

Leadership and management

85. Course team meetings take place each week. Attendance of part-time teachers is low. Teachers are not always aware of the topics included in whole courses that they are presenting, nor the

content of courses within the area and the results of assessments. Some topics are sometimes duplicated and identical deadlines for assignments and other work are given. Planning to avoid unnecessary repetition and to examine opportunities to reduce the assessment load by integrating some assignments is ineffective. All teachers were involved in producing the self-assessment report. Insufficient weight is attached to some weaknesses and there is no assessment of teaching and learning. All full-time teachers were involved in the review of the provision and the decision to stop offering courses with poor results and to introduce the new course portfolio.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- thorough initial assessment
- good levels of support for individual students
- good, well-planned teaching focused on individual needs
- effective monitoring of students' good progress
- good development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Weaknesses

- poor resources in community venues
- some ineffective management of classroom assistants in lessons
- insufficient monitoring of literacy and numeracy provision for students on vocational courses.

Scope of provision

86. Programmes to enable adults to improve their literacy and numeracy skills are offered in three community venues and the two main college campuses at Brooksby and Melton Mowbray. The range of provision includes programmes of everyday English and everyday maths, wordpower and numberpower, basic skills tests in literacy and numeracy and open college qualifications. During the first two terms of the 2000/01 academic year, there has been just over 140 enrolments on literacy and numeracy programmes. These tutors provide literacy and numeracy support each week to about 80 individual students following vocational programmes and two groups of students on foundation level courses.

87. Programmes in literacy and numeracy are provided at suitable times to meet the needs of individual students. For the adult programmes, each student is interviewed and assessed to identify the most appropriate study programme and venue. Link tutors work with students in college on vocational courses either in groups or individually and visit work-based learners at their work placement.

Achievement and standards

88. The pass rate of students entered for examinations is high. For many students, such achievements are their first experience of successful learning. Students are only entered for examinations if they wish to take external accreditation and if the tutor considers that they will be successful. Students make good progress in lessons and learning is good. Learning targets are negotiated with individual students and form the basis of the 'work, record and plan' that serves as the individual learning programme. Achievements against the negotiated targets are recorded in sufficient detail to allow students to receive feedback on their progress in small incremental steps. Students' progress is regularly monitored and learning targets are reviewed and adjusted to meet the needs of the individual student.

89. The development of students' personal skills is good. All students value their increased confidence and skill development in literacy and numeracy. In a numeracy lesson, a student had developed the knowledge and skills to become a successful economical shopper. The student was able to calculate the percentage reduction on discounted goods and write numbers in figures and text to write a cheque that she had previously been unable to do. In three of the lessons observed, classroom assistants intervened too much when students were working through problems and did not always allow students to reach their own solution and develop as independent learners.

90. Vocational course students who are experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy are offered support both at college and in the workplace to help them with the completion of assignments and the building of portfolios of work. A link tutor successfully took dictation for an NVQ ecosystems student who was able to describe in detail and with enthusiasm his specialist underpinning knowledge, but was unable to transfer his knowledge to the written word. The monitoring of the performance of some vocational students is unsatisfactory. There is no mechanism to inform literacy and numeracy tutors if students, who have previously benefited from literacy and numeracy support, are to return the next academic year. As a result, some students are precluded from building on the skills they have already developed in literacy and numeracy and do not always receive additional support at the most appropriate time.

Quality of education and training

91. Most teaching is good or better. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is well planned. The majority of teaching is on an individual basis and follows the detailed targets in the students' individual learning plan. Plans are devised following a thorough initial assessment. The assessment determines the student's ability to read, write, speak and listen at home, at work and in leisure activities. Teachers are sensitive to individual students' circumstances and needs. Lessons are purposeful. Students are clear about what they need to do to achieve the targets identified in their individual learning plan. In the majority of lessons, there is good classroom management with

pleasant, productive working relationships. Teachers set work at an attainable level and challenge students to achieve the expected standard by using the skills they have developed in literacy and numeracy.

92. Staff are suitably qualified. Paper-based resources are generally adequate, but a few are of poor quality. Computers are available at the Brooksby and Melton campuses, but are not available at some of the community venues. This omission was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. There is poor access for students with restricted mobility at the Thurmaston site.

Leadership and management

93. The literacy and numeracy provision is co-ordinated by the only full-time member of staff in this area of work. The co-ordinator is supported by three part-time tutor organisers who share responsibility for interviewing students, developing the self-assessment report and carrying out quality checks in the classroom. The action plan for the development of literacy and numeracy has been thoroughly researched and identifies targets and actions to improve the quality of the provision. The college is an active member of the countywide Basic Skills Working Partnership. Through this group the college has successfully secured funding for a development worker to promote literacy and numeracy provision. Staff are aware of equal opportunities issues and reflect this awareness in their teaching.

Part D: College data

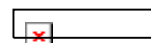
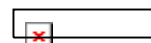


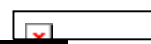
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	24	44
2	49	24
3	24	17
4/5	1	1
Other	2	14
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2002.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



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

Science	773	817	31
Agriculture	315	357	13
Construction	3	0	0
Engineering	132	51	4
Business	71	117	4
Hotel and catering	17	14	1
Health and community care	90	209	6
Art and design	150	26	3
Humanities	1,352	273	32
Basic education	66	233	6
Total	2,969	2,097	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2002.

Table 3: Summary of grades awarded to teaching by level

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	58	35	7	60
Level 2 (intermediate)	56	37	7	27
Level 1 (foundation)	50	38	12	8
Other sessions	78	22	0	18
Totals	60	34	6	113

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