



# Barnet College

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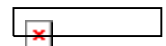
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**Basic information about the college**

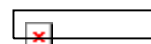


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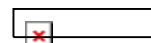
Name of college:	Barnet College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	John Skitt
Address of college:	Wood Street High Barnet Barnet EN5 4AZ

Telephone number:	0208 440 6321
Fax number:	0208 441 5236
Chair of governors:	Tony Alderman
Unique reference number:	130425
Name of reporting inspector:	David Hornbrook HMI
Dates of inspection:	15-25 April 2002

## Part A: Summary



### Information about the college

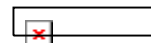


Barnet College is a large further education (FE) college located at five main centres in the London Borough of Barnet. The present college was established in August 2000 as a result of a merger between the former Hendon and Barnet Colleges. Within the college's main recruitment areas there are 12 FE colleges and many private training providers. Fourteen schools in Barnet have sixth forms. The college offers academic and vocational provision in 13 of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) 14 areas of learning. In 2001/02, the college had 18,700 students, of whom about 80% were aged 19 or over. Some 25% of all students studied full time. The largest number of enrolments in the same year was for level 3 qualifications. Some 60% of students were female; over half were from minority ethnic groups.

The student population is largely drawn from the north London boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Brent. Barnet itself is an area of some affluence, although there are significant areas of deprivation. Local jobs are concentrated in retailing, health and social work, education, wholesaling and business services. It is estimated that a quarter of the people in the college's catchment area have no, or very low levels of, qualification; the college draws significantly from this group. In addition, the college attracts students from abroad and many new settlers in the area, such as refugees and asylum seekers.

The college's mission is to work with its partners to 'promote innovative, high quality learning, which will enable its diverse communities to access education and training'.

### How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of education and training to be good in science, health and social care, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language (EFL), and English for speakers of other languages. Education and training were satisfactory in mathematics, construction, business administration, computing and information and communication technology (ICT), hospitality and catering, sports leisure and tourism, hairdressing and beauty therapy, art and design, performing arts and media, English and communications, humanities, courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and basic skills. In engineering, inspectors considered the quality of

are listed below:

***Key strengths***

- good range of courses and progression opportunities at all levels
- GCE AS and A-level students achieve well compared with their prior achievement
- good student support
- good opportunities for staff development
- good leadership of the recent merger
- good range of local partnerships.

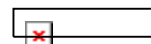
***What should be improved***

- student achievement
- undemanding teaching in many lessons
- poor attendance and lack of punctuality
- use of ICT in lessons
- work-based provision
- accuracy and dissemination of management information

- drab accommodation.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science	<b>Good.</b> Science provision is well managed and most teaching is effective. Standards have risen significantly at the former Hendon College site and are now good. Students perform significantly better at General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced level (GCE AS/A level) than predicted. Retention and pass rates for some General Certificate of Secondary Education (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and GCE A-level subjects are unsatisfactory.
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The area offers a wide range of courses. There are good pass rates at GCE A level, but retention rates are below the national average and attendance is poor. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory and resources are adequate. Management of the area is good and there are strategies in place for further improvement.
Construction	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention rates on carpentry and bricklaying construction courses are good. Pass rates are satisfactory at level 1, but poor at level 2. The standard of adult students' work is good. Students work well in the workshop, but some are not developing basic craft skills.
Engineering	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Pass rates for General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses are below the national average, although pass rates for part-time courses are satisfactory. There is too much unsatisfactory classroom teaching. The monitoring of students' use of tools is insufficiently thorough. Resources are satisfactory and students are well supported by staff.
Business administration	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a wide range of courses with good internal progression routes. Teaching and support for students are good. Retention rates on most courses are high, but pass rates are low on GNVQ courses and modern apprenticeship programmes. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
Computing and ICT	<b>Satisfactory.</b> An extensive range of well-resourced courses provides good opportunities for progression. Pass rates are low on

	intermediate courses, although pass and retention rates overall have improved. Teaching does not sufficiently extend students, but additional support is effective. Course reviews do not sufficiently address the quality of teaching.
Hospitality and catering	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are above average and students are well taught and supported. Student numbers overall have fallen and are now low. The quality of the restaurant and kitchens is unsatisfactory. The area is recovering well from past organisational difficulties, during which time quality assurance was neglected.
Sports, leisure and tourism	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a broad range of appropriate courses. Teaching on most courses is good or better, but pass rates at level 3 are often below average. Good local partnerships have been developed, but there is no strategy for the development of the sports facilities. Students are well supported, resources are good and teachers are well qualified.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students have good practical skills. Teaching is particularly good in evening classes. Pass and retention rates on the beauty and complementary therapies courses are good, but very low on the modern apprenticeship framework. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.
Health and social care	<b>Good.</b> Most teaching is good or better. Pass rates in childhood studies are very good and there is good progress to higher education (HE) from access courses. Pass rates in GNVQ and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) health and social care are below average. There is an effective tutorial programme and the college-based provision is well led and managed.
Art and design, performing arts and media	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Most teaching is satisfactory or better, and assessment and internal verification are good. A wide range of courses is offered. There are low pass rates on some GCE A-level courses and most retention rates are below the national average. There is some poor attendance and a lack of punctuality. Current, temporary arrangements for the management of the area are unsatisfactory.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates overall are satisfactory, although they are significantly below average in some subjects. Students make the expected progress given their starting points. Teaching is good, but learning is adversely affected by poor attendance and there are significant amounts of uncompleted work.
English and communications	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is an adequate range of provision in this well managed area. Pass rates overall are satisfactory and retention rates are mostly good. Most teaching is good or better, but teachers often make too few demands on students and pay too little attention to the development of students' independent learning skills. Attendance is poor and students are not punctual.
Foreign languages and English as a foreign language	<b>Good.</b> There has been a steady improvement in retention and pass rates, although GCE A-level pass rates are still below the national average. Teaching is good or better, and standards of oral work are high. Assessment is thorough and students are well supported. The provision is well managed, but there is some unsatisfactory accommodation.
English for speakers of other languages	<b>Good.</b> Effectively planned teaching enables students to improve their skills. There is a broad range of provision in terms of level, mode and location. The curriculum is managed effectively and is well supported by senior managers. However, there is poor attendance on some courses, and the internal college accreditation award is insufficiently demanding.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students develop in confidence and improve their social skills. The teaching of students with profound and complex learning difficulties is innovative. Tutorial support is good and there are effective links with external partners. The initial assessment of students with moderate learning difficulties is inadequate and lacks specialist input.
Basic skills	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a strong college-wide, basic skills strategy. Basic skills support across the curriculum is effective. There is much good teaching, but too little variety in the use of teaching resources. Although the provision is well planned, individual learning plans do not adequately support the monitoring of progress and achievement.

### How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. The merger of Barnet College with Hendon College in August 2000 presented significant challenges and a good start has been made in bringing the two colleges together. Senior managers have provided strong leadership during a period of uncertainty and change. The college has good cash reserves and a process of rationalising its estate is underway. Governors contribute to strategic planning and expend much time and effort on college business, although they do not receive enough information about retention and pass rates. New quality assurance systems are beginning to make an impact, but retention and pass rates are still low in too many areas and inspectors judged an above average proportion of teaching to be less than satisfactory. Leadership and management within curriculum areas are satisfactory. A new management information system is not yet operating effectively. Overall, resources are adequately deployed to achieve satisfactory value for money.

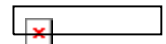
### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college's commitment to equality of opportunity is strong, and reflected in its strategic objectives. Through successful partnerships, extensive local consultation and carefully targeted marketing, the college has successfully attracted students from areas of local deprivation. The college's community development unit offers good provision in the community and has established learning centres in four identified areas of deprivation in Barnet. The college is responsive to local people's needs, such as in the training it provides for homeless people to meet a specific local skills shortage. Particularly successful elements of the college's inclusiveness strategy are the employment of guidance workers in the community and the use of additional funding sources. These are often used to develop minority-interest courses and to involve minority groups. The college has also been effective in improving access for students with restricted mobility. Over 50% of the college's students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is above the local average.

### How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Guidance and support for students are good. The partnership with the local Connexions service is effective and comprehensive careers guidance is available. There is a well-structured induction programme. Learning and language support are good, and advice, guidance and welfare services are accessible and well regarded by students. Tutoring is effective on most courses and students find tutors approachable and supportive. In the best individual tutorials, tutors use attendance and progress information to complete and monitor action plans with their students. Attendance monitoring has been introduced.

### **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***

- supportive, motivating and helpful teachers and support staff
- quality of much of the teaching
- good learning resources, including the independent learning centre, and the good access to ICT
- friendly, safe, multicultural environment
- social life in the college and its sense of community
- tutorial programme and support provision
- courses which raise the confidence of adult students, improve skills and help students decide what to do in the future.

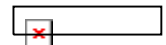
#### ***What they feel could be improved***

- quality of much of the accommodation



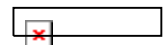
- costs in the canteen and the variable quality of the food
- quality and range of books in the library
- use of technology in classes
- cover for absent teachers
- enrichment activities.

#### 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

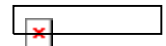


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	54	36	10
19+ and WBL*	63	29	8
Learning 16-18	48	41	11
19+ and WBL*	63	29	8

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 offers a wide range of vocational and academic qualifications. In four of the areas of learning inspected there is a small amount of work-based learning in which learners are following advanced or foundation modern apprenticeships which incorporate NVQs and key skills. Most full-time college students are aged 16 to 18, students on part-time programmes are mostly aged 19 or over. There is significant level 4 provision. For many students, the college offers a second chance when they have missed opportunities to achieve qualifications at school. Students report that many adult courses increase students' self-esteem and confidence.

2. Overall, in the last three years, retention rates have fallen. Exceptions have been those for adult students on courses at levels 1 and 2 where there has been a steady rise in the number completing. There has been a marked improvement in pass rates at level 3, but pass rates at levels 1 and 2 have fallen for both age-groups. There is good progression both to courses within the college and to higher level courses at the college and elsewhere. Standards were unsatisfactory in 12% of the lessons observed. This figure rises to 15% for students aged 16 to 18 and falls to 7% for adults. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about achievement and standards in particular courses.

3. Attendance during the inspection week was 69%, slightly below the average for the sector, with no significant variation between age-groups.

### **16-18 year olds**

4. Pass rates on level 3 courses have improved so that, in 2000/01, they were similar to the national average. However, this rise in achievement has been accompanied by a corresponding fall in the retention rate which, in the same year, was well below the national average. There has been a steady rise in the pass rates for GCE A-level subjects. In 2000/01, 76% of students aged 16 to 18 who completed their course passed the examination, compared with 65% in 1999/2000. In 2000/01, the average points score for students taking two or more GCE A levels was 8.7. This was below the average for maintained schools and colleges in London. At 59%, retention rates on GCE A-level courses were below national averages. Retention rates for GCE AS courses are better, at 77%; pass rates for this examination in 2001 were similar to those for GCE A level and below the average for England as a whole.

5. Many students on GCE A-level courses have low levels of achievement at GCSE. Data produced by an independent, external service providing an analysis of students' achievements at GCE A level compared with their GCSE achievements, show that, for the past three years, students have generally been performing better than expected. Students studying biology, chemistry, economics and French did significantly better than expected; those studying art, computing and English language underperformed. There has been a sharp rise since 1999 in the amount that the college has increased students' achievement over and above what might have been predicted from their previous attainments at entry.

6. Retention rates on GNVQ advanced/Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) programmes in 2000/01 for students aged 16 to 18 are rising and have been well above the national average for three years. In 2001, 92% of advanced GNVQ students completed their courses. Pass

rates, at 64%, however, are well below average. The college has conducted a comprehensive analysis of students' achievements at GNVQ advanced level compared with their previous GCSE attainments. Data show that GNVQ students do slightly better than expected, particularly those with higher GCSE scores. The number of students entering the college with average GCSE scores who only partially complete a GNVQ qualification is high. At 31%, NVQ level 3 achievements for the small number of candidates are well below the national average, although in travel and services, all students remained on the course and achieved their NVQ.

7. Pass and retention rates at level 2 are below the national average, sometimes markedly so. GCSE pass rates have fluctuated over the past three years, but, at 44%, those achieving grades A\* to C were above a low national average in 2001. GNVQ intermediate pass rates were below the national average in 2001 at 56%. Data produced by the college show that GNVQ intermediate students do slightly better than expected, but few students entering the college with average and above GCSE scores achieve higher grades. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 have declined to well below the national average, at 26%.

8. Retention and pass rates on level 1 courses declined in 2000/01 to below national averages. Retention rates on GNVQ foundation courses are similar to the national average but, at 57%, pass rates are below them. On NVQ level 1, retention and pass rates are below the national average. In 2001, only 9% of those completing courses achieved their qualification. However, pass rates on NVQ administration at level 1 are good.

9. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. However, there is little progression by students on pre-vocational courses to level 1 courses in the college or elsewhere.

### **Adult learners**

10. With the exception of those studying at level 3, the adult students at the college achieve better than students aged 16 to 18. Attainment in lessons among 60% of adult students was good or better. More adults also complete their courses.

11. Pass rates at level 3 has been improving over the past three years, but are still below the national average at 64%. Retention rates have fallen to slightly below the national average. Students who complete access to HE courses in science, computing and nursing do well. In 2001, 77% of access to science students progressed to HE. Of the high numbers completing access courses for computing and nursing, nearly 90% achieved the qualification. Retention and pass rates are low, however, for students on the access course for social science and social work.

12. Retention and pass rates for adults studying GCE A-level subjects improved to 76% and 73%, respectively, in 2001, significantly above national averages. The overall GNVQ advanced pass rate of 75% is comparable with the national average, but, at 31%, retention rates are low. Retention and pass rates on NVQ level 3 courses are broadly in line with national averages.

13. Pass rates on level 2 courses fluctuate at levels below the national average, but the retention rate at this level has improved steadily over the past four years to a figure, in 2001, of 88%. At 52%, GCSE pass rates are slightly below the national average. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 programmes are similar to the national average and retention rates on these courses are above it.

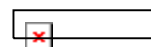
14. Pass rates on level 1 courses remain just below the national average, but the number completing courses at this level rose significantly in 2001 to 85%. The pass rates for these adult students are better than for students aged 16 to 18. Pass rates are good for the small number of GNVQ foundation students. The retention rate of students on NVQ 1 programmes is good, but the pass rate, at 53%, is below average. The pass and retention rates of students on English courses for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and EFL courses are good.

15. Students with profound and complex learning difficulties achieve appropriate objectives. Those on the mental health courses gain in confidence and make progress over time, many taking the

opportunity to change direction in their lives. Many take Open College Network (OCN) units of accreditation and achieve pass rates of 100%.

16. Achievements in work-based training are poor. In 2001/02, there were 93 young people undertaking foundation or modern apprenticeships in business, customer service, hair, care, and construction. Only a few modern apprentices complete their training. Of the 208 foundation apprentices who started since 1998 and are no longer in training, only 1 had completed the framework at the time of the inspection; 25 had achieved NVQ level 2. Of the 114 advanced modern apprentices who started since 1998 and are no longer in training, only 7 had completed the framework in the required time; 19 achieved NVQ level 3 and 33 achieved NVQ level 2. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 at foundation level are 12%, and on level 3 at advanced level are 17%.

### Quality of education and training



17. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 331 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 59% of these, satisfactory in 32% and less than satisfactory in 9%. There was no significant difference in the quality of the teaching for different age-groups. However, there are significant variations in teaching quality across different areas of learning. The percentage of good or better lessons observed ranged from 81% in health and social care to 17% in engineering. The highest percentage of unsatisfactory lessons was in engineering, at 33%. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching requires attention. The best teaching is in health and social care, business administration, hospitality and languages. There was no significant difference in the quality of the teaching at different levels.

18. The college is a supportive place to learn which fosters students' personal development and promotes their confidence and self-esteem. However, support too often stands in place of the provision of challenging work and students do not make the progress of which they are capable. In too many lessons, learning was adversely affected by absence and lack of punctuality.

19. In the best lessons, teachers inspire students and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers are knowledgeable and often enthusiastic about their subjects and students respond well. Lessons are conducted at a speed well matched to students' abilities and new topics are carefully introduced and explained. Where appropriate, there is a good emphasis on the demands of examinations. A well-judged mixture of theory and practical work successfully maintains students' interest in many lessons. The best teachers use a good range of activities, including small group work and whole group discussions.

20. Most teaching is well planned with detailed schemes of work stating objectives and learning outcomes. However, for some lessons, the learning objectives are too general and take too little account of individual students' prior experience and attainment. In the less effective lessons, teachers make too many decisions for students, talk for long periods and make infrequent checks on students' understanding. The pace of work in some lessons is slow; teachers make poor use of teaching aids and fail to provide an appropriate variety of stimulating learning materials. In some lessons, there is an over-reliance on copying.

21. Many part-time courses for adult students are well organised, designed and taught. Work-based training is not uniformly good. The best is highly organised with regular meetings of assessors and college staff to ensure that students develop appropriate knowledge and skills. In other places, candidates receive little structured support for their learning. Considerable effort has been put into the arrangements for improving and assessing students' key skills; the key skills team is developing assignments which are a central part of students' main programmes of study. However, in some curriculum areas, key skills are not being successfully taught. On modern apprenticeship programmes, the absence of key skills has meant that many students have not been able to complete the framework for their award. Teaching on courses for students with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

22. In most curriculum areas, teachers are well qualified and, in many cases, have appropriate industrial or commercial experience. In some areas, the college has had difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and this has had adverse effects on some students' learning. Support staff have relevant experience and are appropriately qualified.

23. In four of the college's five centres teaching accommodation is in need of refurbishment. In most areas of the curriculum accommodation is drab. Toilets need upgrading in many parts of the college. The college has worked hard to mitigate the impact of using old former primary and secondary schools for college students and the accommodation strategy being considered by the governing body proposes reducing the number of sites. The college has prioritised access for people with restricted mobility during the past few year, and has improved access so that 85% of the teaching and administrative areas are now accessible.

24. Since the last inspection, the provision of learning centres has substantially improved students' access to facilities that enable them to learn on their own. There is now some provision on all sites, although the centres are popular and there is not always enough room. The college's ICT facilities have been networked for 13 years and the college is presently expanding its on-line learning provision. The ratio of computers to students is 1:6. The college has plans to improve this ratio and is also planning to extend teachers' access to ICT.

25. The college has clear guidelines for assessment that are regularly updated and students' course handbooks include sections on assessment. However, not all teachers follow the college guidelines. Internal verification is satisfactory. In most areas, teachers comment helpfully on students' work. The initial assessment of students on entry is centrally co-ordinated with specific assignments relating to each curriculum area. The monitoring of students' progress on courses is good overall, though, in some subjects, teachers do not provide students with clear, specific targets and students are not always clear about what they need to do to complete a course.

26. The college offers a good range of courses to meet the needs of potential students from local communities and beyond. Effective market research is undertaken, but, in some curriculum areas, curriculum planning lacks a strategic perspective. The mainstream provision at the college generally has good progression opportunities for students to gain qualifications at two or three levels. There are few opportunities for students to start courses at times other than September, or to change between courses mid-year. A sample of the college's provision is regularly offered at a successful 'weekend college' that attracts about 2,000 enrolments.

27. School links are being developed. The college has offered taster days to Year 9 pupils to help them make GCSE option choices. There are good links for progression to HE, especially at the Middlesex University. The college's business training and advisory service (BTAS) has operated for 10 years. The service markets courses to local businesses and organises work placements for full-time students.

28. Guidance and support for students are good and the college has worked hard since the merger to provide a cohesive and comprehensive service. In 2001, the college achieved Guidance Accreditation Board (GAB) standards recognition. The partnership with the local Connexions service is good, and careers guidance is available from personal tutors, college guidance staff and the external careers service.

29. There is a well-structured induction programme for all students that helps them settle into their courses and to understand their rights and responsibilities. Vocationally specific initial assessment tests in literacy and numeracy enable full-time students to be placed on the appropriate level of course and for any additional support arrangements to be made in a timely manner. Arrangements for assessing and responding to the needs of part-time students are less structured.

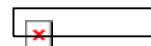
30. Learning and language support are both well co-ordinated and students speak highly of the beneficial impact they have on their studies. There are good staff guidance packs for teaching

bilingual students and deaf/hearing-impaired students are well supported by interpreters. There is an integrated and accessible welfare information, advice and counselling service, and support services are available to all students and open in the evenings and at weekends. The college is able to offer financial assistance to a number of students and an access fund helps students with childcare.

31. All students, regardless of age or mode of attendance, are entitled to tutorial support. Most full-time students have weekly group tutorials supplemented by individual sessions. Tutoring for part-time students is less structured. A comprehensive tutor handbook includes much useful information including lists of external support agencies and ideas for tutorial activities. Tutoring is good on most courses and students find tutors extremely approachable and supportive. In the best individual tutorials, tutors use attendance and progress information to complete and monitor action plans with their students. The quality of tutorial records varies significantly, however, even within curriculum areas.

32. Attendance monitoring was introduced across all sites in September 2001. Same-day action is aimed at tackling poor attendance in a timely, supportive and effective manner. There are comprehensive student disciplinary procedures and use of the procedures is systematically and confidentially recorded and analysed.

## Leadership and management



33. Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. The merger of Barnet College with Hendon College in August 2000 has presented significant challenges to the senior managers and governors of the new Barnet College. This is particularly the case with regard to the development of effective unified systems for this large and geographically widespread institution. A good start has been made in bringing the two colleges together. Senior managers have provided strong leadership during a period of uncertainty and change. Considerable efforts were made by managers to consult and inform staff, both before and during the process. Staff feel that they are part of one college, and some benefits of the merger are already evident. However, not all functions are yet fully effective.

34. The college generated a marginal financial deficit in 2000/01, owing to the under-achievement of its target units. However, the college has good cash reserves. A process of rationalising the college's estate is underway, including the sale of property. Once this is completed, the college's financial position will be further enhanced. Managers have been energetic in making and instigating beneficial links with other colleges in north London, with HE institutions and many other educational, healthcare, business and voluntary sector partners. It has formed a strategic partnership with the London Borough of Barnet which is important in improving opportunities for local people. It uses its resources effectively to achieve satisfactory value for money.

35. Considerable time and effort is expended by governors on college business, reflecting a high level of commitment both during and after the merger. Governors have strong local links, possessing expertise and experience in a range of appropriate fields. The corporation made a significant contribution to the development of the college's mission and strategic plan for the period 2000 to 2004. There are some deficiencies in reports made to governors. There is currently no termly report to the corporation on the finances of the college and there is inadequate information for governors on the retention and pass rates of students on courses compared with national averages. There is, however, good reporting to governors on the progress made in improving individual courses on which students have underachieved in the past.

36. A strong effort has been made since the merger to establish a new quality assurance system. The comprehensive arrangements include regular course review meetings and reports by course teams, self-assessment reports and lesson observation. These arrangements are beginning to make an impact. For instance, there have been improvements in retention and pass rates on a

number of courses identified through quality assurance procedures as failing. However, inspection evidence shows that the arrangements are not yet fully effective. Retention and pass rates are low at levels 1 and 2. The proportion of teaching judged satisfactory or better by inspectors was 60%, which is just below the national average for FE colleges; nearly 10% of teaching was less than satisfactory, which is above average. The quality of provision for the small numbers of work-based learners is unsatisfactory.

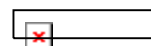
37. Inspectors agreed with most of the grades awarded to areas of learning by the college's self-assessment report. In some curriculum areas, the self-assessment reports did not concentrate sufficiently on the quality of teaching and learning, or overestimated the quality of teaching. The whole-college self-assessment report lacks analysis of cross-college themes, apart from leadership and management. The views of students are systematically sought, and where possible, action is taken to make appropriate changes.

38. Leadership and management within curriculum areas are generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Staff meetings are regular and generally well documented and progress made in achieving action plans is carefully monitored by senior and middle managers. There is a good programme of staff development, which is responsive to the college's strategic aims and to staff needs. There are workshops on issues arising from the programme of lesson observation. The system of staff appraisal lost its momentum during the period of the merger and a new system of appraisal has recently been introduced. There are arrangements for the mentoring of new staff.

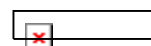
39. Since the merger, the college has sought to develop a new management information system. This is not yet operating effectively. The centrally held data on students' retention and pass rates frequently do not correlate with the figures held by curriculum managers, which inspectors found to be generally accurate. Data about students undertaking work-based learning are not available from the management information system.

40. The college's commitment to equality of opportunity is reflected in its strategic objectives. Access to study is facilitated by the broad range of courses, modes of attendance and opportunities for students to progress internally between courses and levels, and also through the effective cross-college organisation of basic skills. There is an equal opportunities group which is investigating students' experiences of equality within the college and an annual report on equal opportunities is prepared by the personnel department. The college has started to make some analyses of students' performance by gender and ethnicity. Successful events, such as the equal opportunities week, celebrate the college's ethnic and cultural diversity and help raise the profile of equality issues.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Science



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

#### **Strengths**

- good retention and pass rates in many areas

- better than predicted pass rates at GCE AS/A level
- much effective and well-planned teaching and assessment
- high expectations of students' performance and behaviour
- effective post-merger management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- overgenerous self-assessment of quality of teaching
- ineffective use of key performance indicators.

