



Havering College of Further and Higher Education

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Business administration and secretarial](#)

[Finance and management](#)

[Computing and information technology](#)

[Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Visual and performing arts](#)

[Humanities](#)

[English and communication](#)

[Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities](#)

[Basic skills and English for speakers of other languages](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

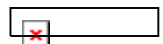
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

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

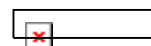
Basic information about the college



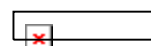
Name of college:	Havering College of Further and Higher Education
Type of college:	Further Education College
Principal:	Noel Otley
Address of college:	Ardleigh Green Campus Ardleigh Green Road Hornchurch Essex
Telephone number:	RM11 2LL 01708 455011
Fax number:	01708 462788

Chair of governors:	Bruce Gordon-Picking
Unique reference number:	130444
Name of reporting inspector:	Kenneth L Jones HMI
Dates of inspection:	27-31 May 2002

Part A: Summary



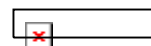
Information about the college



Havering College of Further and Higher Education serves the local community of the London Borough of Havering but also draws students from Redbridge, Barking and Newham and a wider area that includes Essex, Kent and beyond. The mission of the college is to provide high-quality education and training. Havering is generally considered to be an area of comparative affluence. The unemployment level in the borough is 2.8% and is lower than the overall rate in Outer and Greater London. Unemployment levels in the neighbouring boroughs, from which the college recruits students, is significantly higher, averaging around 12%. Local recruitment through New Deal initiatives is consequently low. Some 25% of Havering school-leavers do not continue in education or training. The college runs a substantial programme for 14 to 16 year olds who are deemed by local schools to be at risk from exclusion or academic underachievement. The college occupies three main sites at Ardleigh Green, Quarles and Harrow Lodge. The college also has information technology (IT) centres at Romford and Brentwood and makes use of a number of community-based centres.

Approximately 85% of the overall provision at the college is further education (FE). In 2000/01, based on college data, the total number of student enrolments on FE courses was 22,486. Some 24% of students attended the college on a full-time basis, of whom 62% are aged 16 to 18. Some 89% of part-time students are adults. Havering has a higher proportion of residents in white ethnic groups (97%) than most other outer-London boroughs, but the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups attending the college is significantly higher at 21%.

How effective is the college?



The quality of teaching and the achievements of students are good in six of the fourteen curriculum areas inspected, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in only one. Work-based learning provision in engineering is outstanding. Pass rates on long courses are satisfactory and improved in 2001. Pass rates on short courses improved considerably in 2001, but were poor in previous years. Retention rates were satisfactory in 1999 and 2000, but declined slightly at foundation and intermediate levels in 2001 and more significantly on advanced courses. A higher proportion of good or better teaching was recorded at the last inspection. Students are well supported. The governors and senior managers set clear strategic objectives. The college has been successful in widening participation, increasing enrolments and improving the quality of teaching accommodation. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

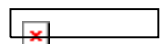
- good guidance and support for students
- effective partnership arrangements
- broad and accessible curriculum
- community-based learning centres
- effective learning support centres.

What should be improved

- retention rates on many courses
- reliability of some management information
- amount of good or better teaching
- action planning to help individual students improve their performance
- impact of self-assessment and quality assurance procedures.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

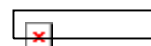


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Good. Pass rates on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced-level (GCE AS and A-level) courses are good, but retention rates on two-year GCE A-level courses are poor. Levels of student attendance are high. Although preparation for examinations is good, there is some weak lesson planning. All laboratories and teaching rooms are modern and well equipped and resources are used effectively in biology teaching.
Construction	. Teaching is effective and students are well supported. Pass rates on electrical installation courses are high and resources are of good quality. Pass rates on several courses are low and the brickwork workshop is inadequate. There is a small range of craft provision to meet anticipated growth. Development plans have not been adequately implemented.
Engineering	Good. Partnership arrangements are effective and provision meets employers' and learners' needs. Teaching and retention and pass rates are outstanding for work-based learning. Students are well supported and their progress is effectively monitored. Retention rates are unsatisfactory on some college-based courses, and the mechanical engineering workshop is unsatisfactory.
Business administration and secretarial	Good. Retention and pass rates are good on many courses. Much of the teaching is good. The area is managed effectively and there is a broad range of courses that meet the needs of students and employers.
Finance and management	Good. There is much good teaching, and learning is effective. Pass rates are good on management courses and satisfactory on finance and accounting courses. The area is effectively managed and courses meet the needs of students and employers.
Computing and information technology	Satisfactory. Courses are well matched to students' needs. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. On most courses, retention rates are satisfactory. Some pass rates are declining. Community-based, IT learning centres are well managed. Quality assurance procedures are not adequately implemented at course team level.
Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates are good on hospitality courses. A significant number of programmes have poor retention and pass rates and much teaching is ineffective and undemanding. Insufficient attention is paid to improving the quality of individual students' work.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Practical classes are effectively taught, but theory teaching is unimaginative. Students are well supported. There are insufficient opportunities for developing workplace skills. Pass rates are good on part-time and some full-time courses, but poor on intermediate and advanced beauty therapy courses. Accommodation is too small for hairdressing and course planning is unsatisfactory.
Health and social care	Good. A wide range of full-time courses meets local employer and community needs and provides good opportunities for progression.

