



# Carlisle College

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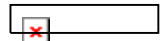
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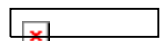
**Basic information about the college**



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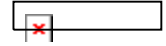
Name of college:	Carlisle College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Julian Venables
Address of college:	Victoria Place Carlisle Cumbria CA1 1HS
Telephone number:	01228 822 700
Fax number:	01228 822 710
Chair of governors:	Michael Gilligan
Unique reference number:	130634
Name of reporting inspector:	Linda Harwood HMI
Dates of inspection:	20-24 May 2002

**Part A: Summary**



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## Information about the college



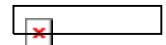
Carlisle College is a medium-sized further education (FE) college serving the post-16 education and training needs of north Cumbria. It is the only general FE college within a 35-mile radius. It offers a broad range of programmes delivered in a variety of ways to meet local need. There is a strong commitment to widening participation. Approximately 25% of the college's provision is delivered through franchise partnerships. Half of its franchised activity is through CREDITS, a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) project operated by Cumbria Local Education Authority (LEA). With one exception, franchise provision is within Cumbria.

In Cumbria there is above average progression into post-16 education. Some 13 of the 15 secondary schools in the Carlisle area have sixth forms and many of them also provide adult education. The schools have extended their post-16 provision and many now offer vocational qualifications. There has been a consequent reduction in full-time enrolments at the college. Competition for provision of work-based learning has also been encouraged locally.

After considerable debate, governors took the decision that the college should focus on vocational provision. This has resulted in the cessation of full-time General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) courses from September 2001. To meet the needs of its population, the college has some higher education (HE) work and a significant provision in work-based learning in addition to its work in the community. In 2000/01, there were 184 young people participating in Carlisle College's modern apprenticeship programmes in engineering, motor vehicle, construction, electrical installation, care and early years, hairdressing, business administration, accountancy and information technology (IT).

The college offers a wide range of programmes, both full time and part time, from entry level to HE and is planning to offer foundation degrees from September 2002. There has been a notable decline in full-time enrolments and a substantial increase in part-time enrolments in recent years. In the current academic year (2001/02) there are 1,205 full-time students (676 aged 16 to 18; 529 aged 19+) and 8,645 part-time students (859 aged 16 to 18; 7,786 aged 19+). Thus 56% of full-time students, but fewer than 10% of part-time students, are aged 16 to 18.

## How effective is the college?



The college provides satisfactory or better teaching and opportunities for learning for most of its students. Inspectors judged the provision to be satisfactory in seven curriculum areas and good in two areas, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. One curriculum area, basic skills, was deemed to be unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below:

### **Key strengths**

- good range of community-based and franchised provision to widen participation
- provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

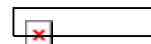
- productive links with employers
- effective development of students' practical skills
- some good specialist resources and equipment
- good personal support.

***What should be improved***

- curriculum planning and delivery for students aged 16 to 18
- pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses
- sharing of good practice between and within departments
- vitality of teaching and learning in theory lessons
- target setting and monitoring of students' progress on their courses
- planning, teaching and assessment of key skills
- monitoring of attendance.

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
Construction	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a broad range of courses to meet the needs of the wider community. Retention and pass rates are good in most areas and so is the standard of students' work. Students fail to make effective use of course-related learning resources in the library and learning resource centres. There is insufficient sharing of good practice to improve teaching. Theory teaching is dull but most practical lessons are well taught.
Engineering	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is good practical teaching in the college and the workplace. Pass rates are excellent in computer-aided design but poor on national certificate and diploma courses in 2001. The standard of students' work is good and key skills are well integrated into the curriculum. There is insufficient monitoring of students' progress.
Business and retail	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Course provision for the majority of students is good. Retention rates are above the national averages. There are below average pass rates on most business and professional courses. There is much good teaching, but it is pedestrian and unimaginative on business courses.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The wide range of courses provided in outreach centres effectively widens participation. Most of the teaching in these centres is good or excellent, students are well motivated and attendance is high. The retention rates on full-time courses and pass rates on some of these courses are below the national average, and monitoring of progress is not consistent. There is poor attendance in many college-based lessons.
Hospitality, food manufacture, sport, leisure and travel	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Practical lessons are well taught but there is some poor teaching in theory lessons. Pass rates are high on National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)s in food preparation and manufacture but low for most travel and tourism qualifications. Retention rates are below average on some courses. Students participate in stimulating enrichment activities. Arrangements for quality assurance are not consistently applied.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Good.</b> The college-based provision in this area is good with most retention and pass rates at or above the national average. There is much good teaching which is well planned and motivates students to succeed, but key skills teaching is poor. Students' practical work is of a high standard and they participate in a good range of subject-related enrichment activities.
Health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> A wide range of full-time and part-time courses meets local employer and community needs, and provides good opportunities for progression. There is effective teaching and learning for adult students on part-time courses. There are weaknesses in teaching and learning on full-time courses. Few students achieve

	high grades. There is evidence of recent improvements in retention rates on level 2 courses but there is a steep decline in retention rates on some level 3 courses in 2001/02.
English and humanities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The full-time GCE programme was closed in the summer of 2001 and the current GCE A-level provision is the last of the previous year group. Most teaching is good and in English it is outstanding. Many of the GCE humanities programmes have declining retention and pass rates. The access programme is designed flexibly to meet the needs of students and has good progression rates to HE. There are above average pass rates on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English and psychology and on access courses.
Basic skills	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> There is a good range of community learning provision which gives sensitive support for adult basic education students. Good teaching demonstrates an effective use of methods and styles. However, there is insufficiently demanding teaching in a significant minority of lessons. There is good one-to-one personal and academic support but there is poor target setting and review in individual learning plans. The provision is characterised by weak planning and management.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Good.</b> The provision effectively meets the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the college and local community. Accommodation and resources are excellent. Support workers are well qualified and highly skilled. Teaching is effective and makes very good use of practical activities to support learning. Tutors lack up-to-date specialist qualifications in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Target setting and tutorial records lack sufficient detail of students' progress.

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

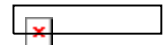
Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. The college is good at widening participation. It provides courses in a wide range of community settings, it has successfully targeted disadvantaged groups and the quality of work with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. In the majority of curriculum areas management is satisfactory. Quality assurance processes have led to improvements in the overall quality of teaching and learning. Self-assessment processes are thorough and generally provide a realistic picture of the college's strengths and weaknesses. Franchised provision is well managed but the co-ordination and quality assurance of work-based training is less effective. Governors' monitoring of students' performance has improved since the last inspection. The main weaknesses for the college are under-recruitment of full-time students aged 16 to 18 and declining financial health. Target setting and performance management are under-developed below the level of senior management.

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

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. It provides good

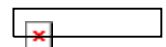
disadvantaged groups in areas of rural disadvantage. The college has made genuine attempts to overcome barriers to access, but it is not sufficiently successful in keeping students or enabling them to complete courses successfully. Provision for adults is flexible, but there is less effective support for those starting at different times in the year other than in September. The college effectively meets the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is currently implementing a good staff development plan for raising awareness on equality and diversity issues. The college does not effectively monitor equal opportunities patterns in recruitment, retention, achievement and progression.

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



Support for students and trainees is satisfactory. Students appreciate and value the support they receive from the college. The restructured tutorial provision introduced in September 2001 assists in coherent management and planning, and there is a strong commitment to providing students with a range of learner services. All full-time students undergo a well-managed process of initial assessment, but the system is less well organised for part-time and work-based students. Students have access to a range of services including counselling and careers advice. The quality of tutorials varies, with much good practice in monitoring students' progress but also less effective sessions with vague targets being set.

### Students' view 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***

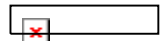
- systems for support and advice
- friendly and approachable staff
- access to ICT
- course-related enrichment activities
- being treated like an adult

- pre-entry advice
- crèche.

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

- some student facilities, such as lockers and changing areas
- key skills
- access to the Internet at peak times
- size and comfort of some classrooms
- timetable arrangements
- some boring lessons.

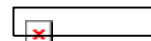
**Other information**



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the LLSC. The LLSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) receives the college's post inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

**Part B: The college as a whole**





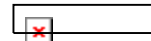
## Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	65	26	9
19+ and WBL*	67	24	9
Learning 16-18	60	31	9
19+ and WBL*	68	22	10

*Key: Inspectors grade three aspects of lessons: teaching, learning and attainment. 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. Carlisle College endeavours to offer a wide curriculum to meet local need, with a strong focus on vocational provision. The courses at the college lead to a wide range of qualifications. The largest number of enrolments at the college are on level 2 qualifications for students of all ages.

2. Retention rates match those nationally overall but they are well below on some courses. Retention rates are above the national average on most courses in construction, on administration and secretarial courses, on most hair and beauty courses and on part-time ICT courses. However, they are below the national average on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) business courses, on full-time ICT courses, on many GCE A-level humanities courses and on national certificate and diploma courses in engineering.

3. Pass rates are even more variable and show a significant drop in 1999/2000 from 80% to only 61% of qualification aims achieved. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 declined between 1997/98 and 1999/2000. College data indicate that pass rates improved overall in 2000/01, but with the exception of those for 19+ students at level 2, they are still below national averages. There are below national average pass rates on many business courses, on most courses in travel and tourism, and on some level 3 courses in construction and engineering, for example.

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

4. Retention rates are at or above national averages for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1, 2 and 3 for the three-year period from 1997/98 to 1999/2000, with one exception at level 1 in 1999/2000. However, college data indicate an improvement in retention rates for 2000/01 to the national average at level 1, but a significant decline in retention rates at level 3 to well below the national average. In 1999/2000, retention rates ranged from 65% on GNVQ level 2 courses to 90% at NVQ level 3.

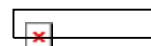
5. Overall, the pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 are poor. In 1999/2000 on GNVQ courses at level 2 and 3 they were below national averages. They were at the national level for NVQ level 2 but below at levels 1 and 3. Pass rates at GCE A level were at the national average but at GCSE they were below those nationally.