### ***Scope of provision***

41. The college offers a good range of full-time courses in science and a small number of part-time courses. There is a substantial GCSE programme, with over 100 enrolments, that includes human biology and astronomy. GCE AS and A-level subjects are offered over one or two years. There are about 150 students enrolled on a wide range of GCE AS science subjects which includes science for public understanding. In addition to a successful access to HE programme in science, the science team makes a major contribution to the access to HE course in nursing. The GNVQ intermediate science course, a dental surgery assistants course and an NVQ programme for science technicians all recruit well. There is no provision at foundation level in science.

### ***Achievement and standards***

42. Pass and retention rates for GCE AS courses are generally good. Almost 80% of those enrolled on GCE AS courses in science, in 2000, completed their courses; 77% of these achieved their qualification. GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses and the access to HE courses usually have high retention rates and good pass rates. Pass rates for GCE A-level science courses vary and some declined in 2001, but they are satisfactory overall. Pass rates for most GCSE science subjects are above national averages. Students studying GCSE chemistry did particularly well in 2001. Retention rates for both GCSE and GCE A-level science subjects are generally good. In most science subjects, students perform significantly better than their GCSE grades on entry predict.

43. Students' skills, knowledge and understanding are good and in some cases very good. A group of GCSE physics students reporting on experiments with the reflection and refraction of light rays relating to Hooke's Law reached standards that were above those expected for GCSE work. In a fast paced revision lesson in GCE A-level biology, students showed a firm grasp of the factors that influence plant growth and aspects of evolution. Many students who complete advanced level programmes progress to HE, including 77% of access students. In 2001, 90% of students who



successfully completed their GNVQ intermediate course progressed to further study on an advanced course at the college.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	19	16	10
		% retention	74	94	80
		% pass rate	36	87	63
GCSE sciences	2	No. of starts	*	*	83
		% retention	*	*	82
		% pass rate	*	*	40
Access certificate in science	3	No. of starts	18	19	12
		% retention	76	73	92
		% pass rate	84	81	64
GCE A-level sciences	3	No. of starts	*	*	214
		% retention	*	*	60
		% pass rate	*	*	60
GNVQ advanced science	3	No. of starts	33	34	28
		% retention	100	82	76
		% pass rate	60	71	88

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

\* data unreliable

***Quality of education and training***

44. Much of the teaching is well planned and effective. Teachers know their students well and have established good working relationships with them. Students are expected to attend lessons punctually and regularly - and they do. Attendance at lessons was 84% during the inspection. In lessons, teachers expect students to be attentive and to take an active part. They encourage students where necessary and exercise good control over the lessons. Lessons are usually conducted at a speed that is well matched to the students' abilities. Teachers are knowledgeable and often enthusiastic about their subject and are skilled at explaining scientific concepts in language which students can follow. Detailed schemes of work and student handbooks support all the courses. Lessons often have a mixture of theory and practical work that maintains students' interest. Practical work is closely linked to theory, well organised and effectively supported by technical support staff. In the less effective lessons, teachers' questions were poorly constructed, and there were short periods where control of the lesson was ineffective or planned activities over-ran.

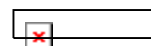
45. Students are assessed regularly and thoroughly. They are set a good range of tests, required to undertake sufficient homework and write reports on their practical work regularly. Some GCSE and AVCE students are not completing enough work. Teachers mark and correct students' work accurately and carefully; in most cases they show where students have made errors and provide corrections. Tutorial support is effective and valued by students. Tutors monitor students' progress and take appropriate and effective action to ensure that students have opportunities to progress. The laboratories provide a good environment for learning. They are spacious enough to

accommodate the numbers of students in lessons. Displays of students' work and posters are used well to enliven them. They are well organised and maintained by the technical support staff. There is sufficient well-maintained equipment to meet the current requirements for practical work. There are some good science materials on the college intranet, though some new books have been added to the library, there is too much out-of-date stock.

### ***Leadership and management***

46. Science is well led and managed. There have been many major changes over the last three years, including the college merger, the closure of some laboratories and the refurbishment of others. Poor provision at the former Hendon College has been improved significantly. The quality of teaching is now consistently good and records and other course documents are complete and thorough. The provision is closely monitored and its quality assessed regularly. External moderators and examiners reports are generally positive and any issues noted in them are acted upon. GCSE and GCE A-level retention and pass rate data for 1999 and 2000 used by the curriculum area were insecure, preventing the accurate analysis of performance trends. The self-assessment report was overgenerous in its assessment of the quality of science teaching.

### **Mathematics**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good range of courses for full-time students
- good pass rates at GCE A level and in numeracy
- good team management
- effective strategies in place for improving retention rates.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on GCSE and GCE A-level mathematics courses
- poor attendance

- little use of ICT in lessons
- narrow range of teaching in some lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

47. The college offers a good range of courses in City and Guilds numeracy, GCSE and GCE AS/A-level mathematics across all the main college sites. Over 550 students enrol for GCSE mathematics each year, including a number studying through the open-learning 'Flexistudy' scheme and through the college's Saturday school. Nearly 100 students study for GCE AS mathematics, and modules are offered in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. A small number take GCE AS/A levels in further mathematics. Approximately 100 adult students on access courses across the college study mathematics as part of their programmes. GCSE mathematics is available to some long-stay patients at a local hospital and some mathematical topics are taught on a supported learning course for people recovering from mental health problems.

### **Achievement and standards**

48. The retention rate of GCE AS students is satisfactory, but retention rates for GCSE and GCE A-level mathematics are below national averages. The proportion of students gaining A\* to C grades at GCSE is similar to the national average, which is itself low. Part-time GCSE students perform significantly better than full-time students. The pass rate for GCE A-level mathematics is above the national average. In 2001, only about half of the number of students studying GCE AS passed the examination, but results of modular tests taken in 2002 show a higher percentage of successful students among the present cohort. About 60 students study for City and Guilds numeracy qualifications each year and the pass rate is significantly above the national average, with pass rates of between 80% and 100%. GCE A-level students perform significantly better than their GCSE grades on entry predict. Similarly, about half the students on GCSE courses improve on their entry grades. Each year approximately 70% of successful GCE A-level students progress to HE, around 10% continue in full-time FE and a small number seek employment. Students developing their key skills in application of number show a wide range of achievement, mainly at levels 2 and 3, but students on vocational courses are more successful than those on GCE AS and A-level courses.

49. Most mathematics students are attentive in class, produce full and accurate working of problems and are able to explain their reasoning. A few make attempts to check their working, but this is not systematic. Many students question teachers thoughtfully and prepare homework carefully. However, there are a number of GCSE students who do not attend regularly and fail to produce homework. In application of number lessons, many students lack motivation. However, most students are able to perform calculations and explain their reasoning. Attendance in the lessons observed during the inspection was poor at only 55% with the poorest attendance being in application of number lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	466	416	481
		% retention	62	57	59
		% pass rate	36	38	35
GCE A-level	3	No. of starts	85	66	103

mathematics	% retention	56	67	46
	% pass rate	84	66	81

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

### **Quality of education and training**

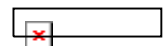
50. Most teaching is good or better. In the better lessons teachers inspire students to learn. Teachers explain work well, make good use of a range of additional activities, including quizzes, work in small groups, whole class discussions and the use of selected past examination questions. GCE A-level students visit theme parks to conduct science and mathematics investigations. In a numeracy lesson, students were developing reasoning skills by sharing ways of solving problems with the whole group. In some lessons, teachers make too many decisions for the students and do not allow for their different abilities. In one lesson, students listened to a teacher talking for most of the lesson and did not do any exercises that tested their understanding. There is little use of ICT in lessons. Many students attend mathematics workshops outside normal lesson time and there are revision classes during the day and on Saturdays at key times of the year. All courses have detailed schemes of work. Homework is regularly set and carefully marked. Teachers keep accurate records of students' progress, agree target grades to be achieved with GCE AS students and review progress with students at least once a term.

51. Mathematics classrooms on the three main sites are adequate and there are some good practical resources, particularly for use with numeracy students. The students make good use of the learning centres that contain a good supply of textbooks, videotapes, CD-ROMs and computers. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and undertake regular professional development, including updating on curriculum changes, key skills, behaviour management and the use of ICT. Effective use is made of classroom assistants to support weaker students and those with specific learning difficulties.

### **Leadership and management**

52. The programme area is well managed. The timetables are carefully co-ordinated to ensure that all groups cover similar material each week irrespective of the teacher and the site. The teachers work well as a team and share learning materials and other good practice. Strong emphasis is given to improving the quality of teaching. New teachers are mentored by more experienced staff and teachers observe each other. Support classes, attendance monitoring and the choice of suitable course modules, have been developed effectively to improve retention rates and there are signs of improvement. All the teachers make a contribution to annual course assessments and agree plans for improvement.

### **Construction**



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

### **Strengths**

- good retention rates on carpentry and bricklaying courses
- good student workbooks

- good additional support for students
- good workshop resources for in carpentry.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on NVQ level 2 courses
- underdeveloped craft skills of some students
- insufficient target setting for individual students
- inadequate resources for theory teaching.

### ***Scope of provision***

53. The college provides construction craft courses from levels 1 to 3 in bricklaying, carpentry and joinery and painting and decorating. At the time of the inspection, there were 65 full-time students, mostly aged from 16 to 18 and 115 part-time adult students. Enrolments have been increasing in recent years. The curriculum area has made successful approaches to local 11 to 16 schools and there is a growing school-link programme. Most courses start in September, but there are flexible arrangements to allow students to enrol throughout the year.

### ***Achievement and standards***

54. Retention rates on most courses are good. Historically, pass rates on NVQ level 2 courses have been poor, although results improved significantly in 2001 when 60% of carpentry and joinery students gained the qualification. Pass and retention rates for a newly introduced City and Guilds level 1 qualification in 2001 are above national averages at 79% and 73%, respectively.

55. The standard of adult students' work is satisfactory or better. In one example, a level 1 carpentry student had produced mortice and tenon joints for an end garden frame to a standard well above what might be expected at this level. In another, a painting and decorating level 1 student was able to hang wallpaper to surfaces, working accurately around corners and wall sockets, with no defects and while keeping the paper free from dirt. However, some students are hampered by underdeveloped craft skills and the standard of their work is less satisfactory. For example, NVQ level 2 students within a second-year bricklaying course were unable to construct walls to level and vertical because of poor use of tools. Students are punctual for lessons and attendance at the lessons observed was satisfactory at approximately 70%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	89	90	34
		% retention	84	93	74
		% pass rate	24	27	60
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	6	21	*
		% retention	83	76	*
		% pass rate	80	38	*
NVQ painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	15	12	*
		% retention	73	50	*
		% pass rate	55	0	*
NVQ construction crafts	3	No. of starts	35	17	*
		% retention	89	88	*
		% pass rate	16	27	*

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

\* data unreliable

**Quality of education and training**

56. Most lessons are well planned. Schemes of work clearly state aims and objectives and identify learning outcomes. In practical lessons, students of varying abilities work at an appropriate pace and demonstrate mature levels of motivation. In these lessons, students are supported by good workbooks and by competent staff who assist and advise on their work. In a carpentry lesson, students using workbooks had set out and were confidently producing roofs with either square or irregular base plans; the more able students worked with irregular base plans. In practical lessons, teachers do not explain key practical tasks by providing whole group demonstrations at the start of lessons. The carpentry workshops are up to date and safe, and there is an exceptionally well-equipped wood machine shop. Technical support staff are committed and effective in their support of learning. In theory lessons, teachers make good use of visual aids to help students' understanding. For example, first-year students learning about fixings into masonry walls were shown clearly various patented devices. Overall, however, resources for theory teaching are inadequate. Students sit inappropriately at benches in workshops with background noise from other areas, producing work that is at times below an acceptable standard.

57. Individual student tutorials address punctuality, attendance and general course issues. In these sessions, teachers are supportive and caring and allow time for students to respond to questions and in discussion. Targets for individual students are not always set, however, so that effective monitoring of students' progress is difficult. Teachers' feedback on both practical and written work does not give students enough advice on how to improve their performance. When asked, students were not always clear about what they needed to do to complete their course. Assessment of students is fair. Teachers employ clear criteria and marking is thorough. Some practical assessments are not easy for students to carry out because of cramped facilities in bricklaying.