6. There are currently about 150 trainees on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes in construction, engineering, accounting and administration, hairdressing and care and early years. Pass rates are variable and sometimes well below the national average. In 2000/01, of the 184 participants in modern apprenticeship training, 73 achieved NVQs but only 12 frameworks were completed. There were 75 early leavers/non achievers. Although many apprentices achieve the NVQ qualification, for example, in hairdressing 86% passed NVQ level 2, they fail to achieve the full framework, largely through not achieving the key skills qualification. There are above average pass rates in engineering and in the newer childcare provision, students are progressing well towards achieving the full qualification.

### **Adult learners**

7. Large numbers of adult students follow courses at the main site and in the wide range of community venues which enable them to study college courses. The vast majority of enrolments of students aged 19+ are on courses at levels 1 and 2, largely attending part time. Overall, students aged 19+ are more likely to complete their courses and to be successful than are 16-18 year olds. In 1999/2000, retention rates at levels 1 and 2 were 87% and 93% respectively. Pass rates at level 1 were well below the national average at 50% but matched the national figure for level 2 courses at 68%. In several areas, for example ICT, pass rates are above national average on part-time courses and these are largely adult students. Most students who complete the access to HE course are successful and there is good progression to HE.

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



8. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 176 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 67% of these and less than satisfactory in 9%. A high proportion of teaching and learning is good in engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In basic skills, however, there is a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Overall, there is more good or very good teaching at entry level and level 1, but there is more unsatisfactory teaching at level 1 than on courses at other levels. Overall, learning and attainment are better for adult students than for students aged 16 to 18.

9. Teachers display good knowledge of their subjects and have considerable vocational expertise. Some 93% of permanent teachers have a teaching qualification. Some 71% of teachers and 78% of instructors have assessor awards. All learning support assistants have the City and Guilds 7321 certificate. In some areas, for example, hairdressing, sport and hospitality there is insufficient knowledge of current industrial practice. Good use is made of staff development opportunities, which are monitored and evaluated by managers. There is a thorough induction process and good supporting guidance for new members of staff. An Education Services Unit established in September 2001 is housed in well-equipped accommodation and provides staff development to meet needs identified through monitoring of strategic planning, teaching observations, appraisal and programme review.

10. In the lessons which were good or better, careful planning meant that students worked purposefully on a range of activities which engaged their interest. Teachers produced good learning materials and regularly checked and reinforced learning throughout the lesson. They showed sensitivity to the group and individual needs of their students, encouraging them to think for themselves and to use evidence from their own experience or from work placements. In the best lessons, teachers elicited confident responses from students who were actively enjoying their

lessons. In weaker lessons, there was insufficient student involvement and few checks were made on their understanding. In these lessons, the pace was too slow, teachers talked too much and students were not given opportunities to learn on their own. Learning outcomes were not shared with students and teachers did not match their teaching to the needs of the different students in the class.

11. There is much variation in the quality and the success in the teaching of key skills. The college acknowledges these weaknesses and is seeking to remedy them. The poor teaching of key skills is a particular problem in some work-based learning programmes where apprentices are failing to achieve the full framework qualification. There have been a number of improvements in the teaching of key skills in care and early years, with good booklets and a clear grid for referencing evidence. Assignments are well linked to the workplace and assignment briefs are clear in detailing what has to be done. In engineering, considerable progress has been made in developing and assessing apprentices' key skills because of the greater monitoring of students' performance against course requirements. No students have completed the framework requirements in construction over the last three years as a result of a failure to achieve key skills. Plans are now in place to rectify this weakness.

12. The college has made significant investment in computing and learning resources. There are industry standard levels of equipment in the high technology centre and in the hair salon, refurbished in the autumn term 2001. Realistic work environments in catering and hospitality are good. There is a good ratio of five full-time equivalent students to one computer. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have excellent specialist resources and dedicated ICT facilities provided with appropriate software. The learning resource centres provide good working environments, networked computers and good reference materials which are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet the students' needs. There is good assistance provided by information and communications technical support staff. Overall, students make good use of these facilities, however, some are closed at lunch times so limiting students' time for independent study.

13. Since the last inspection the college has continued to improve its accommodation. Most classrooms and corridors are decorated to a good standard. Buildings are clean and well maintained and there is good signage throughout the buildings. The quality of the refectory provision is good. In particular the 'Lite Bite' café provides a good social area for students to meet. There are some good wall displays in curriculum areas, for example in health and social care and art and design. However, a minority of classrooms are inappropriate for their current use.

14. Good nursery facilities in the 'Chatterbox Crèche' continue to be provided for the children of students. A recent OFSTED inspection reported that children achieved well, teaching continued to be good, creativity in children was encouraged and diverse cultures were explored through teaching and good quality learning materials. Most of the college and all curriculum areas are accessible by wheelchair users. Recreational facilities on the site are generally poor and, in particular, the gym and its equipment are out of date. However, students are able to use facilities in the town.

15. The college offers a broad range of courses to meet the needs of students, employers and the local community. In addition to those courses based at the college, there is a wide range of courses at over 100 centres across Cumbria. The timing, location and duration of courses are adapted to fit the needs of students. Whilst ICT courses predominate, there are also other specialist courses, such as lip-reading, aromatherapy and first aid. Provision within the local community is enthusiastically promoted in a way that is responsive to prospective students' requests. Outreach courses effectively promote social inclusion and widen participation in a region of remote communities, winding roads, mountains and lakes. Examples of innovatory work include teaching basic skills to travellers, lunch 'n' learn courses run in village pubs and work with those who are deaf. There are good college-employer partnerships with flexible arrangements to fit in with shift patterns. There are strong links with universities and other HE providers, especially for students on care and access to HE courses. In addition, an engineering foundation degree is being developed in partnership with a local university.

16. Some courses attract low numbers and some gaps in provision remain. The college ceased to offer full-time GCE A-level provision and there is no level 2 provision in business. Many courses

start traditionally in September and induction activities are planned for this main enrolment time. The college has recently produced marketing materials to inform prospective students of courses they can start at other times of the year.

17. The arrangements for the assessment of students' work and the monitoring of students' progress are effective in many curriculum areas. There is much good practice in individual progress reviews conducted by tutors and these are valued by students. Feedback to students on written and practical work is generally good, with helpful comments to aid improved performance. There are a few examples, in humanities and English, of less careful marking where comments are brief and unhelpful, and in basic skills written feedback on portfolios is unsatisfactory. There are some instances where assignment deadlines previously given by teachers have been moved to a later date to accommodate those students who say they need more time. This practice penalises students who have submitted their work within the time limit, extends the time taken to return marked work and adversely affects the intended programme for teaching the course.

18. Internal verification is satisfactory overall. Action is taken to rectify weaknesses identified by external verifiers. In hospitality and catering, for example, there are very positive external verifier reports which acknowledge that clear action has been taken where issues have been identified. However, there is some variation in the quality of assessment and recording. For example, in work-based mechanical engineering, there is insufficient assessment, whereas in motor vehicle engineering there are effective and robust systems for assessment. There is insufficient use of workplace evidence for assessment in hair and beauty, engineering and construction, so teachers are unaware of the progress and standard reached by the students.

19. The college has taken the decision to restructure support arrangements for students in order to provide greater coherence and raise the status of tutorials and student services. The current position is that detailed plans have been devised and associated training needs identified with the intention of full implementation in September 2002. The management of tutorials, student services and learning support has been rationalised under the director of academic operations. A new enhanced personal tutor role is being created for September 2002. There is a well-written tutorial policy that outlines roles and responsibilities, core entitlements and the documentation used to record interviews and progress reviews. One-to-one tutorials frequently provide students with effective support and monitoring of progress. Tutors are very knowledgeable about their students and enjoy good relationships with their tutor groups. Students speak warmly about the value of their tutorials and the help they receive with work and personal issues. There are, however, some tutorials that are less effective, where students' progress towards agreed targets is inadequately recorded and where tutors lack an overview of students' progress. Target setting is inconsistent. Some targets lack sufficient detail, especially in relation to course requirements, to help students identify what they need to do to improve and some are poorly recorded. There are also examples of students having insufficient privacy when reviewing their progress with tutors.

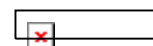
20. All full-time students have an initial screening assessment which identifies those students for whom support is essential and those where support is recommended. The take-up of support, which is carefully monitored, has increased from 51% in 1999/2000 to 68% in 2000/01 of those identified as needing support. Initial assessment for part-time students is inconsistent and students joining courses late, or at times of the year other than September, can miss initial assessment and consequently the extra support they might require. Students studying off site are provided with a college handbook describing the support available.

21. Careers advice and guidance are readily available to students through the college careers adviser and Connexions staff. There are regular talks in tutorials and good support for those wishing to progress to employment and HE. Students have access to a good range of counselling, accommodation, welfare and financial advice through student services. Counselling staff are well qualified and available to students on request. There is a college chaplain and also a quiet room for students to use. The college's access fund is well used and includes assistance with childcare costs for 60 students.

22. The college prospectus for full-time and part-time students is useful and detailed. Whilst much initial guidance is satisfactory, those curriculum areas with poor retention rates suggest that

students are not always placed on the course which best suits their needs. The college has recently participated in a level 2 project to increase achievement and retention and there is an increased awareness of the factors influencing retention, including the need to monitor attendance more thoroughly. At present, monitoring of and action to improve attendance are inadequate and inconsistent.

## Leadership and management



23. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has reviewed its strategic direction, following under-recruitment of full-time students and a declining financial situation. After lengthy discussion, governors decided to stop providing full-time GCE AS and GCE A-level courses from September 2001 and focus the college on vocational provision. There has been a significant growth in work with franchised partners and work-based learning has also increased. The main strategic aims for 2001/02 were a focus on 16-19 full-time recruitment, financial recovery and quality improvement in the quality of teaching and in pass and retention rates. The college has experienced difficulty meeting the first two of these aims.

24. The college's quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. There are comprehensive measures to review the main operations of the college, including the franchised work. There are regular quality audits. The course review process has been improved to introduce more rigour and is effective in some, but not all, curriculum areas. Lessons are observed more frequently. One day each term is designated a quality development day. Data from the management information system are more readily available and more user friendly. These are generally helping staff and managers to conduct more realistic reviews, though in a few areas, the data are unreliable.