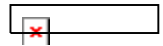
58. Additional support for students on construction courses is good. All students are assessed for their special learning needs and effective links between students and staff ensure a positive attitude to learning support. Learning support assistants, using student workbooks, are able to identify and support students' learning needs in the context of their vocational subjects. One student, having support, both within the lessons and in separate specialist classes, was able to talk with confidence

about the progress made over a two-year period.

### ***Leadership and management***

59. There are good day-to-day communications within the section supplemented by regular, minuted, meetings where general issues concerning the management of courses are discussed and action planned. For example, after a recent external verifier's report required the centre to provide additional assessment resources in painting and decorating, these resources were provided well in time for the next scheduled visit. Informal communications are used sensitively and to good effect when dealing with student issues. Appraisals are carried out and resulting staff development needs are addressed. The self-assessment report over-estimated the strengths of the curriculum area. Data on pass rates were misinterpreted and weaknesses were overlooked. Although a lesson observation scheme is in place and all teachers have been observed, the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning was unrealistically high.

### **Engineering**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on part-time courses
- good use of college ICT network to help students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on GNVQ courses
- much unsatisfactory classroom teaching
- insufficient monitoring of workshop practices in the mechanical workshop
- lack of current industrial experience of a few staff
- lack of student punctuality.

### **Scope of provision**

60. The engineering curriculum area offers a broad range of electronic, electrical and mechanical engineering courses. Full-time courses lead to GNVQ and AVCE qualifications at levels 1 to 3; part-time courses include a City and Guilds advanced diploma in electronic and computer systems and electrical installation and maintenance courses at levels 2 and 3. At the time of the inspection, there were 127 full-time students aged 16 to 18. Of these, 13% were studying GNVQ at foundation level and 29% at intermediate level; some 31% were enrolled on the AVCE engineering course. Sixteen students aged 16 to 18 were studying for the advanced diploma in electronic and computer systems. The 16 students on electrical installation and maintenance were all adults.

### **Achievement and standards**

61. Achievement on GNVQ programmes is unsatisfactory. Since 1998 the pass rates on foundation, intermediate and advanced GNVQ programmes have been consistently below the national average. The pass rates at foundation level have declined dramatically over three years from 61% to 14%; the pass rates of GNVQ advanced students dropped to 39% in 2001. City and Guilds advanced diploma courses have very good results with 100% of candidates achieving the award in 2000 and 2001. Retention rates in the same period are generally above the national average. On the City and Guilds part-time installation and maintenance course there were satisfactory pass rates. There is good progression from level 3 courses into HE. In 2001, 60% of students progressed from the GNVQ advanced engineering course into HE.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 1999 to 2001**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GNVQ engineering	1	No. of starts	19	22	17
		% retention	95	100	82
		% pass rate	61	32	14
GNVQ engineering	2	No. of starts	38	30	37
		% retention	92	97	92
		% pass rate	60	59	62
City and Guilds installation and maintenance	2/3	No. of starts	*	11	59
		% retention	*	55	98
		% pass rate	*	100	76
GNVQ engineering	3	No. of starts	23	21	40
		% retention	96	100	70
		% pass rate	36	67	39
City and Guilds electronics and computer systems	3	No. of starts	*	11	15
		% retention	*	55	80
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

\* course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**



62. Though most of the teaching is satisfactory, 33% of the lessons were unsatisfactory. For some lessons teachers talk for long periods and students become bored. Some teachers fail to involve all students in discussions or make frequent checks that students understand the work. Some handouts are poor and do not enable students to identify electrical components. Some students are not punctual, and this disrupts the learning of other students. Students on part-time courses learn new skills with enthusiasm. The quality of most practical basic engineering teaching is satisfactory. Students' poor use of hand tools, however, is not always corrected, allowing them to develop bad working practices.

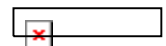
63. Teachers are technically well qualified and most hold qualifications as teachers and assessors. Two teachers are working towards the internal verifier qualification. Some teachers do not have current industrial experience, although this is being addressed through the staff development programme. The range and quality of resources are satisfactory and meet the needs of students. However, in one lesson there were insufficient computers for students to diagnose faulty components and practise new skills in order to complete their assignment. In another, the classroom was not large enough for the number of students. Students worked in cramped conditions and were unable to work effectively. Most students do not wear suitable safety clothing. Many wear trainers and have no overalls to protect their personal clothing. Students from a nearby jewellery class have frequent, unsupervised access to the engineering workshop. Although trained in the use of the equipment, they also have inappropriate footwear.

64. Assignments are well planned and assessment is thorough. Students receive good, helpful written feedback. Internal verification is effective and assessors are well supported. There are good links with local industry. One employer annually sponsors a student into HE and visits the college to give talks to students on career opportunities. Students receive a thorough induction when additional learning support needs are identified and individual learning plans agreed. Tutorials, which students find helpful, are held regularly throughout the programme. Tutorials are held in class groups or individually. Students' progress is discussed, but actions for improvement and targets are not always recorded. Good additional learning support is available for students on the college network. Lesson handouts, assignments and animated presentations are available for the use of students who have been absent from a lesson or who wish to revise. This is highly valued by students.

### ***Leadership and management***

65. Managers systematically monitor students' progress and achievement and set action plans for improvement. Observations of teaching are carried out regularly. Effective support for teachers includes appropriate staff development where necessary. Attendance monitors follow up poor student attendance and effectively support teachers.

### **Business administration**



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

**Contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on many courses
- wide range of courses with good internal progression routes

- good teaching
- good support for individual students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on GNVQ advanced and intermediate courses
- poor completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- lack of punctuality on full-time programmes
- low attendance.

### ***Scope of provision***

66. The college provides a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time courses, from foundation level to advanced and higher levels that is responsive to local requirements. There are full-time courses in business, management, administration, accounting, legal executive and management. Specialist part-time courses include marketing, personnel practice and a certificate in management. At the time of the inspection, there were 882 full-time and 1,399 part-time students. Of the full-time students, 529 are aged 16 to 18. There are day-release, part-time day and evening, and flexible learning courses so that students are able to progress from foundation to advanced levels using a range of modes of study. Work-based programmes are offered by the BTAS. There are 50 modern apprentices in customer service, accounting and administration.

### ***Achievement and standards***

67. Retention rates are mostly at or above national averages; in some cases they are significantly higher. However, pass rates on some full-time courses are significantly below national averages. The pass rates on the GNVQ advanced and intermediate in business are well below national averages and declined last year. Pass rates on some part-time management and administration courses, such as the certificates in personnel practice and training practice, are good. There is good preparation for employment and progression to higher level courses. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Students' poor attendance and lack of punctuality on full-time courses are adversely affecting achievement.

68. Pass rates on modern apprenticeship programmes are very poor, mainly because learners fail their key skills assessment. In the two years 1999 and 2000, 135 learners started a programme, but, at the time of the inspection, only four had achieved the full framework.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
NVQ administration	1	No. of starts	18	17	15
		% retention	78	81	80
		% pass rate	46	77	92
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	141	119	105
		% retention	82	62	85
		% pass rate	68	69	55
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	42	39	22
		% retention	86	79	91
		% pass rate	77	68	85
GNVQ business	2	No. of starts	107	106	80
		% retention	66	78	84
		% pass rate	26	63	49
GNVQ business	3	No. of starts	165	248	171
		% retention	78	89	75
		% pass rate	62	69	49
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Certificate in Personnel Practice	3	No. of starts	47	46	32
		% retention	79	87	88
		% pass rate	100	93	100
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	132	126	86
		% retention	77	92	58
		% pass rate	59	82	80
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	108	104	97
		% retention	69	77	79
		% pass rate	27	32	55
CIPD certificate in training and development	3	No. of starts	26	20	19
		% retention	88	90	95
		% pass rate	100	94	100

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

***Quality of education and training***

69. Most teaching is good or very good. Teachers maintain students' interest by using a range of appropriate, sometimes imaginative, activities. Teachers adapt their methods to meet the needs of the different student groups, although, in some lessons, they do not take sufficient account of the needs of individual students. In the most effective lessons teachers use resources well and schemes of work and lesson plans are good. Most lessons have clear aims that are fully explained to the students at the start of each lesson and teachers review students' learning at the end of lessons using a variety of methods to consolidate and review the lesson content. Supporting handouts and visual aids are informative and clear. On many part-time courses for adults, teachers

draw on their own experiences and those of their students to provide memorable and relevant examples that help to explain key points. Teachers provide good personal support in lessons.

70. Students receive a good induction programme that includes an initial assessment that identifies needs for support in key skills, ESOL and additional learning needs. On full-time courses, the results of initial assessment are used as a basis for the students' individual learning plans. Tutors and students agree learning goals at their first tutorial and progress is monitored regularly throughout the year. The tutorial system includes procedures for monitoring attendance, punctuality and poor performance and taking appropriate action. Students who are at risk of failing are identified and extra support is organised for them. The tutorial system has yet, however, to have a noticeable effect on pass rates.

71. Staff are well qualified, but some teachers have little recent industrial and commercial experience. Most classrooms are suitable places for students to learn.

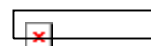
72. Teachers set and mark work regularly. Marking is thorough and it is easy for students to see how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. English and grammar are corrected. Internal verification is satisfactory.

73. The teaching of work-based learners is satisfactory or better. Learners on the modern apprenticeships programmes value the effective support they receive by telephone or e-mail inside and outside college hours. Individual learning plans are not always updated regularly. Employers are not involved in progress reviews and the monitoring of progress in customer service is unsatisfactory.

### ***Leadership and management***

74. Overall, the provision is well managed. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and managers are enthusiastic and work closely with teachers. Internal communications are good and meetings are held regularly. Staff development opportunities are good, but some teachers have not been appraised. All courses set targets for attendance and retention and pass rates and are reviewed twice a year. Course reviews lack rigour, however, and some targets are very general and difficult to measure. Staff have contributed to a detailed self-assessment of modern apprenticeship programmes. However, this process has been impeded by the absence of accurate data on work-based learning. Quality assurance procedures have yet to have an impact on achievement in key areas.

### **Computing and information and communication technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- extensive range of courses
- good overall retention rates for adults
- good level of up-to-date ICT resources

- effective support for students.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on intermediate courses
- undemanding teaching
- unsatisfactory organisation of computers and laboratories.

### **Scope of provision**

75. An extensive range of courses in computing and ICT provides good opportunities for progression from foundation to advanced level and to HE within the college. There are over 2,000 enrolments of which over 500 are full-time students. Unusually, the college offers full-time ICT courses specifically designed to cater for speakers of other languages. Part-time courses give opportunity for adults and young people to develop skills in a wide range of ICT areas. Part-time courses are offered both on main sites and at centres serving local communities. The majority of students recruited to the full-time courses are aged 16 to 18, whereas most of those enrolling on the part-time courses are adults.

### **Achievement and standards**

76. Retention rates are good on courses at levels 1 and 2. However, in 2001, fewer than 60% of students who began level 3 courses were retained. A high proportion of adult students completed their courses, but retention rates for full-time courses were low. Overall, the number of students completing ICT courses is increasing and was 93% at the time of the inspection. Pass rates are low and particularly weak on courses at intermediate level. Pass rates have mostly improved since the merger of the two colleges and was good on advanced level courses in 2001.

77. Adult students make good progress in lessons. They develop confidence and achieve good levels of ICT skill. Most students achieve the objectives of their lessons and attain an appropriate standard of work. There is good progression from intermediate to advanced level courses. Although advanced level students achieve a satisfactory standard of work by the end of their courses, the work completed in lessons is insufficiently demanding. Teachers give insufficient attention to the development of independent learning skills and to ensuring that students attempt tasks in a structured and disciplined way. Full-time students are not punctual and frequently disrupt lessons by arriving late. Attendance at lessons observed was satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ ICT	1	No. of starts	24	66	61

		% retention	54	76	75
		% pass rate	46	60	65
CLAIT (stage 1)	1	No. of starts	*	605	53
		% retention	*	85	98
		% pass rate	*	60	67
City and Guilds certificate in IT	1	No. of starts	566	525	574
		% retention	61	82	95
		% pass rate	68	51	67
GNVQ ICT	2	No. of starts	93	121	110
		% retention	88	76	89
		% pass rate	49	57	47
City and Guilds diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	451	527	26
		% retention	81	81	77
		% pass rate	52	49	35
GNVQ ICT	3	No. of starts	116	141	130
		% retention	69	54	51
		% pass rate	65	71	76
Access to computing	3	No. of starts	30	72	52
		% retention	77	79	71
		% pass rate	83	58	89
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	58	57	57
		% retention	56	56	44
		% pass rate	52	53	100
Business Technology Education Council national diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	20	30	22
		% retention	55	40	50
		% pass rate	73	75	91

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

\* course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**

78. Most teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is most effective on non-advanced courses and for adult students in part-time classes. In these lessons, activities are well organised and engage students in well-defined tasks that maintain their interest and help them develop their skills. In a GCSE lesson, the teacher had prepared a good series of related exercises based around a case study. In the first part of the lesson, the teacher skilfully used questions to help students identify key health and safety considerations when using computers. The students then prepared an information leaflet using desktop-publishing software. This activity was carefully managed and developed ICT skills while consolidating students' knowledge of health and safety requirements. In a few lessons, teachers give insufficient attention to developing good professional practice. An advanced level lesson, covering techniques of computer fault diagnosis, did not help students to develop a planned approach to the investigation of different types of fault, or to record their findings. Although some teachers appropriately insist that students answer questions coherently and used technical terms correctly, some teaching does not sufficiently develop students' knowledge or make them think

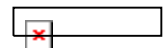
through reasons for their answers to questions.