25. Information gained from the ongoing reviews is used in the self-assessment process which is thorough and comprehensive. There has been an improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection; the proportion of lessons that are good or better is now slightly above the national average. The number of lessons judged less than satisfactory has fallen to 9%, which is also slightly above the national average. In order to redress this issue, the college has established an Education Services Unit to support staff development and has established links with a number of beacon colleges to share good practice.

26. In the majority of curriculum areas management is satisfactory; it is good for hairdressing, beauty therapy and retail courses and in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but less than satisfactory in basic skills. Target setting and performance management are underdeveloped below the level of senior management. In the current academic year the college has introduced termly performance reviews which require department managers to meet with the principalship to review key targets and performance indicators. Targets for attendance are not included and there is no comparison of current performance with that at entry or other points in the students' college life. A more rigorous appraisal system is being introduced for teaching staff.

27. The management and quality assurance of franchised courses are good. College staff carry out monitoring visits and lesson observations. Feedback from students is used to improve provision. Review meetings are held regularly with providers and these include an analysis of retention and achievement data. Training events are held for the staff in franchised centres. Work-based learning is not well managed overall. The central administration team is effective but there are insufficient links with the vocational areas. There is a lack of sharing of good practice across the different work-based learning programmes, for example, on trainee reviews and the development of key skills. Data on retention and achievement for work-based learning programmes are not collected in a way that easily helps the analysis of year-on-year trends.

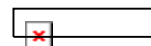
28. Governors' monitoring of students' performance has improved since the last inspection. A standards committee has been created, which is well informed and which plays an active role in the

college's quality assurance systems. The role of link governor has been reviewed and is working well in some areas of the college. A governor development strategy has been discussed and improvements made to induction for new governors, however, governors do not receive sufficient training to monitor both the educational and financial performance of the college.

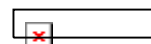
29. The college is successful at widening participation. Examples include the CREDITS franchise programme, which delivers IT skills in a wide range of local venues, such as primary schools. Work is also undertaken with under-represented groups, such as travellers. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Work with international students helps to enrich the culture of the college. The equal opportunities policy and the terms of reference for the equal opportunity committee were reviewed in April 2002. The college recognised the need for a more proactive approach to diversity and is discussing the possibility of exchanges of staff and students with colleges within and outside the UK. Insufficient attention has been given to data to help devise procedures to monitor equal opportunities and planning of future provision.

30. The college has undertaken value for money exercises to compare its performance against that of similar providers. A recent analysis concluded that teaching costs are high compared with good practice elsewhere. The college has considerably more space than it needs and is reviewing the current and future use of its accommodation. However, premises-related running costs, such as cleaning and heating, are tightly controlled and lower than average. The financial health of the college is declining. The college has attributed this failure to the recruitment of insufficient 16 to 18 year old students, partly due to increased provision in the schools. The college has maintained a broad curriculum and has run some classes with small numbers because of its isolated geographical position. Steps taken to remedy the situation have not been successful. At the time of the inspection, further work was being undertaken to achieve cost savings and to review the curriculum on offer. Support mechanisms to improve the retention and achievement of students are also being further developed.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Construction



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

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

#### **Strengths**

- good quality students' work in most areas
- above average retention and pass rates on most courses
- rapid and detailed written feedback on students' assignments

- effective widening participation and progression routes through good community-based initiatives.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor teaching in theory classes
- library and learning resources under-utilised by students
- no systematic sharing of good practice in teaching within the section.

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

31. The curriculum area offers a broad range of provision to suit local and regional needs. Courses in all the main building crafts and some technician and professional courses are available. Foundation Accreditation of Vocational Education (FAVE) courses in plastering, brickwork, decorative and wood occupations have replaced NVQ level 1 provision in September 2001. These provide a progression link for new entrants to the industry. There is a wide range of NVQ provision at levels 2 and 3 in painting and decorating, brickwork, plumbing, electrical installations, wood occupations and electrical installation. There is a range of gas courses to meet specific industry accreditation requirements. Currently there are 684 students, of whom 155 are advanced modern apprentices. The college provides off-the-job training for advanced modern apprentices of local training providers and has its own local LSC work-based learning contract for 41.

32. There is a good range of link and taster courses for school pupils. Introductory courses in basic furniture making, woodwork and upholstery are taught in local community centres. College students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught basic craft skills in the construction workshops. There are currently over 100 students on non-vocational programmes.

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

33. On most courses, retention and pass rates are good. For example in 2000/01, at NVQ level 1 in decorative, trowel and wood occupations, pass rates of 100%, 91% and 83% respectively were achieved, all significantly above the national averages. There are exceptions, however. Painting and decorating NVQ level 3 had a 29% pass rate in 2000/01. Pass rates on the modern apprenticeship courses are well below average. Since 1999, no apprentices have successfully completed the modern apprenticeship framework, a weakness acknowledged in the college's own self-assessment report.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>level</b>	<b>Completion year</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
NVQ decorative	1	No. of starts	21	9	15

occupations		% retention	95	56	100
		% pass rate	100	0	100
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	29	48	30
		% retention	100	83	77
		% pass rate	83	98	91
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	27	25	27
		% retention	100	96	89
		% pass rate	44	67	83
NVQ bricklaying (1 year)	2	No. of starts	15	15	7
		% retention	53	93	100
		% pass rate	33	64	67
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	33	27	22
		% retention	76	96	95
		% pass rate	96	58	45
NVQ painting and decorating	3	No. of starts	10	6	8
		% retention	90	100	88
		% pass rate	100	100	29

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

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

34. Practical lessons are well planned and well taught. Students make good progress and their practical work is of a high standard. One furniture craft student gained second place in a recent national skills competition. In some subjects, teachers produce good workshop task sheets whilst in others, students used national training organisation handouts as guides. In all areas, students' portfolios contain comprehensive evidence of good achievement in a range of tasks. In these portfolios there is a good variety of evidence, including photographs of work done in the students' workplaces. Teachers' assessment and assignment timing is poor, often with several assignments or assessments being scheduled close together. However, there is rapid, good written feedback for students on their work. Internal verification within the college is thorough, well recorded and meets external requirements. However, some further work has yet to be completed by staff before all the NVQ performance criteria are incorporated into the set practical tasks on plastering courses.

35. There is much dull and uninspiring theory teaching. The college is aware of this and acknowledges it as a weakness in the self-assessment report. In one lesson, the teacher simply read out the information from the screen of a computerised presentation, asking the students questions with the answers shown on the screen. Very few teachers plan their theory lessons in such a way that achievement of lesson objectives can be evaluated. However, despite the boring teaching, most students are able to produce good quality work. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and dynamic in their teaching styles.

36. Workshops in most areas are well equipped. They contain a good range of tools, equipment and materials that enable students to carry out work to national industrial standards. There are safety hazards in some workshops and inappropriate use of some hand tools. The college policy for the use of personal protective equipment is not consistently applied across all workshops. All workshops have statutory notices relating to safety clearly displayed, but not all equipment has risk assessment details displayed. Some classrooms are poor and in need of refurbishment and decorating. There is a good range of subject-specific resources and computing facilities in the college library and resource centre. However, these resources are under-utilised by students. There



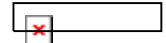
is a lack of qualified key skills staff for teaching and assessing the craft students. The college is aware that this is a significant factor leading to the poor pass rates for the modern apprenticeships. All teachers are suitably qualified in their subjects. Most have, or are working towards gaining, a recognised teaching qualification and/or industry assessor awards. Only a few staff take part in the college-wide staff development and continuing professional development opportunities. Currently there are no arrangements for sharing good practice amongst the construction staff.

37. Students who start later than the majority in September do not take part in a comprehensive induction programme. All students are aware of the college guidance and support services available to them. Monitoring of students' progress is carried out regularly. Most recording systems used to document this are good. All students have individual tutorials. The college is aware that the progress reviews for the electrical installation advanced modern apprentices are not taking place as required.

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

38. Management of the programme area is carried out satisfactorily within the college. The course team plans courses well to ensure that local needs are met. Information gained at regular meetings with representatives from local industry is taken into account in making future course development decisions. Courses designed to encourage women into construction proved popular recently and further courses are planned. Yearly reviews are carried out of the overall provision and regular course reviews take place during which course teams consider issues such as an evaluation of teaching standards and resource provision. The construction courses for all the advanced modern apprentices were in the work-based learning self-assessment report: it does not identify the weaknesses in the college's own construction courses for modern apprentices.

## **Engineering**



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

### ***Strengths***

- excellent retention and pass rates on computer-aided design courses
- good practical teaching in the college and in the workplace
- good integration of key skills within vocational programmes.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rate on the national certificate and diploma programme in 2001
- insufficient use of ICT in teaching

- insufficient use of individual learning plans and milestones.

### **Scope of provision**

39. There are 270 students enrolled in engineering of whom 30% are full-time students. The college provides courses in motor vehicle, mechanical and electrical engineering. They range from level 1 to higher national certificate and diploma, but the majority of students are on level 2 courses. Sixty of the students are on the college's advanced modern apprenticeship programme. Modern apprenticeship programmes in engineering last either three or four years.

### **Achievement and standards**

40. Pass and retention rates match or are better than national averages across most courses at levels 1 and 2. The best achievements are on the City and Guilds computer-aided design course, where pass rates are consistently high. In 2001, 97 % of the students gained the qualification. Retention and pass rates on level 3 national certificate and diploma courses declined to below the national average in 2001. On these unit-based programmes, students have difficulty in completing all of the units within the expected time scale.

41. Some 32 engineering apprentices have achieved a NVQ level 3, and of these, 19 have achieved the key skills and the full framework. The proportion gaining the key skills qualification in 2001 has improved substantially compared with the previous year. Many apprentices achieve more than the minimum requirements of an apprenticeship. They complete additional units at NVQ level 2, where these are relevant to their work. Many apprentices gain a higher level national certificate.

42. The standard of students' current work is good. Level 2 students demonstrate competence in operating specialist equipment and in completing skill development assignments. Most written assignments are well presented and, in the best examples, demonstrate the application of IT skills. Level 3 students complete more complex project work involving research and evaluation skills.

### **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>
City and Guilds basic engineering competences	1	No. of starts	20	**	13
		% retention	85	**	92
		% pass rate	88	**	100
NVQ engineering manufacture	2	No. of starts	32	34	18
		% retention	94	79	67
		% pass rate	77	47	67
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	**	9	19
		% retention	**	100	95
		% pass rate	**	*	778
City and Guilds computer-aided design	2	No. of starts	**	52	63
		% retention	**	98	97
		% pass rate	**	88	97

Service and repair of road vehicles (and precursor)	2	No. of starts	66	18	45
		% retention	59	94	67
		% pass rate	2	*	80
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	27	47	46
		% retention	89	96	67
		% pass rate	*	79	65

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

\* data not reliable \*\* course not available

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

43. Most of the teaching observed by inspectors was good or better. Practical teaching is good. Students work with interest through a planned programme and progressively develop their confidence and competence. Learning is supported by detailed task sheets, with individual guidance and support from the teacher. For example, in the computer-aided design course, students progress through a well-presented series of practical training assignments to develop their computer-aided design skills. Upon completion of the teaching programme, the students are able to undertake the awarding body assessments with confidence and success.

44. The teaching in theory sessions often lacks variety. Students' files contain large amounts of hand-written notes copied from a board or screen. Students are not always given sufficient opportunity to participate and to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. In the better theory sessions, students engage in class activities to develop and apply their knowledge, often relating it to the workplace. In one motor vehicle lesson, students demonstrated and improved their understanding of fault diagnostic techniques by applying them to a fault they had previously encountered in the workplace. The integration of key skills with other elements of the course is good. Students develop their knowledge through practical activities related to their respective vocational area. For example, in the application of number, mechanical engineering students develop most of their level 2 skills in making six items in the workshop.

45. Teaching staff have appropriate teaching and specialist occupational qualifications. Most specialist equipment is of a good standard. Recent improvements have been made to the facilities in the mechanical workshop with the purchase of new equipment, and in the motor vehicle workshop, by the installation of an industry standard testing and inspection bay. Students also have the benefit of access to a learning centre equipped with 24 modern computers and an expanding range of engineering-related software. However, teaching schemes of work and students' files indicate insufficient use is made of these resources.

46. Assignments meet course requirements and teachers make constructive comments to help students to improve the quality of their work. In practical work, information gathered from assessment is often used to modify intended timing or sequence of programmes of work. If students do not reach the required standards, further practice is introduced before students progress to the next stage. However, the use of individual learning plans is not well established and often students are not set any step-by-step achievements against which their progress may be monitored.

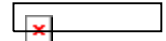
47. Modern apprentices receive good on-the-job training from experienced supervisors. The resources in the workplace are satisfactory in engineering and good in other engineering disciplines. Apprentices are given increasingly more complex tasks to perform, which enable them to develop their competence progressively. Teachers do not encourage motor vehicle apprentices sufficiently to identify for themselves evidence for the NVQ or key skills standards. The assessor does much of the cross-referencing for them. Good, robust systems are used in engineering and motor vehicle for the planning, implementation and verification of assessments. There is, in many cases, insufficient direct observation of apprentices' performance to assess work-based learning. Some of the

apprentices' progress review meetings are not held in privacy. There is insufficient time devoted to agreeing specific targets and the recording of targets is too general and brief.

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

48. Day-to-day management of the provision is good. Staff are kept well informed and involved through a planned programme of regular meetings. Course reviews often lack rigour with insufficient analysis of students' performance. The setting and monitoring of targets is weak. The division in responsibility between the engineering department and the central administration for work-based learning is not clear. For example, it is not clear who is responsible for monitoring the progress of apprentices. More critical self-assessment and thorough analysis of achievement data have led to substantial improvements in the apprenticeship programme compared with the previous year, particularly in key skills, and standards of performance are rising.

### **Business and retail**



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

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

#### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on administration, secretarial and level 1 retail courses
- above average retention rates on most courses
- very good teaching on administration, secretarial and retail courses
- flexible and accessible support for students on both college and work-based programmes
- good course management and teamwork in retail
- effective course review and action planning.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- below average pass rates on most business and professional courses

- teaching which fails sufficiently to challenge students in business
- weak initial assessment for retail courses
- gaps in progression opportunities in business and retail provision
- lack of active promotion of equality of opportunity in most areas.

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

49. The college provides courses in business, administration and secretarial studies, education and training, retail and customer service, and introduced a trade union education unit in January 2001. In 2000/01 there were over 2,000 enrolments, the majority of which were of adults on part-time courses. Students often travel significant distances to attend courses at the college. In accounting and administration, there has been a total of 62 work-based learners over the last three years, including 22 starters since September 2001. The college operates a number of franchised courses in finance, both in the region and nationally, in London, Bristol and Birmingham. Since September 2001 there has been a significant increase in retail provision which takes place wholly within the workplace.

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

50. Retention rates on most courses are above the national average, with very good retention on administration and secretarial courses. Retention and pass rates have improved on the City and Guilds further education teachers' certificate. However, there has been a significant decrease in retention rates on GNVQ and AVCE business courses, with many students leaving for employment or personal reasons. This course is being replaced from September 2002 by an alternative programme not currently offered elsewhere in the area. Pass rates on administration and secretarial courses are substantially above the national average with a high percentage of high grades. Full-time NVQ administration level 3 students had a 100% pass rate, with 92% distinctions, in the January 2002 series of secretarial skills exams. Retail level 1 pass rates are 11% above the national average. There are low pass rates on full-time and most part-time business courses. Some courses with well below average pass rates are being withdrawn from September 2002. Some Association of Accounting Technician (AAT) courses and the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) part 1 membership have pass rates which remain below the national average.

51. The standard of most students' work is good. Portfolios are carefully organised and well presented with a good range of evidence gathered in the workplace. There are examples of excellent projects having been completed for employers. Students on courses in retail and on work-based learning programmes are able to demonstrate necessary skills required by industry. A group of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities working towards an entry certificate in skills for working life were undertaking a project linked to recycling. They used a video camera to record some of their activities and word processed information. Although some groups observed had small numbers, most attendance and punctuality are good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	41	38	33
		% retention	88	87	94
		% pass rate	32	42	39
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	71	49	41
		% retention	79	71	85
		% pass rate	68	89	79
GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	15	13	13
		% retention	73	77	31
		% pass rate	100	40	75
Word processing III part 2	3	No. of starts	67	73	24
		% retention	100	99	100
		% pass rate	94	97	92
Further and adult teachers' certificate stage 1	3	No. of starts	*	25	73
		% retention	*	76	99
		% pass rate	*	74	85
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	25	27	18
		% retention	96	100	94
		% pass rate	46	30	44

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

\* course not available

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

52. The standard of teaching is good. Some 73% of observed teaching was graded good or better, the majority of which was on administration, secretarial and retail courses. Students learn effectively because the teaching is well planned with work matched to individual needs, supporting students with a range of skills and abilities. In most business lessons, however, the pace is slow, teaching is uninspiring and unimaginative, and fails sufficiently to challenge students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities demonstrate good awareness of relevant business aspects, meeting with a representative from the local council and finding out how the recycling programme operates. Trainee teachers actively participate in well-structured discussion, sharing their own teaching experiences from a variety of backgrounds and linking these to educational theory.

53. Most resources are adequate. There are good facilities for learning including a practice office, a well-resourced area for trade union education, and a newly refurbished baseroom for education and training, equipped with powerpoint and electronic whiteboard. There is effective use of customised workbooks to support learning in the workplace for retail. The college intranet is well used by administration students but business students use it infrequently. Students are sometimes taught in inappropriate classrooms or those which lack relevant course-related displays.

54. In most areas, assessment is well planned and thorough. Students receive constructive written feedback. Retail students are assessed at times to suit their shift patterns, which include evenings and weekends. Whilst most initial assessment is effective, there is insufficient assessment of retail students' experience and aptitude when deciding on the correct level of learning. There are several examples of late completion of assignments by students on the teacher training course.

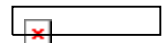
55. There are gaps in opportunities to progress to higher levels in business and retail provision. There is no full-time business provision at level 2, which limits opportunities for some students to enter or progress. There is no provision for retail students to progress beyond level 2. Well-established and effective links for work placements for administration and secretarial courses provide valuable opportunities for students to obtain evidence to complete their portfolios. There is insufficient employer involvement in business courses, with few visits to local companies and visiting speakers from local businesses.

56. Students value the support offered by tutors and make good use of it. A well-structured tutorial process results in effective action planning for full-time students. However, action planning and monitoring of students' progress on part-time courses are less rigorous. Support staff are available at times and locations readily accessible for both college and work-based students. Administration students and work-based learners communicate regularly with their tutors by e-mail. Retail students are visited at evenings and weekends to coincide with shift patterns of working.

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

57. Much of the curriculum provision is well led and managed. An effective course review and self-assessment action planning process has led to improvement. Most course files are comprehensive and course leaders play an active part in implementing improvement measures. A team formed in April 2002 is working successfully to deliver the retail provision. There are regular productive meetings and staff have a high level of delegated responsibility for their work. There are no arrangements for formal feedback from students and employers to suggest ways to improve provision. Franchise programmes in finance are well run and managed. Trade union and teacher education courses promote equality of opportunity through the curriculum. However, there is little evidence of active promotion in other areas, for example in updating learning materials and reviewing recruitment activities. Entrants to work-based learning are usually selected by local employers and there is no apparent evidence of attempts to widen participation nor to seek greater social inclusion.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- wide range of courses which effectively widen participation
- good retention and pass rates on part-time courses
- particularly good teaching and learning in outreach centres
- good assessment of students' work with constructive feedback.