79. Assessment is well organised and most marking provides constructive comments to help students improve. However, some teachers provide insufficiently detailed comments on students' coursework and rarely mark any work other than assignments. There is insufficient development of key skills in lessons. Students' use of language and number are weak in many lessons. Some students are confused about the objectives for key skills and unaware of the level of their progress. Tutorial support is well organised. Action plans are agreed with students and their progress is closely monitored. Students use a computer programme to model their own performance by entering their expected grades against the points needed for entry to HE. Course leaders use diagnostic assessment to identify additional learning and language needs and to group students according to their differing abilities. Some lessons are specifically designed to provide support for second language speakers.

### ***Leadership and management***

80. ICT courses are managed within five different areas across the college and most courses are run on more than one site. Despite this, there is a consistent approach to the management of courses and comprehensive course records are kept. Communications between teachers are effective and there are common approaches to planning teaching and assessment. Retention rates are closely monitored as is student performance on under-performing courses, but course reviews do not adequately assess the quality of teaching. Managers have been successful in improving the performance on some courses since the merger.

## **Hospitality and catering**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates
- effective support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low numbers on full-time courses
- poor quality specialist accommodation
- unsatisfactory quality assurance.

### ***Scope of provision***

81. There has been a considerable reduction in the full-time provision in this area in the last three years and numbers are low. The provision now comprises; NVQ catering courses for 30 students in food preparation and food service at levels 1, 2, and 3; an airline staff course for 12 students offering NVQ food service together with certificates related to appearance and customer relations; and an entry level catering course and a course combining NVQs with English as a second language, or with special support in numeracy and literacy. The airline staff course and the entry level courses have been developed by the college to meet specific needs in the locality. However, it is not evident that the airline course is appropriate for students wishing to enter to the airline industry. A wider range of part-time, evening and short courses is also offered. The college offers a Higher National Diploma (HND) in hospitality, in partnership with Middlesex University, but there is no hospitality course at advanced level that would give students access to the HND.

### ***Achievement and standards***

82. Retention rates on full-time catering courses are 15% above the national average and the pass rate for NVQ level 2 in food preparation is between 5% and 10% above the national average. Food preparation pass rates have been consistently high for the last three years. The airline staff course ran for the first time in 2000/01 and only 50% of the students were retained. There is no national comparison for this course, but this retention rate is not satisfactory. Students on all courses demonstrate particularly good vocational skills for their level and type of course. In practical lessons, students are developing supervisory and team working skills in addition to catering skills. Attendance is well above the college average.

83. Pass rate data provided by the college could not be satisfactorily reconciled with information from awarding bodies and other sources. In one case the number of students recorded on the course was less than the number shown by the awarding body as taking the qualification. It has, therefore, not been possible to publish an accurate table of retention and pass rates.

### ***Quality of education and training***

84. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Second-year and third-year students believe that the quality of lessons and of support they receive has improved during the past two years. Teachers give freely of their time. Most learning takes place in the restaurant and associated production and preparation kitchens. These provide a good, realistic, working environment in which students learn to develop a sense of responsibility. However, on occasions the number of customers dining in the restaurant is not sufficient to provide an appropriate experience. Teachers are skilled at taking account of all levels of ability in practical lessons for classes that combine students working towards different NVQ levels. Teachers have developed workbooks to cover the background knowledge for many NVQ units. These are a valuable resource from which the students benefit.

85. The college restaurant does not have an appropriate ambience to teach restaurant service and needs refurbishment and redecoration. There is a lack of finesse in the restaurant and in the service provided during some meals. All the kitchens are in need of modernisation. The layout is inappropriate for their current use and some equipment is unsuitable for a modern kitchen. These problems have been compounded following the closure of the bakery and removal of some bakery equipment into the restaurant kitchens and their layout urgently needs to be reviewed.

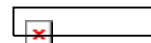
86. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all students who require additional learning support have access to appropriate specialists. This is applied to both full-time and part-time students. The support provided within the learning area is good and teachers work well with the specialist supporters. Students commented on the excellent pastoral support provided by their class tutors. Assessments are well planned and conducted thoroughly and students are encouraged to set themselves high standards.



## **Leadership and management**

87. Course leaders manage their programmes reasonably well on a daily basis. However, the area has suffered from the combined effect of organisational and staffing difficulties. A new team is in place and is working well. The process of recovery is underway, but not yet complete. Insufficient time has been spent on quality assurance procedures and course reviews have not always been properly recorded. Reviewing the quality of provision is often done outside the formal review process and may not include all those who are involved in the team. Proposed actions are not always followed up. Staff did not feel involved in the preparation of the self-assessment report that relates largely to a teaching team that no longer exists. Management information is inaccurate. Course teams are aware of these weaknesses and are planning for improvement. Some teachers are still not clear about the extent of their roles and responsibilities in the new college structure. Teachers take advantage of good staff development opportunities.

## **Sports, leisure and tourism**



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on GNVQ foundation and NVQ travel courses
- good teaching
- good support for students
- broad range of appropriate courses
- good resources.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on BTEC national sports science and GNVQ advanced courses
- inconsistent assessment practices

- ineffective management of staff shortages
- some poor attendance
- under-use of sports facilities.

### **Scope of provision**

88. There are 400 full-time students and 190 part-time students participating in a wide variety of courses in sport, leisure and travel. Qualifications offered range from entry level to NVQs at level 1, 2 and 3, GNVQ foundation and intermediate, AVCE, Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national and GCE AS/A level. An innovative project, involving a combined programme of GCE AS/A-level study and coaching, has been developed by a member of the sports staff. Partnerships have been developed with Shaftsbury Barnet Harriers, Barnet Copthall Swimming Club and successful progression links have been developed with Middlesex University, Westminster University and Luton University. In the travel area, teachers are participating in a computer-based learning pilot scheme developing on-line assignments for travel students. Although the college offers a wide range of sports-related courses, it has no representational teams for any sports.

### **Achievement and standards**

89. Students on GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism had pass rates well above the national average in 2001, and students studying for an NVQ in travel services are achieving well at levels 2 and 3. However, there has been a drop in pass rates on other level 3 courses, notably on GNVQ leisure and tourism and on the BTEC national diploma in sports science that only 17% of those completing achieved in 2001. Retention rates are satisfactory on most courses. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but there are some pockets of poor attendance. Only 50% of NVQ level 1 sport and recreation students attended lessons observed during the inspection. Student portfolios contain completed units of a good standard and standards of work in lessons are generally satisfactory or better.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in sports, leisure and tourism, 1999 to 2001**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	25	41	32
		% retention	68	68	72
		% pass rate	59	73	84
GNVQ leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	41	49	48
		% retention	80	73	79
		% pass rate	61	51	76
GNVQ leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	67	64	55
		% retention	87	78	61
		% pass rate	53	83	52

BTEC national diploma in sport science	3	No. of starts	12	11	23
		% retention	100	92	52
		% pass rate	83	82	17
GCE A-level sports games and recreation	3	No. of starts	27	19	22
		% retention	85	84	68
		% pass rate	59	80	80
NVQ in travel services	3	No. of starts	28	18	12
		% retention	79	89	100
		% pass rate	95	94	100

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

### **Quality of education and training**

90. Most teaching is good or very good. Lessons are well structured and have clear links to the assessment requirements of the courses. Staff are clear about what they want to achieve and students are attentive, lively, well motivated and enthusiastic. There are many examples of good practice. For example, a college governor was involved in one class working with GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism students on a preparation for employment unit. The governor and a member of the administration staff carried out mock interviews for which students had formally prepared.

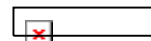
91. Resources for sport and travel are generally good. The college travel agency is an excellent resource for NVQ travel students and is highly valued. Indoor sports facilities are good, and include well-equipped sports halls and fitness rooms and a swimming pool. The quality and size of classrooms vary from site to site; in some cases teaching rooms are unsatisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience, although the college is finding difficulty replacing some teachers who left in 2001, and this has had an adverse effect on students' learning. At the time of the inspection, AVCE leisure and recreation students had not been taught one of the units they should have completed.

92. On most courses, students receive constructive feedback on their work. However, the assessment of students' work is not consistent across the provision. Support for students across the area is strong and valued by students. Those with individual needs are given appropriate support, including students for whom English is a second language. A student with Aspergers syndrome had a support worker and was progressing extremely well on his travel services course. Individual tutorial sessions are well structured and the outcomes carefully recorded. Students' have the opportunity to review their progress and negotiate future targets.

### **Leadership and management**

93. Communications between teachers on different sites and across the sport and travel areas are not always effective. The sports facilities are under-used. There is no strategy for the development of these facilities, which, with greater college and community use, could bring in revenue for the college. Staff recruitment has not been well managed and teachers have to cover vacant posts for extended periods. Unsatisfactory achievement is linked partly to weak assessment and verification practices. There is an action plan in place and teachers have been involved in training and development following recommendations from the external verifier. Attendance problems have been addressed by the use of a monitoring scheme that is having some success.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

**Contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates in beauty and complementary therapy
- good practical standards in hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapy
- lively, stimulating teaching in evening classes.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory pass rates in NVQ level 1 hairdressing
- unsatisfactory assessment procedures
- unsatisfactory quality assurance
- poor retention and pass rates on modern apprenticeship frameworks.

### ***Scope of provision***

94. The college offers courses in hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies. Hairdressing courses include NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3, barbering, Afro-Caribbean and introduction to hairdressing. There are beauty and complementary therapies courses at levels 2 and 3 and two vocational courses designed specifically for students who are speakers of other languages. A range of complementary and related courses includes holistic therapies, aromatherapy, reflexology, Reiki, Indian head massage, Asian bridal make-up, mendhi/henna skin decoration, anatomy and physiology, manicure, fashion photography, media and theatre make-up. Courses are offered during the day, in the evenings and at weekends. There are 170 full-time and part-time students on hairdressing courses including 22 foundation modern apprentices and 1 advanced modern apprentice, and 314 full-time and part-time students on beauty and complementary therapy courses.

### ***Achievement and standards***

95. Retention and pass rates on most beauty and complementary therapy courses are good. In hairdressing, pass rates are unsatisfactory at NVQ level 1 and retention rates are poor at level 2. Recruitment for NVQ level 3 in hairdressing has dropped significantly, although retention and pass rates have improved significantly so that they are now similar to national averages. Course reviews in March 2002 show significantly improved retention rates on all hairdressing courses.

96. Media make-up portfolios are good, and contain a wealth of relevant evidence of students' competence, including visual work and presentations showing students' grasp of ICT skills. Work in hairdressing students' portfolios lacks appropriate variety. Standards of practical work in hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies are high. Students participate in local, regional and national competitions and have had a number of successes. NVQ level 1 hairdressing students are producing work that is above the expected level.

97. Over the last four years retention and pass rates by hairdressing modern apprentices have been poor. At the time of the inspection, of the 64 students who had started as modern apprentices since 1998, only 2 had achieved their NVQ and key skills qualifications and 23 were still learning. Of those who started in 2000, 42% left with no qualifications.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	*	*	102
		% retention	*	*	72
		% pass rate	*	*	44
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	1 and 2	No. of starts	83	32	40
		% retention	43	50	25
		% pass rate	29	33	80
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	76	170	76
		% retention	75	81	86
		% pass rate	42	63	83
NVQ hairdressing	3	No. of starts	21	5	7
		% retention	66	100	71
		% pass rate	29	100	80
Anatomy, physiology and body massage	3	No. of starts	71	85	132
		% retention	69	76	87
		% pass rate	71	45	72
Fashion and photographic make-up diploma	3	No. of starts	**	16	*
		% retention	**	81	*
		% pass rate	**	92	*
Diploma for make-up artistes	3	No. of starts	**	21	14
		% retention	**	62	79
		% pass rate	**	85	91
Reiki, reflexology and aromatherapy (short courses)	3	No. of starts	*	*	80
		% retention	*	*	86
		% pass rate	*	*	89

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

\* data unreliable

\*\* course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**

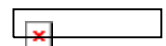
98. Teaching in evening classes is particularly well planned, lively and stimulating, with teachers making good use of a variety of appropriate activities and teaching methods. In contrast, much daytime theory teaching is dull and uninspiring. There is an over-reliance on the written word in theory sessions and in the learning packs. No use is made of ICT in teaching. Students waste time in some salon sessions waiting for clients or deciding what to do in the absence of clients. The two recently refurbished college hairdressing salons are modern, bright and spacious. The facilities for students on beauty courses are adequate. There are too few clients in most hair and beauty salon classes and the reception area is uninviting and sparse. The three beauty salons vary in size, one being particularly small and cramped, and they lack the ambience of a good commercial salon. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. All full-time and fractional staff are qualified assessors and half are internal verifiers. Teachers maintain their commercial skills by working regularly in salons and attending exhibitions, seminars and training events. There is a good ethnic and gender match between teachers and the students they teach.