### **Weaknesses**

- below national average retention, pass rates and achievement of high grades on some full-time courses
- poor attendance in many lessons
- some inadequate monitoring of students' progress.

### **Scope of provision**

58. The college offers a wide range of part-time courses from entry level to level 4 at its main site and at a large number of outreach centres through partnership arrangements. In 2001/02, some 4,401 mostly adult students have studied on a broad range of courses, including the City and Guilds 7261 at certificate, diploma and advanced diploma levels, IT courses for beginners through to higher national level, Internet technology courses at basic and intermediate levels, the European computer driving licence (ECDL) and computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) certificates, and a specialist maintaining and upgrading of computers course.

59. There are currently 111 full-time students studying on GNVQ intermediate and AVCE advanced ICT courses, an entry level course in computing, City and Guilds 7261 modules and the higher national diploma in computing. The college also responds to the training requirements of local businesses and over 200 students are studying towards the NVQ in using IT.

### **Achievement and standards**

60. Retention and pass rates for students on part-time courses are above national averages, with particularly good pass rates on City and Guilds levels 1 and 2 courses and in the ECDL. On full-time courses, retention and pass rates are below average. Retention rates on full-time intermediate and advanced GNVQ have been consistently below national averages over the last three years. The pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate course is average for similar colleges but the number of students gaining high grades is well below average. Although the pass rates for AVCE have improved over the last two years, they are still below national averages and fewer than 20% of students gained higher grades. Students' progress to other courses is good. Many of the full-time students progress to level 3 ICT courses or other courses in the college. The majority of advanced students also progress to HE courses.

61. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Most students use the Internet and resources on the World Wide Web to enhance their assignment work. Students are also encouraged to develop real-life applications as part of their assignments. The standards of portfolios are good and tutors provide constructive verbal and written feedback. Attendance during the inspection was poor at 70% and this is typical of some attendance at other times. This low attendance has adversely affected the students' learning, teamwork and group projects.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
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OCN introduction to IT	Entry	No. of starts	454	1,303	2,131
		% retention	99	99	98
		% pass rate	60	75	79
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	1,239	599	864
		% retention	89	88	93
		% pass rate	59	65	64
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	22	20	15
		% retention	77	80	53
		% pass rate	59	25	63
NVQ using IT	2	No. of starts	20	176	293
		% retention	80	100	81
		% pass rate	0	57	61
City and Guilds 7261 diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	122	27	45
		% retention	84	90	91
		% pass rate	96	92	83
OCR integrated business technology	2	No. of starts	191	131	156
		% retention	83	85	84
		% pass rate	86	66	71
GNVQ advanced IT	3	No. of starts	15	26	50
		% retention	73	50	40
		% pass rate	83	45	80

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

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

62. The quality of teaching is particularly high for adult students in outreach centres. Lessons are well planned and students' progress is closely monitored and recorded. At one centre, students' attendance is recorded on computer and managers receive weekly reports on attendance. Students who miss lessons are contacted to ascertain the reason and to identify any extra support needed. At the friendly and informal tutorials the adult learners are given confidence to return to study. The students work at their own pace but the tutors ensure that the pace of learning is challenging for all students including the more able. Students are well motivated and attend regularly and punctually.

63. Most successful college-based lessons are well prepared and teachers use a variety of activities to develop effective learning. Teachers regularly check students' understanding through questioning, short quizzes and the use of model answers against which students check their own work. In one class a teacher devised different work for different individuals, taking account of their personal abilities but at a level sufficient to challenge each of them.

64. The monitoring and recording of students' progress are inconsistent in college-based lessons. These adversely affect the students' learning. In one lesson a new teacher was not provided with the record of progress of the students after the last teacher had left. In some college-based lessons the students are not provided with sufficiently challenging tasks. In one revision lesson, students were giving only superficial answers to questions from past examination papers and were taking no account of the marks allocated by the examiner. In one poor lesson the teacher was not aware of the level of skills or the current work of the students and was unable to support them when they had difficulties.

65. Assignments are well designed and contain clear grading guidelines. Written and verbal feedback is provided to help students to improve their work. Students are well supported in the development of their course portfolios and are provided with many opportunities to enhance their coursework. Internal verification of the assignments and students' assessments across the programme area is variable. In key skills lessons some students successfully develop a range of key skills, but attendance at these lessons is low. Many assignments do not identify opportunities for key skills.

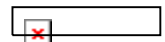
66. Full-time students are initially screened and additional support is offered to those with identified basic skills needs. A number of these students do not take advantage of this support and their absence is not followed up. Initial screening for part-time students and adult learners is variable and inadequate. Personal tutors effectively take responsibility for monitoring the progress of students and agreeing action plans with them. Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively together providing the required level of support to students. In one lesson, a student with severe mobility difficulties used a switch-activated computer with specialist software to word process her document. In another session, groups of students with severe learning difficulties were well motivated by the assistant to raise the standard of their work.

67. Teachers are suitably qualified and some have up-to-date industrial experience. There is good access to computer equipment and good quality software. Students also effectively use a well-resourced library and learning centre. There is good technical support and staff are readily available at a helpdesk to answer queries.

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

68. Management of ICT courses is satisfactory overall. However, there is a lack of consistency in procedures for internal verification, initial assessment, staff development and target setting. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and operational planning is effective. Teachers are involved in course review and self-assessment with course directors. Effective team meetings include discussion of retention, progression, students' views and the sharing of good practice. Appropriate actions are identified and those responsible for their implementation nominated. Most managers have access to on-line data to inform course planning and development. However, on some college-based courses there is inadequate monitoring of attendance and retention.

### **Hospitality, food manufacture, sport, leisure and travel**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching of practical skills in hospitality
- high pass rates in NVQs in food manufacture and food preparation
- productive use by students of learning resource centres

- well-planned and rigorous assessment
- wide and responsive provision in hospitality
- relevant and stimulating enrichment activities which contribute to learning.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on some courses
- low pass rates on most travel and tourism courses
- some ineffective teaching strategies used for small groups
- unsatisfactory accommodation and equipment for sport and recreation
- ineffective strategies to improve retention.

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

69. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in hospitality and catering from level 1 to level 3. There are currently 73 students, mainly aged 16 to 18, studying full time for NVQs in hospitality and catering. Nineteen students have progressed from level 2 to follow a one-year full-time NVQ level 3 in food preparation and cooking. NVQs in food preparation are also provided at levels 2 and 3 for part-time day release students. Part-time courses in cake decoration are offered at three levels and a range of short courses includes basic food hygiene and health and safety. There is a productive partnership with a local employer who currently has almost 100 employees enrolled for NVQs in food manufacture.

70. Approximately 70 students, mainly full time, aged 16 to 18, are studying for qualifications in sport, leisure and travel. Some 29 are taking sports courses and others are studying for qualifications in travel and tourism. All students undertake key skills and appropriate additional qualifications, such as the community sports leader award, the primary or advanced certificate in tour operations, the intermediate certificate for air cabin crew services and the certificate for resort representatives.

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

71. Within the programme area there are variations in achievements and standards. The pass rates for courses in food manufacture and food preparation are high. Pass rates on most courses in travel and tourism are low. There are low retention rates on a range of courses, some of which might be attributed to the particular circumstances following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease affecting the area in the past year. However, data supplied by the college for the current year indicate that the retention rates for some courses are low at around 50%.

72. The standards of students' practical skills in catering lessons are high and they work well together in a professional manner. Good health and safety and hygiene standards are maintained by students in the college and in the work-based food manufacture provision. Students in the food service operation display good communication and customer care skills. This is especially noticeable in the café operated by NVQ level 1 students with learning disabilities. Leisure and travel students produce assignment work of a good standard. They make effective use of the learning resource centres for additional information to use in their written work and in class discussions. Some lessons with very small numbers of students are not stimulating enough and result in limited student response to teachers' questions.

73. In hospitality and catering, students have been successful in competition work at local and national levels, reaching gold medal standard and recognition by a major national food company. A student in the sports section has achieved a national millennium volunteer award for community work with students at the college and in local schools. Students' achievements are celebrated with articles appearing in the local press and in college publications.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, food manufacture, sports, leisure and travel, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ sport recreation and allied occupations	2	No. of starts	*	11	16
		% retention	*	91	88
		% pass rate	*	70	79
NVQ food and drink manufacturing	2	No. of starts	*	76	61
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	66	100
NVQ catering and hospitality food and preparation cooking	2	No. of starts	55	38	70
		% retention	69	68	51
		% pass rate	47	77	94
Resort representatives	2	No. of starts	*	16	17
		% retention	*	94	82
		% pass rate	*	80	59
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	24	20	15
		% retention	67	90	60
		% pass rate	67	65	44
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation cooking	3	No. of starts	20	15	20
		% retention	95	100	85
		% pass rate	88	80	94

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

*\* course not available*

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

74. Across the programme area, the quality of most teaching and learning is satisfactory. In almost two thirds of the lessons observed, teaching was good or better. The good practical skills teaching in the hospitality area is reflected in the good standard of the students' work and the high pass rates. In travel and tourism, one teacher made very effective use of the subject to raise environmental and cultural issues. However, teaching and learning strategies are sometimes inappropriate. In some lessons, for example, teachers do not adapt their approach to meet the different needs of small groups of students brought together for identical elements of their disparate courses. In several lessons the pace was too slow and teachers failed to recognise the individual needs of students. Many schemes of work are simply a list of topics and do not show a range of strategies for the teaching of different stages of the course. AVCE travel and tourism students in the final stages of their course are too reliant on their teachers for information. Teachers do not encourage students to contribute by undertaking their own investigations or calling upon their personal experience. Students make good use of learning resource centres. They work confidently on a range of ICT applications. Sports studies students use specialist software to measure and analyse body mass index, heart rate activity and general fitness levels. Extensive use is made of books, magazines and journals. Students work productively and on their own and their work is professionally presented.

75. There is a good range of enrichment activities on all courses and this enhances learning. In particular, students have the opportunity to travel abroad or to other parts of the country; for some, this is their first experience of being away from home. Hospitality and catering students take part in a variety of activities that include culinary competitions, visits to industry and working at major sporting events. Students in travel and tourism have undertaken study tours to Amsterdam and Spain and have visited a wide variety of tourist destinations locally and further a field. Some students take up work placements in Europe.

76. Assessment and internal verification procedures are rigorous and robust. The assessment of competence in food manufacture is well planned, managed, executed and monitored. The assessment systems have been devised jointly by the college and a local company. Good assessment records are maintained, students are aware of assessment schedules and there is flexibility in the allocation and the return of work for part-time students. Students receive good feedback on assessed work. Students' progress is monitored through individual tutorials and there is effective communication between subject and course tutors. In the food manufacture provision, students with poor literacy skills receive effective informal help to enable them to complete their written work. A small number are about to undertake a basic skills programme in the college.

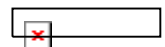
77. All staff within the programme area, including three work-based assessors working with the food manufacture students, hold specialist qualifications. Specialist accommodation and equipment for hospitality and catering are mostly satisfactory. The restaurant was refurbished in spring 2002 and looks modern and attractive. There is also a small coffee shop for students to experience a different style of service. All students on hospitality courses have the opportunity to work in simulated realistic work environments within the college. In some instances, equipment has been specially purchased or modified to assist students with physical and learning difficulties. Travel students benefit from a college travel shop that has links with a local retailer. Accommodation for sport and recreation is unsatisfactory. Much of the gym equipment is old and fitness room facilities do not reflect modern industry standards. These restrict the learning of students. Male changing facilities for catering and sport students are in poor repair and ill equipped.

### **Leadership and management**

78. There have been recent changes in the staffing structure and the new arrangements are beginning to work well to raise standards of teaching and students' performance. Communications within the programme area are generally effective, regular meetings take place and these are minuted and followed up by appropriate action. There is a commitment to equality of opportunity and the curriculum on offer now reflects a greater inclusiveness and potential progression to higher

qualifications or employment than at the time of the previous inspection. Course teams have established strong industry links which enhance students' learning, and they are committed to quality improvements in teaching and learning. However, the self-assessment process lacks rigour and course teams have not paid sufficient attention to the teaching strategies required for theory classes where there are especially low numbers of students. Although attendance and punctuality are monitored, the strategy for dealing with these and also with low retention rates is underdeveloped. The food manufacture programme is well organised and managed. The annual contract review with the company helpfully identifies actions to improve the performance of the college in meeting targets, but the college team does not undertake its own annual review. Accordingly, the opportunities to broaden aspects of the college's work and to consider future developments are missed.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and level 3 complementary therapy courses
- above national average retention rates on NVQ level 3 hairdressing
- high standards of practical work
- well-planned and effective teaching
- good range of course-related enrichment activities
- modern well-resourced hairdressing salons.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on NVQ level 2 beauty therapy and level 3 hairdressing courses

- poor key skills teaching and low pass rates
- insufficient assessment of workplace activities.

### **Scope of provision**

79. The college provides a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy. In this area there are currently 194 students aged 16 to 18 and 186 students aged 19+. Courses include NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 in hairdressing, NVQ levels 2 and 3 and a national diploma in beauty therapy, courses in body massage, aromatherapy and reflexology. There are 33 modern apprentices, whose courses include NVQs in hairdressing and key skills awards. Community-based courses are offered throughout the year. A school pupils' taster programme is offered three times a year at the college. Most courses start in September, although there is some provision for joining modular courses at other times.

### **Achievement and standards**

80. Pass rates are good on most courses, matching or exceeding the national averages. On the NVQ level 2 hairdressing college course there was a 100% pass rate in 2001. On NVQ level 3 complementary therapies courses, pass rates are high, ranging from 74% to 89% in the last three years (1999 to 2001). Low pass rates at NVQ level 2 in beauty therapy have led to a change of course. Pass rates on the modern apprenticeship programmes are also well below average. There is a lack of emphasis and strategy for key skills teaching and assessment. Of the enrolments since 1999, 91% of foundation modern apprentices and 86% of advanced modern apprentices have left their courses without completing all parts of the programme. However, 86% passed NVQ level 2 and 35% passed NVQ level 3 in hairdressing. Retention rates on most courses are above average. Between 1998 and 2001, retention rates at NVQ level 2 in hairdressing were above the national averages, ranging between 67% and 79%. On the NVQ level 3 hairdressing course they exceeded the national averages by between 12% and 19%.

81. Students produce good work. Assignments on the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in applied science (beauty therapy) are well designed, imaginative and clearly link the task to commercial practice. Students' portfolios of work on NVQ level 1, 2 and 3 hairdressing and NVQ level 3 beauty therapy contain a variety of good assignment and project work. Students' practical skills are also good. Assessment records show that the students are making good progress. In 2001, two modern apprentices were highly placed in two northern regional hairdressing competitions, winning places in the national finals.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Hairdressing	2	No. of starts	103	86	25
		% retention	72	67	79
		% pass rate	74	65	100
Beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	63	46	51
		% retention	62	74	67
		% pass rate	85	59	57

Other beauty	2	No. of starts	69	44	124
		% retention	91	93	53
		% pass rate	79	78	71
Hairdressing	3	No. of starts	16	15	14
		% retention	88	95	93
		% pass rate	50	57	69
Beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	101	69	74
		% retention	82	88	77
		% pass rate	81	80	74
Other beauty	3	No. of starts	78	46	50
		% retention	87	78	72
		% pass rate	74	89	86

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

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

82. Teaching was good or better in 80% of the lessons observed. Most teachers prepare well, producing detailed lesson plans. However, some teachers do not take sufficient account of the various ability levels in the classes. In practical lessons in the salon, students are not always kept busy throughout the lesson. Most theory sessions are interesting and lively. Students are encouraged to join in debates and discussion. In salon lessons, teachers use questions well in assessing the theory relating to a practical activity. Good written and oral feedback is given to students about their work, enabling them to improve both their practical and theory assessments. In some beauty and complementary therapy salon lessons, there is poor classroom management, when interruptions disrupt the calm of the relaxing client treatments.

83. Students keep and continually update the achievement records in their portfolios. Centralised records provide teachers with information which they use during tutorials and reviews to discuss students' progress and set targets. College staff arrange trips to national trade exhibitions, organise manufacturers' technical training and encourage students to participate in promotional activities. Modern apprentices benefit from training activities in their workplace salons, including manufacturers' demonstrations of new techniques and products.

84. There is insufficient emphasis on the achievement of key skills in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Most key skills teaching is poor, lessons are not well attended and pass rates are low. However, on the BTEC national diploma in beauty therapy course, key skills are taught well. Here, students' attendance is good and teachers relate key skills to the vocational curriculum.

85. There is insufficient assessment of students in the workplace. Opportunities are missed for students to use and identify vocational and key skills as evidence of progress towards their qualifications. There are inconsistencies in the way tutors use work experience for different college students. NVQ level 3 beauty therapy students do not have work experience placements during their course. National diploma students spend a two-week period in work placements. The modern apprentices have regular visits to their workplace salons by the college scheme co-ordinator and college assessors. Relationships with employers are good. However, training activities in the salons operate separately to the college training and there is insufficient co-ordination to link these activities.

86. The college's two spacious, modern, well-resourced hairdressing salons were refurbished in 2001. These adjacent salons are bright and airy with light colours creating a good commercial environment. In contrast, the two beauty/complementary therapy salons are dark and drab. Their

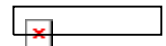


linked open-plan layout lacks privacy and client treatments are carried out in small cubicles behind closed curtains. However, plans for a summer 2002 refurbishment are now finalised. Professional hair and beauty product ranges are used and retailed by students. The modern apprentices' salon workplaces are modern, well resourced and of good quality. The salons meet the requirements for NVQ assessment and attract a wide range of clients. The college learning resource centre holds a wide range of hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapy textbooks. Students also have access to videos, CD-ROMs and the intranet for specialist computer packages.

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

87. The curriculum area is well managed: there is good communication and team work. College quality assurance processes and procedures are well implemented. Staff are keen that actions lead to continuous improvement in teaching and learning, and students' performance is regularly monitored. All staff are involved in self-assessment, target setting and action planning. Resources are effectively used and deployed to the benefit of most students. However, little emphasis is given to equal opportunities in the college or the workplace. Little is being done to encourage males into the curriculum area, despite the fact that there are only four male students on complementary therapy evening courses.

### **Health and social care**



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

**Contributory grade for work-based learning is good (grade 2)**

#### ***Strengths***

- pass rates above the national average on most courses
- good teaching and learning on courses for adults
- wide range of provision meeting diverse community needs
- effective team work on most programmes.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- well below average pass rates on the certificate in childcare and education and on NVQ level 3 in early years

- below average achievement of high grades
- insufficient consolidation of learning in lessons on full-time courses
- inadequate data to support planning and decision making on NVQ programmes.

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

88. In September 2001, the range of full-time courses in both childcare and health and social care was extended and now offers progression opportunities from level 1 to level 4. There has been a favourable response to childcare courses which have recruited well, but numbers are small on some health and social care courses. The department meets local employer and community needs through its wide range of part-time courses in health, social and childcare and counselling. The range of short courses is extensive and recruits well. Work-based learning provision has become more diverse with programmes now at level 2 and 3, though as yet, numbers are small. There are positive links with local universities to enhance progression to nurse training.

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

89. For the last three years, the retention and pass rates for most long courses have been variable. In 2001, both pass rates and retention rates improved and pass rates for most courses were above the national average, compared to those for 2000 which matched national averages. However, with one exception, students achieved well below average grades. In some cases, no students achieved high grades. For the last two years, (2000 and 2001) both the retention and pass rates for the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma in childcare and education have been significantly above the national average. The retention rates on the NVQ courses and the CACHE certificate in childcare and education have been consistently well below the national average. During the current year, retention rates on the CACHE certificate in childcare and education have improved. Of the 16 students who started the course, 14 continue to attend. However, retention rates have declined to 63% on the first year of the BTEC national diploma in health studies and to 69% on the first year of the CACHE diploma in childcare and education. There are above average retention rates on the advanced modern apprenticeships. Students are making good progress. Most assignments are well written, providing reliable evidence covering more than one unit. Currently, three students on the modern apprenticeship programme are scheduled to complete six months earlier than expected.