99. Assessments on complementary therapy courses are well organised, but there is little collection of assessment evidence from the workplace and evidence from vocational work is not used as evidence for the acquisition of key skills. Internal verifiers do not hold separate meetings to discuss issues and share good practice, but internal verification is a standing item at course team meetings. Students undertake an initial assessment of their basic skills at the start of courses and additional learning and language support is offered if required. Tutorials and action plans are used more effectively to monitor progress on some courses than others. Beauty therapy staff use wall charts for recording attendance and punctuality to encourage students to improve in these respects. Recording in work record books is not carried out regularly by all teachers and few teachers evaluate their lessons regularly. Modern apprentices' progress reviews do not focus sufficiently on the completion of NVQ units.

### **Leadership and management**

100. Team meetings are regular and properly recorded. Course reviews monitor retention and pass rates against set targets. Progress is being made in achieving the self-assessment report's action plan. However, quality assurance arrangements do not adequately address weaknesses in teaching and assessment. Staff appraisal has ceased since the merger of the two colleges. Questionnaires are used to gain students' views, but feedback is not gathered frequently enough to be used for improvements. There are no employer forums. Modern apprentices who lose their work placements do not attend college in the interim period.

### **Health and social care**



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

### **Strengths**

- good teaching

- very good pass rates in childhood studies
- an effective tutorial programme
- consistently good progress to HE from access courses
- effective leadership of college-based provision.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor GNVQ and NVQ pass rates in health and social care
- unsatisfactory monitoring of work-based provision.

### ***Scope of provision***

101. The college has health and social care provision on three of its five sites as well as franchised work-based provision. The college offers a good range of full-time courses including AVCE, intermediate and foundation GNVQs in health and social care, and childcare courses at levels 2 and 3, including certificates and diplomas in childcare and education and a national diploma in childhood studies/early years. Full-time and part-time access courses are offered in nursing and health and human sciences. Part-time provision includes counselling, City and Guilds foundation and advanced management of care, childminding, and NVQs in care and early years at levels 2 and 3. There are a small number of modern apprenticeships in care and early years. Enrichment activities and other provision, such as GCSE and GCE AS subjects, are available and some students are taking GCSE mathematics. All students have the opportunity to undertake first aid courses. The work-based NVQs and the modern apprenticeship programmes are managed by the BTAS.

### ***Achievement and standards***

102. Pass rates have fluctuated between 1999 and 2001. The pass rates on GNVQ foundation health and social care improved in 2001 and are at the national average. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses in health and social care have declined and are both below the national average. GNVQ retention rates are good on the foundation course, average on the intermediate, and below average at advanced level. There has been a significant drop in enrolments on the health and social care courses. Retention rates on childcare courses are satisfactory and there are improving pass rates on the certificate in childcare and education at level 2. The national diploma in childhood studies/early years has had 100% pass rates for the past three years. Access to nursing and counselling courses have high retention rates and improving pass rates and there is good progression to HE. Standards of work in health and social care are high. Pass rates on the modern apprenticeship programme in care and early years are low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ health and social care	1	No. of starts	44	33	18
		% retention	75	91	94
		% pass rate	67	60	76
GNVQ health and social care	2	No. of starts	50	34	35
		% retention	92	65	74
		% pass rate	46	86	61
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	48	44	55
		% retention	88	75	88
		% pass rate	68	73	91
Certificate in counselling / counselling skills	2	No. of starts	48	44	30
		% retention	88	75	90
		% pass rate	68	73	85
BTEC advanced diploma in nursery nursing (childhood studies)	3	No. of starts	17	16	11
		% retention	47	100	73
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GNVQ health and social care	3	No. of starts	33	45	26
		% retention	67	89	73
		% pass rate	57	79	68
City and Guilds foundation management for care 325/2	3	No. of starts	14	23	29
		% retention	79	91	90
		% pass rate	91	33	77
City and Guilds advanced management for care 325/3	3	No. of starts	38	51	43
		% retention	95	86	81
		% pass rate	69	41	69
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	30	55	35
		% retention	87	93	91
		% pass rate	77	44	88

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

**Quality of education and training**

103. Most teaching is good or very good. The content of lessons is vocationally relevant, and covers the skills and knowledge which students will need for work experience. In the best lessons, teachers challenge and inspire the students using relevant and current issues and check students' understanding and learning effectively. Mature students contribute well and teachers use their experience to good effect. Teachers show good knowledge of the students and their individual needs, such as that of some for language support. Students worked purposefully in lesson time, were confident in lessons and able to ask questions and discuss topics. Work experience is an integral part of all courses. The selection of work experience placements is carefully monitored by tutors who visit regularly.



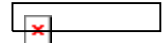
104. Teachers are well qualified and hold vocationally relevant qualifications. Some part-time staff are current practitioners. Staff have opportunities for regular updating, professional development and industrial experience. For example, two teachers are completing relevant higher degrees and exchange visits take place with four students from Norway currently taking childcare courses. There are adequate, or good, resources on all sites and the area is well supported by the learning centres. Classrooms appropriately display students' work. Students' work is assessed promptly and assignments are evenly spread. Teachers provide good written feedback to help students to maintain or improve grades. On the modern apprenticeship programmes there has been no assessment of key skills, although this is currently being addressed. Tutorial support is good.

105. The support is fully individualised and students' attendance and progress are monitored. Tutors know their students well and lecturers are aware of and use the feedback mechanisms to personal tutors.

### ***Leadership and management***

106. There is effective leadership in the department and the teams work well to provide coherent and good quality programmes. The courses are well organised with careful attention given to awarding bodies' requirements. Meetings are regular and minuted with action points and review dates recorded. The management of NVQ training is mixed. The best is highly organised and supervised with regular meetings between assessors and college staff and with basic knowledge being taught in college. Some NVQ provision relies on distance learning materials and candidates receive little structured support in the organisation of their portfolios and achievement of the award. The management and monitoring by the BTAS of the NVQ programmes and the modern apprenticeship programme is not thorough enough.

### **Art and design, performing arts and media**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching
- good range of courses at all levels
- good development of students' research and analytical skills
- thorough assessment and internal verification.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on some GCE A-level courses

- low retention rates on many courses
- insufficiently thorough self-assessment
- ineffective management arrangements.

### ***Scope of provision***

107. There are over 700 full-time and more than 200 part-time students studying on visual arts, performing arts and media courses. GCE AS/A-level courses are offered in art and design, photography, textiles, drama, design technology, media and film. Intermediate courses include both GNVQs and GCSEs in art and design and media. There is a foundation programme in art and design, but not in performing arts. There is a well-established and diverse range of level 3 vocational programmes for full-time students in visual arts and media, including an AVCE in art and design and media and a BTEC national diploma in graphic design, fashion and multimedia. There is also a BTEC national diploma in performing arts. There is no full-time provision at any level in music. The college also provides an access course to HE covering art and design, interior design and media, together with a BTEC foundation diploma in art and design. Visual arts and media students can transfer on to HND and HNC programmes at the college.

### ***Achievement and standards***

108. Pass and retention rates are below average on over half the provision. Both pass and retention rates on the BTEC national diploma in performing arts and GNVQ advanced art and design were above the national average. On the BTEC national diploma in fashion, students have achieved consistently good results. Pass rates on GCE A-level art and design and photography are poor, as is the retention rate on GCE A-level art and design, GNVQ foundation art and design and City and Guilds photography. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate media have been consistently below the national average, but are gradually improving. Progression rates are good with a majority of level 3 students progressing to HE, particularly to the college's own Higher National Certificate (HNC) and HND provision, and about half of intermediate students progressing to level 3 courses within the college.

109. Standards in lessons are good. Students demonstrate good levels of technique and they are also developing good research and analytical skills. However, lack of punctuality disrupts the work of some classes.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in art and design, performing arts and media, 1999 to 2001***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GNVQ art and design	2	No. of starts	33	34	43
		% retention	85	91	88
		% pass rate	57	77	76
GNVQ media	2	No. of starts	33	34	23

		% retention	79	75	96
		% pass rate	44	54	59
GNVQ art and design	3	No. of starts	30	39	34
		% retention	97	92	79
		% pass rate	76	75	89
Foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	65	63	46
		% retention	80	76	80
		% pass rate	88	79	86
BTEC national diploma in fashion design	3	No. of starts	17	23	18
		% retention	76	76	67
		% pass rate	92	69	100
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	29	19	35
		% retention	66	95	68
		% pass rate	86	80	50
GNVQ media	3	No. of starts	47	96	54
		% retention	96	91	67
		% pass rate	91	62	69
BTEC national diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	31	29	35
		% retention	97	93	89
		% pass rate	97	100	90

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

### **Quality of education and training**

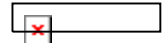
110. The majority of teaching is good or better. Most tutors effectively use question and answer sessions to check students' understanding. In the best lessons, teachers set demanding work and use effective learning materials that stimulate students' interest. In one lesson, students could choose from five still-life arrangements ranging from architectural boxes to Balinese shadow puppets. They could then work on the composition that would most effectively develop their skills for their final project. In weaker lessons, there was poor management, the pace of work was slow and too little attention was paid to keeping students quiet so that they could work effectively.

111. Assessment procedures across a wide range of courses are implemented thoroughly. Students are very aware of their progress to date and the quantity of work that they still have to complete. Written feedback on assignments is good; it gives students encouragement while indicating clearly areas for improvement. Staff effectively monitor each student's progress and discuss it with students in individual tutorials which are held every six weeks. Students' individual learning support needs are effectively diagnosed and appropriate support is offered. In a computer graphics session, a dyslexic student received in-class support for help in maintaining a good set of notes. Overall, resources are satisfactory. Visual art studios are of a good size and have good natural light, but the decor is poor and the rooms are often untidy. Displays in the art rooms are not always inspiring, but student work is effectively displayed around the public spaces of the college. Students have access to good ICT provision and digital video-editing facilities, but complain that they can not always use them as HND students are given priority. Staff are well qualified and have good professional experience, but only a third of full-time staff have a teaching qualification. The book stock in the library is adequate, but in need of updating.

### **Leadership and management**

112. There are significant weaknesses in the management of the area. There is presently no permanent curriculum area manager, communications are poor and there is no regular cycle of meetings to facilitate the smooth flow of information. The self-assessment report does not identify measurable strategies for dealing with the problems of retention and pass rates and some assumptions are based on incorrect figures.

## Humanities



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates in GCE AS history and psychology and GCE A-level sociology
- good retention rates
- good use of students' prior learning
- much quietly authoritative teaching.

### ***Weaknesses***

- below average pass rates in most subjects
- poor attendance
- significant amounts of uncompleted work
- no use of target setting to promote students' progress.

### ***Scope of provision***

113. Most courses in this curriculum area are GCE AS/A-level courses or one-year GCSE courses.

In addition, there are two access to HE courses. GCE A-level psychology and sociology are particularly popular and there are smaller numbers studying history and government and politics. There are also GCSE courses in these subjects along with access to HE courses in humanities and social science and social work. Most of the 400 students are full-time, but some 50 part-time students study mainly in the evening.

### ***Achievement and standards***

114. Standards of achievement, except in sociology, are unsatisfactory at GCE A level, although the number of students who complete their courses is high. Achievement in GCE AS history, where there was a 100% pass rate, and psychology is good. Pass rates on GCSE courses are in line with, or a little better than, the national average. Across all courses, students make the expected amount of progress given their starting points. Many students' attainment is adversely affected by their poor attendance. Most students who complete access courses progress to degree courses. However, the non-completion rate on these courses is high.