90. Students' written work is mainly of a satisfactory standard. A few produce work worthy of a merit or distinction grade that demonstrates good analytical and referencing skills. Students on BTEC national diploma courses show more development of ICT skills than students on other courses. In lessons, students on counselling courses demonstrate clearly their development of counselling skills and sound knowledge of the theories involved.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Certificate in practical	1	No. of starts	11	10	19

skills		% pass rate	89	50	69
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	18	19	15
		% retention	94	58	60
		% pass rate	100	18	89
CACHE diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	41	36	21
		% retention	83	86	86
		% pass rate	81	93	94
NVQ childcare and education	3	No. of starts	16	8	23
		% retention	81	100	57
		% pass rate	40	14	62
Counselling certificate	2	No. of starts	*	19	15
		% retention	*	95	87
		% pass rate	*	100	100
Counselling diploma	3	No. of starts	9	23	21
		% retention	100	91	90
		% pass rate	0	50	58

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

\* course not available

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

91. In 62% of the lessons observed, teaching was good or better. However, teaching in 9% of lessons was less than satisfactory. Teaching and learning of adult students are mostly effective. In the better lessons, teachers clearly identify the expected learning outcomes. Students are attentive and responsive. In one lesson at foundation level, students worked in small groups on positive ways of promoting equal opportunities in dealing with small children. They were encouraged to use examples from their own experience. The teacher moved around the classroom to check students' progress and asked probing questions to stimulate thinking and understanding. Adult students participate effectively in well-designed learning activities. There is good one-to-one tuition in the workplace. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not challenge or inspire the students. They talk for long periods and so leave students with insufficient opportunities to reflect on and consolidate their learning. There were many examples of poor starts to lessons, where teachers did not explain what was to be learned in an understandable context. Many lessons finished abruptly with no clear conclusion or assessment of the work covered, and with no information about the next lesson. In a significant minority of lessons, theory was insufficiently linked with work placements. The few group tasks which were set were often poorly managed. The monitoring and supervision of students in work placements has improved since January 2002 and is now good.

92. Teachers provide tutorials for their respective students. Students on full-time courses feel that they are well supported. They are aware of the range of support services in the college and how to use them. Although needs have been identified at initial assessment, there is variable take up of learning support by students. On a few courses, the majority of students who need support do not take it up. Learning support is well integrated with aspects of foundation courses. Little additional learning support is provided in the workplace.

93. A wide range of relevant books and journals is available to students in both the learning resource centre and the departmental resource base. Classrooms are enhanced by displays of students' work. Some classrooms are small for the size of the group. Students have good access to

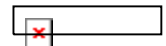
computers, but few make regular use of them in or out of lessons. Full-time teachers are well qualified. The large proportion of part-time teachers in the department have good, relevant vocational qualifications and experience, but many have not yet achieved a teaching qualification.

94. Criteria for assessment are clear and shared with students. Written feedback on completed assignments gives specific pointers for improvement that the students can easily understand and act on. Teachers give more detailed feedback orally at monthly one-to-one review sessions with full-time students. Records of the review discussion, including actions that the student agrees to take, are kept by both the student and teacher. Progress reviews in work-based learning are being further improved to include more detail, especially of key skills achievements.

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

95. Staff work well together. Course teams meet regularly and there are good communications. Full-time staff provide guidance to large numbers of part-time teachers. Staff are kept well informed and are well supported by their line managers. Staff are involved in setting and monitoring their course targets. There are action points identified both as a result of this monitoring and of self-assessment, but few of these address the need to improve teaching and learning. However, teachers' self-assessment of NVQ provision is more self-critical and identifies weaknesses more directly. Action taken to improve retention rates on the CACHE certificate in childcare and education course, as part of a college-wide project on improving retention at level 2, has had a positive impact. Franchised courses are well managed. The curriculum manager for NVQ courses receives aggregated data for all courses. It is difficult to determine the respective performance of individual courses and therefore the data are of limited use as an effective tool for planning and decision making.

### **English and humanities**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on GCSE English, GCSE psychology and access courses
- flexible entry to the access programme
- some outstanding English teaching
- good progression from the access programme.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low and declining retention rates on many humanities programmes

- inconsistent curriculum planning and management
- lateness and poor attendance which disrupts learning and attainment
- insufficient monitoring of students' progress.

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

96. The college offers humanities courses at GCE AS/A level, at GCSE and the access to HE programme. In June 2001, the college withdrew from full-time provision of GCE AS/A-level courses. The current year has a small group of 20 full-time GCE A-level students completing their courses. Some 40 part-time students take GCE AS/A-level courses in humanities. Some 32 students are on part-time GCSE courses in English and the humanities, and there are 51 students taking access to HE modules. The access programme can be studied in one-year full time, or over two years as a part-time course. It offers modules in English, psychology, sociology, quantitative methods and health studies, and provides entry to courses in nursing and teaching. Access students can start the programme at two points in the year, though students joining in January are unable to access the full range of modules. The evening provision of GCSE, GCE AS and A levels offers access to working adults, some of whom travel distances of up to 30 miles to attend.

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

97. Most of the students who complete the access programme achieve well and over three quarters move on to HE, further study or employment. Students' achievements have steadily improved over the last three years. Many of the humanities GCE programmes have declining retention and pass rates. Retention rates have fallen on GCE A-level psychology for three consecutive years and last year only half of the original students completed the course. Pass rates for GCE A-level sociology are good. Students achieve well on the GCSE programme. GCSE English pass rates are consistently above national averages. During the inspection, some lessons were poorly attended. The few students present in some lessons and other students arriving late had a detrimental effect on learning.

98. Many students produce written work of a high standard. GCE A-level English and law students handle complex terminology and concepts well. Most students' files are well organised, with help from teachers, and provide a sound basis for information retrieval and revision. Students contribute well in class and show a developing confidence in themselves and in their appreciation of their subjects.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	47	48	42
		% retention	74	83	59
		% pass rate	71	55	68
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	17	21	14

		% retention	59	71	71
		% pass rate	70	60	80
Access (1 year full time)	3	No. of starts	76	64	36
		% retention	87	80	69
		% pass rate	36	53	80
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	31	25	11
		% retention	67	72	36
		% pass rate	88	50	50
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	27	24	28
		% retention	70	62	75
		% pass rate	100	100	76

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

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

99. There is much good teaching in humanities and in half the lessons observed teaching was very good or outstanding. Less than 10% of teaching is unsatisfactory. There is much inspiring teaching in English. Students respond very positively to their teachers' enthusiasm and love of their subjects. In one access class, the teacher demonstrated poetic conventions by using his own poetry as an example. Students enjoyed analysing his work and gaining personal insights into the creative process. Students show a good knowledge of their subjects and are clearly developing new skills and ideas. They are proficient in using the appropriate terminology and in making the connections between theory and practice. Revision sessions were well structured, matching the demands of examination requirements with the students' needs. In the evening lesson for GCSE psychology students, a self-marking exercise of a practice examination paper provided a timely boost of confidence for the adult learners, in addition to identifying further revision needs. However, there is also some dull and unimaginative teaching in humanities. In weaker lessons, teachers dominate discussion and do not give students enough scope to participate effectively and to test out ideas for themselves.

100. Subject-based tutorial practice is good. Induction of students into their courses is extensive and thorough. Individual tutorials are appreciated by most students and perceived as constructive. Students receive helpful individual progress reviews. Monitoring of attendance, punctuality and performance is undertaken, but practice varies between programmes and tutors. Access students do not perceive the value of tutorials and often do not attend. Academic support is weak on access courses and practices for recording students' performance across the programmes vary between tutors. There is no study skills element to the access programme, despite students identifying this as an important requirement. An ICT course, offered on the access programme, was closed in September 2001 and alternative modes of delivery have not been explored.

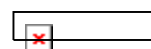
101. Assessment processes are good. Students are set work at a level matching their ability and assignments are well planned and accurately marked. In the best examples, detailed and helpful comments enable students to make considerable progress in improving their work. In a few assignments there was a lack of sufficient constructive comment and in access psychology there is infrequent assessment of written work.

102. Students in humanities have ready access to computers and good learning materials. ICT is not routinely used in lessons. Some students use the Internet and the college's intranet. Teachers also make use of material drawn from the Internet and share this with students. In the learning resource centres, students have access to helpful subject guides which indicate resources available on-line. However, they are not sufficiently encouraged to make maximum use of these learning materials.

## **Leadership and management**

103. There are inconsistencies in the planning and management of the curriculum area at a difficult time. A current weakness in the provision is that full-time courses are only available at level 3. Strategies are currently being developed to expand and enhance the access provision and to introduce other levels of study so that there will be clear progression pathways for students with a range of abilities. Curriculum managers have responded positively to identified weaknesses in teaching and learning and have encouraged staff to take up in-house staff development opportunities designed to disseminate good practice. Quality assurance monitoring lacks thoroughness. Course targets are set and performance is monitored at regular course appraisal meetings. The information is used for self-assessment purposes, but managers do not always make productive use of management information data.

## **Basic skills**



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

### **Strengths**

- good range of community learning programmes
- sensitive support for adult basic education students
- good one-to-one personal and academic support
- much good teaching varying in methods and styles to meet needs of students.

### **Weaknesses**

- variable initial screening
- insufficiently demanding teaching in a significant minority of lessons
- lack of differentiated resources in support or English for speakers of other languages lessons

- poor target setting and review in individual learning plans
- insufficient written feedback on students' work
- weak planning and management of provision.

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

104. The college offers both discrete programmes in literacy and numeracy, and additional literacy and numeracy support across the college. A limited range of English for speakers of other languages courses is offered. Literacy and numeracy courses are offered at entry level only and there are no coherent progression routes across literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages provision. In 2001/02, 764 students were enrolled on literacy and numeracy programmes of whom 67 were aged 16 to 18 and 697 were aged 19+. Students may take examinations such as City and Guilds wordpower or numberpower, Associated Examination Board (AEB) literacy and numeracy, and key skills. A wide range of courses is offered which is responsive to community needs. Family literacy and numeracy and story sacks courses are offered in the community and an innovative programme offered at a travellers' site promotes social inclusion and widens participation. The adult basic education programme in the college is flexible and responsive to the individual needs of students. Staff are developing models for student support.

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

105. The college has no separate or disaggregated achievement data for basic skills. Retention and pass rates for students on basic skills courses are not presented or analysed separately. The lack of discrete data prevents the basic skills team comparing retention and pass rates against national averages. As a result, the team is unable to set realistic programme targets. Students whose attainment is not subject to external accreditation are not set sufficiently rigorous targets to enable them to assess their progress. Vocational students attending language support lessons are entered for external accreditation. For example, NVQ catering students are entered for numberpower qualifications and beauty therapy students take AEB achievement tests. Where basic skills is integrated with other aspects of the vocational course, such as in catering, the lessons are well attended and students learn well. In a NVQ catering lesson, students were working on percentages by calculating cost and profit in relation to the price of a meal. Students' portfolios vary in quality and organisation and some are poor, for example, in family literacy and numeracy, and in some vocational courses. Accreditation is currently being considered for those studying English for speakers of other languages.

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

106. While most teaching and learning are good, in a significant minority of lessons, both teaching and learning are less than satisfactory. Inspectors found an unusually dichotomous teaching profile where no lessons were graded satisfactory; they were either good or better or less than satisfactory. In 69% of lessons, teaching was good, but in 31% it was unsatisfactory. Students in adult basic education and English for speakers of other languages classes are responsive to their teachers, who are helpful and aware of individual student needs and aspirations. Students are highly motivated and keen to learn. Support for students in one-to-one sessions is good. In the best adult basic education classes, students work at their own pace on activities related to their needs. The quality of learning support for students on vocational courses is varied. In support lessons, special work targeted at examination syllabuses is sometimes inappropriate, such as that in progression to



beauty therapy. In most learning support and English for speakers of other languages lessons there is no variation in the use of teaching and learning materials to accommodate the different levels of ability within the class. Attendance is good where support materials are related to the specific vocational area, such as in NVQ bricklaying. In most lessons attendance was low.

107. Students have an induction programme that includes an introduction to the use of the well-resourced access learning centre. Initial screening of adult basic education students is sensitive and there is good individual help for these students. Targets for this group are set against the component skills of the adult curriculum for literacy and numeracy, but there is inconsistency in how they are reviewed by teachers. There is a draft policy on progression and a member of staff has been given responsibility for its development and implementation. Partnership with the Connexions Service is effective and has resulted in the planning of a four-week summer school with taster sessions.

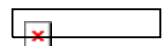
108. Not all students are subject to initial screening, which tends to be descriptive rather than diagnostic. Adult basic education students are set individual targets related to their personal needs and aspirations but these are not sufficiently definitive. Students attending the access learning centre are not always set measurable targets and reviews are not regular enough to enable students to effectively assess their own progress. Students' work is not internally verified and there is insufficient written feedback on students' work to help them identify what they need to do to improve. However, the college has recognised the need to internally verify work and a new member of staff has been appointed to enable this to happen. The standard of students' wordpower and numberpower portfolios is inconsistent and some are poor.

109. Full-time staff hold appropriate qualifications, but fewer than 40% of part-time staff hold a basic skills teaching qualification. Staff have completed recent and relevant staff development in relation to the adult curriculum for literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. There is a lack of paper-based and ICT resources in classrooms used for basic skills teaching and the rooms are rather drab and uninspiring. Students do not have ready access to study resources such as dictionaries.

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

110. The basic skills team was established in September 2002 and, while there is recognition at senior management level of the need for a whole college approach, this is at an embryonic stage of development. There are emerging strategies for improving support in vocational areas, but these too are at an early stage of development. Communication with all departments within the college has been considerably enhanced by the identification of designated members of learner support staff whose role is to liaise with vocational staff. The self-assessment report for basic skills is too descriptive and shows little evidence of evaluation of the effectiveness of provision or of the implementation of equal opportunities and diversity policies.

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



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

#### ***Strengths***

- very good teaching using excellent practical activities
- good vocational entry level provision

- accreditation well matched to students' requirements
- excellent college accommodation and resources
- extensive use of ICT throughout the curriculum
- highly effective use of learning support assistants
- strong curriculum leadership.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient short-term target setting for individual students
- tutorial records which lack sufficient details of progress
- very few teaching staff with recent specialist qualifications.

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

111. The college provides a good range of full-time and part-time courses which effectively meets the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The New Horizons course offers flexible provision for students with severe learning difficulties. The skills for working life programme includes help for students with moderate learning difficulties to transfer into vocational areas. The access to FE course meets the requirements of students with social and emotional problems. Various part-time programmes meet local needs in the community. Students with specific needs receive one-to-one support on their mainstream courses. There are currently 195 students receiving support of whom 79 have severe learning difficulties and 37 have moderate learning difficulties. There are students with other disabilities such as those with physical disabilities, visual impairment and deafness.

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

112. Staff have high expectations of all students. Students with moderate to severe learning difficulties are achieving challenging personal targets. Students' work, produced throughout the

year, is of a high standard and demonstrates significant progress towards fulfilling their learning goals. Excellent use is made of practical activities to develop personal, social and learning skills. Six students with social and emotional difficulties have achieved certificates of achievement and are progressing into supported mainstream programmes. Only 50% of students completed the access to FE course in 2000/01. Redesign of the curriculum has led to an improvement in retention rates in the current year. There are insufficient data to make detailed analysis of retention and pass rates across the range of provision.

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

113. Most teaching is good and some is very good or excellent. The best teaching challenges and inspires students. Teachers are aware of their students' individual needs and use imaginative practical activities to involve them in learning. Few teachers, however, have recent relevant specialist qualifications and, therefore, lack up-to-date specialist knowledge. Realistic working environments, including those in hairdressing and catering, are used effectively to develop practical and social skills. Students gain confidence through drama productions which are planned and performed in conjunction with the local community. Students have high levels of concentration and motivation, and speak positively of the progress they have made. The curriculum provides students with opportunities for team working, problem solving and decision making. Learning in one session is reinforced in other lessons. In one instance, students involved in a community recycling project in one lesson recorded their findings in a later computer lesson. There are good links with adult training centres but there has been no joint planning for setting personal goals. Individual target setting tends to be general rather than in measurable steps.

114. There is good vocational entry provision which enables students with moderate learning difficulties to make a supported transfer into mainstream vocational areas. Supported provision in hairdressing and catering is of a very good standard. Students with social and emotional needs are very well supported and the majority of them are progressing onto mainstream college courses at the start of the next academic year. Additional support for students who are visually impaired, deaf, or mentally ill is available but limited in its provision.

115. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities speak highly of the support they receive. Weekly tutorials are integrated with other aspects of the curriculum, but tutors' records are insufficiently detailed and give little written evidence of topics discussed or action agreed. Support is negotiated with and designed to meet the needs of the individual student. Support arrangements are well planned and well managed. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed and maintain student support records detailing students' progress. There is, however, no overall strategy for recording students' views on the appropriateness and usefulness of support.

116. Initial assessment is matched to the students' individual requirements and reliable test methods are used. During initial interviews, tutors complete an initial assessment based on student responses. Information is obtained from partner special schools, but there is a lack of such information from mainstream schools to help identify students' strengths and areas for development. Additional assessment is made by observation throughout induction week. The results are used to devise students' action plans and support is implemented as appropriate. Short-term and long-term goals are set but there is little detailed recording of progress made against these targets.

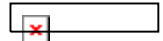
117. Accommodation is excellent and centrally located within mainstream college premises. The computer suite is well equipped and used extensively by students who demonstrate a sound knowledge of computer skills. Use of computers is integrated with other aspects of students' courses. The home skills base room contains modern kitchen appliances and provides an excellent environment for developing living skills. Learning support assistants are well qualified and are highly skilled in providing the needed support. Students are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for their own learning.

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

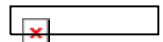
118. The programme area manager provides good leadership and monitors the quality of the

provision. Good use is made of the self-assessment report to identify areas of concern and actions for future development. Both teaching and support staff have a clear understanding of their roles and work together to bring about improvements. The Horizons course team established in January 2002 meets on a weekly basis. Other teams meet regularly but there are no minutes kept to record the discussion and related action points.

#### Part D: College data



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

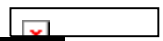


Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	33	29
2	33	25
3	22	12
4/5	1	7
Other	10	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2002

Note: Percentages in column 16 -18 have been rounded and hence do not add up to 100

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	395	5,047	39
Agriculture	6	13	0
Construction	345	602	7
Engineering	453	267	5
Business	182	1,259	10
Hotel and catering	297	514	6
Health and community care	451	1,398	13
Art and design	126	415	4
Humanities	231	1,243	11

Basic education	67	697	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,553</b>	<b>11,455</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	1999/00	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	495	389	483	871	668	1,086
	Retention rate (%)	80	87	73	80	88	87
	National average (%)	82	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	75	71	49	53	79	50
	National average (%)	59	62	66	61	63	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	738	1,002	1,120	896	1,570	2,348
	Retention rate (%)	78	76	76	82	87	93
	National average (%)	77	76	77	80	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	77	64	48	78	85	68
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	597	709	425	841	900	827
	Retention rate (%)	82	83	84	88	85	78
	National average (%)	78	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	89	75	55	70	62	56
	National average (%)	70	72	73	63	65	69
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	20	17	1	457	664	522
	Retention rate (%)	95	100	*	94	95	97
	National average (%)	84	83	81	85	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	71	88	*	64	73	64
	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 and sixth form colleges).

\* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation

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 1998/99-1999/2000: *Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates*, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

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

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	62	31	7	71
Level 2 (intermediate)	67	25	8	60
Level 1 (foundation)	74	10	16	19
Other sessions	77	11	12	26
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>176</b>

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