115. Most students make satisfactory progress and some contribute well, asking thoughtful questions and giving answers that show a good understanding of the key ideas and themes. Most do not achieve as well with their written work as they do orally. A significant minority has missing, or uncompleted, course work, showing that students do not follow up at home the good starts made in lessons.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	30	16	23
		% retention	57	69	74
		% pass rate	71	82	47
Access to social science /social work	2	No. of starts	108	85	21
		% retention	84	92	67
		% pass rate	48	45	21
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	102	86	89
		% retention	82	83	48
		% pass rate	45	62	60
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	102	86	66
		% retention	70	78	55
		% pass rate	49	72	86
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	19	41	28
		% retention	79	80	64
		% pass rate	58	37	72
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	42	47	31
		% retention	85	86	74
		% pass rate	62	57	43

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

### ***Quality of education and training***

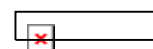
116. Most teaching is good; it engages students' attention and is quietly authoritative. In the best lessons, for example, in a GCE A-level history class, the teacher used students' prior knowledge well to draw parallels with propaganda in Nazi Germany and developments in the modern world. Excellent use was made of both primary and secondary sources. Students responded well and showed not only good subject knowledge, but also considerable maturity in their evaluative and reflective comments. In this lesson, as in most lessons, questions that raised equal opportunities issues were handled well. However, the mostly good teaching does not always lead to the expected gains in learning. Again, irregular patterns of attendance were an important contributory factor. Where the teaching was less successful, learning objectives were too general and the progress made in achieving them was not reviewed.

117. Teachers are well qualified and have taken full advantage of training opportunities to update their subject expertise, not least in respect of the 2000 Qualifying for Success reforms. There are adequate resources for teaching, but too few library books. There is little use of ICT. Accommodation is adequate, although some rooms are small and many are in need of refurbishment. Students' work is marked regularly and accurately, but students are not always informed in sufficient detail, in writing, what they need to do to improve. Oral feedback in lessons is generally good and teachers build assessment into lessons skilfully. Teachers keep accurate records and mark books are up to date. Tutorials are used regularly to discuss underachievement, but these efforts do not always achieve the desired outcomes. While most teachers share their grade predictions with students they do not use students' starting points to set targets and review their progress in achieving them.

### ***Leadership and management***

118. Current management arrangements do not provide for the most effective management of the humanities provision. The senior managers' responsibilities extend across all GCE and GCSE courses, not just those in humanities, but they do not include access courses. The college merger has resulted in new curriculum and communication issues and it is too soon to judge how effectively they are being addressed. Team leaders capably manage some of the more popular subjects, but those in charge of other subjects often work in relative isolation from their colleagues. In their assessment of students' performance, teachers do not make systematic use of the data available on students' prior attainments to predict and promote better achievements. In general, there are too few occasions when teachers can meet to discuss common issues, share good practice and review the progress made in addressing known issues.

### **English and communications**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good range of provision
- good retention rates on most courses
- good achievement of high grades in GCSE English.

### **Weaknesses**

- undemanding lessons
- poor attendance and lack of punctuality
- insufficient attention to the development of students' independent learning skills.

### **Scope of provision**

119. There is an adequate range of English and communications provision that includes GCE A-level courses for full-time students in English language, English literature, English language and literature and communication studies. Intensive revision and part-time courses are available in three of the four subjects. GCSE English is available on a full-time and part-time basis, during the day and in the evening.

### **Achievement and standards**

120. There are good retention rates on most GCE A-level courses. On the one-year GCE A-level English language and literature course and the full-time GCE A-level communication studies course, retention rates are above the national average. Retention rates on the full-time GCE A-level English literature course have been significantly below the national average for two of the last three years. On GCSE courses, the retention rate is satisfactory or better. There have been poor retention rates on communication key skills courses on GCE and GCSE programmes where students do not see the relevance of the work. Students at the college start their GCE A-level courses with a below average GCSE points score. In 2001, there was an improvement in student achievements on several courses so that most are now satisfactory. Pass rates on full-time GCE A-level communications studies have risen steadily over the last three years and are now significantly above the national average. Pass rates on GCE A-level English language fell in 2001 and student performance in relation to their prior achievements was low. Pass rates on GCSE courses overall are satisfactory. Students' pass rates on the new GCE AS courses in 2001 were broadly in line with their prior attainment with the exception of English language. In some GCSE and key skills communication classes, there has been considerable dropout since the course began.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	455	227	399
		% retention	89	67	75
		% pass rate	36	48	47
GCE A-level English language and literature (two year)	3	No. of starts	79	45	52
		% retention	67	100	73
		% pass rate	79	70	79

GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	40	28	66
		% retention	55	93	58
		% pass rate	78	79	87
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	33	36	22
		% retention	82	86	73
		% pass rate	86	85	75
GCE A-level communication studies	3	No. of starts	40	24	21
		% retention	58	92	90
		% pass rate	62	70	82
GCE A-level English languages and literature (one year)	3	No. of starts	45	79	43
		% retention	87	80	84
		% pass rate	75	60	72

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

### **Quality of education and training**

121. Teaching in just over half the lessons observed was good or better, although little was very good. Teaching is well planned and organised and detailed schemes of work are in place. In the best GCE lessons, teachers successfully encouraged students to make analyses of challenging literary texts. There was a strong emphasis on examination technique. In the most effective GCSE and key skills communication lessons, teachers kept the activities moving at a quick pace, stimulating students with varied tasks, and providing continuous encouragement and help. In the less effective GCE lessons, the teaching was insufficiently demanding. Teachers sometimes talk for too long, or rely too heavily on loose discussion and open questions that do not engage the participation of all students.

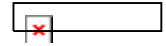
122. Most students are responsive and willing to participate in the activities provided. In the most successful lessons, students made good progress. For instance, in a key skills communication lesson, a lively group of GNVQ intermediate students responded with enthusiasm and much discussion to a task on how to use images, such as the Underground route map. Students' lack of punctuality affected learning in many lessons. Arrangements for the assessment of students' work are good. Students have clear guidelines and they comment favourably on the feedback they receive as work is progressing. Strategies to ensure that students work effectively in their own time are not well developed. English is taught by a team of well-qualified and experienced staff. There is a good range of resources for students to use. There are informative course handbooks and the team has produced excellent revision booklets for GCE A-level courses. These draw together a range of practice questions and materials in an attractive format. English teaching takes place at three of the college's centres. Some rooms have attractive displays of students' work providing a positive image of the subject. Some lessons take place in poorly maintained accommodation.

### **Leadership and management**

123. The English provision is well managed. Increasingly the team is planning teaching and resources collaboratively. There is good mentoring of new staff and a good level of professional updating. Retention and pass rates are carefully reviewed and subject reviews are thorough. There is insufficient evaluation of teaching and learning in the self-assessment report. There are good arrangements for the management and development of communication key skills across the college. Courses have been successful in vocational areas, especially where assignments have been made relevant to students' main programmes.



## Foreign languages and English as a foreign language



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

### **Strengths**

- good pass rates and high standards of oral work
- good teaching
- effective assessment
- good support for international students
- good leadership and course management.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates in GCE A-level languages
- some unsatisfactory accommodation.

### **Scope of provision**

124. Across its centres the college offers a good range of courses in foreign languages for all ages, including less commonly taught languages such as Portuguese, Greek, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese. It is also possible to study languages under a 'Flexistudy' scheme and at the 'Weekend College', where French and Spanish are proving popular. There are evening classes in GCE AS/A-level and GCSE French, German, Italian and Spanish and also in GCSE Modern Greek. Daytime provision is restricted to GCE AS/A-level French and Spanish due to the reduced take up of languages by younger students. A comprehensive range of English as a foreign language (EFL) courses is provided in the daytime and in the evening over two centres. EFL can also be taken as part of an attractive vocational programme that includes travel and tourism, business studies and computing. There is also an international foundation course for prospective university students run in partnership with Middlesex University that attracts students from all over the world. There are currently about 1,010 students enrolled on foreign language courses and about 500 on EFL courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

125. In 2001, there were very good pass rates for adults in foreign languages; this built on a steady improvement in retention and pass rates over previous years. Pass rates in EFL examinations were well above average, as were retention rates. In GCE A-level languages, retention rates have improved, but pass rates are below national averages. Pass rates in GCSE languages are well above the national average. Levels of attainment are good, and in both foreign language and EFL lessons, standards of oral work were high. Students speak confidently and show good recall of previous words and structures. In a GCE A-level French class on the history of the French cinema, students were able to express quite complex and sophisticated ideas in the language they were learning.

126. Pass rate data provided by the college could not be satisfactorily reconciled with information from awarding bodies and other sources. It has, therefore, not been possible to publish retention and pass rates before 2001.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Graded foreign languages examinations	1	No. of starts	*	*	310
		% retention	*	*	63
		% pass rate	*	*	87
GCSE in French, Spanish, Italian and Greek	2	No. of starts	*	*	100
		% retention	*	*	70
		% pass rate	*	*	80
EFL first certificate	2	No. of starts	*	*	950
		% retention	*	*	97
		% pass rate	*	*	62
GCE A-level in French, German, Spanish and Italian	3	No. of starts	*	*	100
		% retention	*	*	86
		% pass rate	*	*	56
EFL Cambridge advanced certificate	3	No. of starts	*	*	67
		% retention	*	*	88
		% pass rate	*	*	88
EFL Cambridge proficiency	4	No. of starts	*	*	71
		% retention	*	*	91
		% pass rate	*	*	81

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001). \* data unreliable

### **Quality of education and training**

127. Most teaching was good or very good. Lessons are well prepared with detailed plans and schemes of work. Good records were evident, especially where two lecturers shared one class. Foreign language lessons are conducted in the language being taught. The materials used in most lessons are stimulating and teachers provide good opportunities for students to practise speaking skills in work in pairs or groups. Students make good use of dictionaries and help each other in

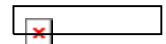
classroom activities. Teachers use effective assessment procedures, based on the requirements of the awarding bodies, and students' progress is regularly monitored and reviewed.

128. Rooms are generally adequate, although in some cases the accommodation is acoustically unsuitable and difficult to work in. There is a well-stocked, dedicated, learning resources facility at one centre and a good foreign languages/EFL drop-in workshop with a language laboratory and Internet access at another. All teachers are well qualified with many having higher degrees and diplomas. Advice is given to foreign languages students on entry, but there is no diagnostic testing. Enrolment staff do not always implement the policy whereby admission to a GCSE course is dependent on previous experience of the language and this creates difficulties for both students and teachers. All international students are given a placement test on enrolment to determine the level of class suited to their attainment. There is an effective tutorial system that ensures that students are regularly reviewed. International students spoke highly of their tutors and the way they made their stay at the college a successful and happy one. They also praised the college's international office and the help it provides with students' living accommodation.

### ***Leadership and management***

129. The provision, and its extensive body of part-time staff, are well managed. The college's commitment to quality ensures that part-time teachers are paid to attend meetings and any in-service activity. Many teachers avail themselves of these opportunities. Meetings are properly minuted, but tend to emphasise operational over pedagogical matters. The EFL provision benefits from two full-time lecturers who each take responsibility for one of the centres. Since the merger, there is increasing co-operation and streamlining of arrangements which have resulted in improvements. Quality assurance systems are satisfactory, and care has been taken to ensure that documentation is prepared in a way which makes it accessible to those whose English is limited. Management information is not adequately interrogated to identify trends in retention and pass rate data.

### **English for speakers of other languages**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching
- broad and appropriate provision
- effective curriculum management
- high achievement in speaking skills.

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficiently thorough internal accreditation
  
- poor attendance on some courses.

### **Scope of provision**

130. The range of provision is broad in terms of level, mode of attendance and location. ESOL courses are offered at all five college centres, and consist of separate specialist full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18, full-time and part-time courses for adults, intensive courses, community courses, volunteer training courses and language support across vocational college courses. In addition, there is franchised provision in ESOL and ICT that is organised through a training provider.

131. A particular example of innovative provision is the medical English course that is designed specifically for doctors who are refugees or asylum seekers. Intensive language work is linked to sessions to refresh medical competence, and placements are arranged in a local hospital. In 2001, one third of the students on this course obtained employment.

### **Achievement and standards**

132. Achievement in past years has been good. In 2000/01, 857 students were assessed through the OCN, and achieved 1,149 credits. Of the 476 students who undertook Pitmans qualifications at basic, elementary and intermediate level, 90% achieved a pass mark. Pass rate data provided by the college could not be satisfactorily reconciled with information from awarding bodies and other sources. It has, therefore, not been possible to publish a table of retention and pass rates.

133. Students achieve a high standard of work in their OCN assignments. Their speaking skills are good and students feel they are gaining in confidence and fluency. The standard of discussion in higher level classes is impressive; students express their ideas fluently and with conviction on a wide range of topics. On some courses, attendance is poor, and this has an adverse effect on students' progress.

### **Quality of education and training**

134. There is much good teaching. Students are constantly encouraged by the staff to build their confidence by applying their language skills in new situations. Skilful lesson planning maximises the opportunities for students to help each other to learn and they are encouraged to assist each other. Teachers demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities by drawing on students' differing experiences and backgrounds in lessons. They use a wide range of appropriate teaching methods and channel the energy and enthusiasm of younger students by using their interests in topics such as football. In a key skills course module, students used their writing and ICT skills effectively to produce a college newsletter. However, the teaching sometimes fails to cope sufficiently well with the most able and the least able. In some lessons, there is an over-reliance in copying or repetition of words and phrases without sufficient checking of students' understanding.

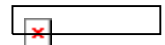
135. Full-time students' progress is carefully monitored through the review process and by informal discussions between teachers. Their performance is discussed during tutorials in order to improve their skill levels, and progression between levels is dependent upon these assessments. However, the quality of individual learning plans and tutorial records between teachers and across centres is not uniformly good. The criteria used to award students a college certificate at the end of the academic year are too easy to achieve and do not promote students' learning sufficiently.

Attendance is monitored effectively on full-time courses, and systematically followed up, however, on part-time courses, the process is not applied thoroughly. Teachers help students with a range of associated issues, such as housing benefits and official forms. Students value the support they receive. Teachers are very well qualified and many have higher degrees. Most teaching accommodation is good, with stimulating wall displays of students' work, posters and photographs. The learning centres have a good range of materials, colour coded by level to encourage students to learn on their own. There are useful ESOL materials available to staff and students on the college intranet. Access to computers is sometimes difficult and drop-in provision sometimes takes place in inadequate settings.

### ***Leadership and management***

136. The management of the curriculum is effective. The management structure is clear and roles and responsibilities are well defined. There is a strong strategic commitment from senior management to this area of work, and good support is given to the curriculum teams. Management time has been efficiently deployed to rationalise procedures and processes following the merger, and good links exist between the specialist ESOL staff and those in the community development unit. The college recognises that further links are needed to integrate the franchised provision. Communication between teachers is good, and a great deal of effort is put into making part-time staff feel part of the team. Planning has begun for the implementation of the national ESOL curriculum from September 2002, and much appropriate staff development has been undertaken. However, although there is much good practice in the curriculum area, it is not sufficiently shared among staff.

### **Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- effective development of students' social skills and confidence
- innovative teaching on provision for students with profound and complex learning difficulties
- effective liaison with external partners
- well-managed provision
- effective tutorial support.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- inadequate initial assessment on some courses
- insufficiently challenging goals for some students
- lack of specialist teaching
- insufficient opportunities for progression to level 1 mainstream courses.

### ***Scope of provision***

137. Barnet College provides courses for school-leavers and for adults, with a total of 350, mostly part-time, students. 'Community link', a well-established programme for people recovering from mental illness, enrolled 73 students in 2001. 'Independence skills', a part-time programme for adults with learning difficulties, enrolled 35 students and 'explore learning', a part-time course for those with profound and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enrolled 33 students. Eleven students are currently taking the full-time course for school-leavers with moderate learning difficulties. There is also community provision for students in mental health units in local hospitals, one of them a secure unit. There are too few progression routes from the pre-vocational programmes. The college has started to develop opportunities for students to work alongside other students in hairdressing, but the entry criteria for mainstream courses are currently a barrier to further vocational progression.

### ***Achievement and standards***

138. Students on the mental health courses gain in confidence and make progress over time, many taking the opportunity to change direction in their lives. Students' previous formal educational experience varies. Some have little previous experience of FE, but many come with degrees or professional qualifications. Some take units of OCN accreditation and achieve pass rates of 100%. A few students take qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Recorded evidence of attainment on most courses for students with moderate learning difficulties focuses on termly objectives, some of which are not sufficiently challenging for students. Too often, the emphasis is on remedying weaknesses rather than building on strengths. The achievements for students on the full-time courses are recognised in the national record of achievement that has brief text and includes photographic evidence. There is little recording of what has been achieved during the whole course. There has been insufficient progression by students on pre-vocational courses to entry level or level 1 courses in the college or elsewhere. Students with profound and complex learning difficulties achieve appropriate objectives.

### ***Quality of education and training***

139. Teaching is satisfactory or good overall. Innovative approaches are used on the programme for students with profound and complex learning difficulties. A variety of different media is used to stimulate students, including dance and movement, visual and tactile arts, water and sensory cookery. In the best of these lessons, the content was not prescribed, but was based on the individual needs of each student. The most effective aspect of teaching on the mental health courses was the emphasis on confidence building through group interaction. Less successful lessons were those which did not allow students time to complete tasks or where the teacher did not sufficiently understand the needs of disabled students. Teaching methods that encourage students

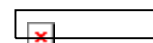
to ask questions were rarely used. Too often praise was too general, or inappropriate. Although many students have ICT lessons as part of the timetable, there is little use of ICT as a teaching tool in other lessons.

140. Although many teachers have additional qualifications, such as counselling, there are too few with specialist, up-to-date, relevant qualifications. For example, there is no one suitably qualified to provide specialist advice in speech and language therapy or behaviour planning. Most accommodation is satisfactory, although some classrooms are drab and uninviting. There are few specialist facilities for students with profound learning difficulties. The college's initial assessment of students on programmes for students with profound and complex learning difficulties is good; it provides a clear picture of students' strengths and areas for development. However, for students with moderate learning difficulties, there is no baseline statement on entry that identifies students' starting points and collates all the known information about them. Generally, there is too little recorded recognition of students' strengths: all the objectives are based on remedying perceived deficits. The quality of student monitoring varies. In some of the sessions for students with profound and multiple disabilities, the recording is detailed and gives a clear picture of student progress over time. In other areas the recording is minimal. This is particularly a problem where the objectives are not demanding enough to ensure students make progress. Students speak highly of the support they receive from teachers and they find the tutorials helpful. On the full-time, pre-vocational course, tutors used the tutorial time effectively, to help students to come to terms with the recent death of a course member.

### ***Leadership and management***

141. The team manager has worked hard to consolidate the provision following the merger. There are regular meetings that involve staff from both sites and the manager spends time at both sites. The team responds well to feedback from students and other interested parties in developing its provision. For example, it has changed the timing and length of programmes to suit students and to enable effective working with care homes. There are opportunities for staff development, though not all staff attend. Teachers use the self-assessment and internal moderation process effectively to help improve the provision. The internal moderation identified the weaknesses in the initial assessment and in recording. However, there is little emphasis on teaching and learning strategies in the course reviews. Effective liaison with external partners such as Mencap Pathway and the community health team has had a positive effect on the curriculum.

### **Basic skills**



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

### ***Strengths***

- much good teaching
- senior management's strategic planning for basic skills
- well-managed and effective basic skills support across the curriculum.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficiently developed individual learning plans
- inadequate recording and monitoring of achievement
- poor attendance
- little variety in the use of teaching resources.

### ***Scope of provision***

142. The college offers separate specialist adult basic skills courses for part-time students, return to learning courses for both part-time and full-time adult students and an entry level full-time programme. These courses are taught across the main college sites. The college has recently developed eight new courses in the community through the 'Local Initiative Fund'. The college also provides basic skills support for students on vocational programmes and English and mathematics workshops for students for whom English is an additional language. At the time of the inspection, there were 48 enrolments on the full-time return to learning courses, 88 enrolments on part-time numeracy courses and 285 part-time students on literacy courses. There are approximately 80 enrolments in community centres.

143. All students on full-time vocational courses undergo an initial assessment process: this identifies key skills levels, ESOL development needs or basic skills and learning support needs. In 2000/01, 363 vocational students received learning support.

### ***Achievement and standards***

144. Judgements about achievement and standards were made difficult by a lack of reliable, recorded evidence. Only 30% of students on part-time programmes achieved external accreditation in 2001 and there is little alternative data to support claims of achievement, particularly given that individual learning plans are not specific enough to show progress. The standard of work in students' files was also difficult to judge as they contained little sustained writing. A college survey reveals that the primary learning goal of most students on basic skills courses is to improve their confidence and that only a quarter want to pursue qualifications. Students certainly believe that teachers have helped them gain in self-confidence and it is clear that improvements in retention rates have been taking place. For example, on part-time literacy courses at the time of the inspection, the retention rate was 78%. Attendance remains well below the college average.

145. In January 2002, 66% of GNVQ students in receipt of learning support were successful in achieving their primary learning goals.

### ***Quality of education and training***

146. There is much effective teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic and well qualified. Course and lesson planning throughout the provision are good; schemes of work are well developed. In the



most effective sessions, tutors used a range of methods to develop learning. The individualised spelling programme used in return to learning courses effectively helps students to engage in systematic and regular learning. In a numeracy class, good use was made of practical activities such as weighing familiar objects to support concept development. However, in some literacy lessons, the emphasis by teachers on skills development meant that they provided activities which did not take sufficient account of the differing levels of ability of students in the class. In most lessons, there is little variety in the use of teaching resources and little use made of ICT.

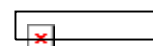
147. There are basic skills base rooms with good resources, including computers, at the main college sites. Although most accommodation is satisfactory, some of the classrooms are too small and limit the range of activities that might be appropriately used. There are some 40 volunteers working across sites; most have been trained and provide good individual support. The mapping of new curriculum standards on individual learning plans has successfully taken place, but these are yet to be used effectively and it is too early to assess their impact on achievement. In some cases, a focus on the basic skills curriculum has resulted in an emphasis on whole group planning and little variation in individual plans. There is insufficient diagnostic information that can be used as a basis for teaching. Students' records are general and evaluative rather than developmental and achievement is not recorded against set targets.

148. Teaching in basic skills learning support sessions is good. There is good liaison with some vocational areas. However, irregular attendance limits progress for some students. Basic skills needs are identified during an initial diagnosis; referrals and arrangements are then made for support in class or outside their vocational course, and individually or in small groups. Students appreciate the approachability and support of staff. Nearly 90% of students who received learning support in 2000/01 expressed high degrees of satisfaction.

### **Leadership and management**

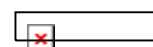
149. The college has linked basic skills and learning support to its strategic priorities and the basic skills quality initiative group, which includes key senior managers, is successfully developing a strong profile for basic skills across the curriculum. The 'Get the Basics' message and logo has been widely used in posters and leaflets and is widely available both within the college and in community venues. The recent appointment of a basic skills co-ordinator for community development is an important initiative and signals the college's commitment to widening participation. The merger of provision from the two colleges has been well managed, although there is little sharing of practice across centres. Communication is good. Quality assurance systems are well developed, although these are not always used effectively, particularly within the individual learning plan cycle. Lesson observations are carried out, but grading is overgenerous. There are many good opportunities for staff development. The college is working to improve retention and pass rates and has set challenging targets for basic skills provision. It has also introduced tutorial support for all part-time students to help them meet their targets.

## **Part D: College data**



**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	9	27



<b>2</b>	27	15
<b>3</b>	50	16
<b>4/5</b>	0	5
<b>Other</b>	14	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2002.

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	1,637	1,524	15
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	71	203	1
Engineering	112	321	2
Business	662	1,121	9
Hotel and catering	390	345	4
Health and community care	373	1,570	9
Art and design	582	1,201	9
Humanities	1,608	4,003	27
Basic education	267	4,783	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,702</b>	<b>15,071</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2002.

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
		<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,298	611	633	3,557
	Retention rate (%)	82	86	87	75	74	79
	National average (%)	82	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	22	61	43	45	69	64

	National average (%)	59	62	66	61	63	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,589	1,857	1,675	3,044	2,610	2,576
	Retention rate (%)	81	80	78	80	76	83
	National average (%)	77	76	77	80	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	69	54	71	51	61	64
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	2,197	2,297	3,390	3,043	2,937	3,025
	Retention rate (%)	74	77	87	79	79	83
	National average (%)	78	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	60	61	44	54	56	61
	National average (%)	70	72	73	63	65	69
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	50	46	7	581	591	466
	Retention rate (%)	88	87	86	88	87	77
	National average (%)	84	83	81	85	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	35	28	60	33	45	57
	National average (%)	64	65	69	58	61	60

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

*Note: 1997/98, 1998/99 and 1999/2000 figures aggregate those from Hendon and Barnet Colleges prior to their merger in 2000.*

Sources of information:

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

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

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

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory	

	%		%	
Level 3 (advanced)	62	29	9	132
Level 2 (intermediate)	59	34	7	85
Level 1 (foundation)	58	37	5	43
Other sessions	51	36	13	71
<b>Totals</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>331</b>

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