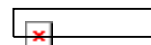
	There is much good teaching and pass and retention rates are above the national average on most courses. Retention and pass rates are unsatisfactory on some well-subscribed courses.
Visual and performing arts	Good. Teaching is good or better on most courses and students develop good independent learning skills. Pass rates are around the national average on most courses and students progress well to higher education (HE). Retention rates are below national averages on some media and art and design courses. The area is well managed.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Students' achievements are satisfactory and pass rates are good in most subjects. However, too many students fail to complete courses. Nearly all teaching is satisfactory or better, and some students develop good critical and evaluative skills. There are weaknesses in the management of the provision.
English and communication	Satisfactory. Standards achieved by students in English are in line with expectations based on prior attainment. Pass rates in communication have improved with the introduction of the new GCE AS syllabus. While there is some good teaching and learning, lesson planning is often weak. Self-assessment and action planning for improvement are inadequate.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Satisfactory. There is a broad range of full-time courses that cater for students with a wide variety of needs. There is much good teaching, but the range of teaching strategies and learning opportunities is limited. Students are well supported and achieve nationally recognised awards.
Basic skills and English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high on most courses. There are good levels of achievement on the access to FE programme. Students receive strong support from their teachers. Basic skills support is not linked adequately to students' main programme of study.

How well is the college led and managed?



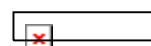
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors contribute to the setting of strategic objectives for the college and are beginning to monitor the college more effectively as they increasingly receive reports on finances, student achievement, and the progress made towards achieving strategic objectives. The college has made good progress towards achieving its key strategic objectives, particularly accommodation developments, widening participation in education and growth in enrolments. It has met its enrolment targets for the past three years. The college has strong links with schools, employers and community groups. Pass rate data are not entirely reliable. In particular, retention rates are overstated on many courses. The management of most curriculum areas is satisfactory or good. Managers pay close attention to courses and teachers where there is unsatisfactory performance. In 2001, the pass rates on level 1 and level 2 courses for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults improved notably and in the two previous years were close to the national averages. Pass rates at level 3 improved slightly over the same period, and in the previous two years were close to the national averages. Retention rates have improved between 1998 and 2000 and were satisfactory in 2000. However, in 2001 they declined slightly at level 1 and level 2 and more significantly at level 3. Day-to-day financial management is effective, but budgeting and costing in some areas needs to be improved. Quality assurance procedures are not consistently effective across the college. In its deployment of staff and other resources, the college offers satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



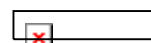
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The friendly and supportive atmosphere of the college encourages many young people and adults to enrol on a wide range of courses, which broaden their choices of HE and employment. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is greater in the college than in the local community, and many students travel from outside the borough to study at the college. The college is succeeding in widening the participation of adults in FE. Provision is offered at nine community venues. Courses in IT are proving to be popular, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and basic skills programmes are being expanded. Many courses are arranged at times to suit students. Community venues include two high street IT centres and a drop-in IT centre in one of the most deprived areas of the borough. The college has recently established, on behalf of the East Thames Lifelong Learning Partnership, a regional centre for the training of basic skills teachers. The college recruits a significant number of students with learning difficulties, with physical disabilities, and from areas with high levels of social deprivation. There is particularly good support in lessons for students who are visually or hearing impaired. There have been many staff development activities designed to raise the awareness and competence of staff on equality of opportunity. The college has recently begun to monitor the performance of students from different minority groups.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance arrangements are good for most students. Case conferences form a key part of the college tutorial system and focus on attainment and the individual support needs of full-time students. Underachievement is identified and students are helped to commit to the actions they need to take to improve. There is, however, insufficient use of personal targets to help students improve their performance. Tutorial arrangements for part-time students are not effective. Student support procedures are well documented and the use of common forms ensures consistency of approach by tutors and equity of experience for students. However, the tutorial programme is not effectively implemented by all tutors and procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of tutorials are not carried out thoroughly, resulting in variability in the quality of support for some students. There is good, comprehensive pre-entry information, advice and guidance for prospective students. Induction is thorough and forms part of the college personal initiative programme. Both full-time and part-time students receive a lot of informal support. Additional learning support needs are identified on enrolment and students referred to specialist staff who diagnose the support required. There is no college-wide system for evaluating the effect additional learning support has on raising standards.

Students' views of the college



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

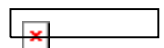
What students like about the college

- welcoming and safe environment
- personal support provided by teachers and tutors
- counselling services
- resource centres and library facilities
- access to IT
- general atmosphere and the cultural diversity.

What they feel could be improved

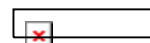
- sports, leisure and recreational facilities
- facilities for prayer and meditation
- procedures for seeking their views and responding to them
- transport between sites
- refectory prices.

Other information



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



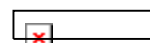
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	55	38	7
19+ and WBL*	66	29	5
Learning 16-18	49	42	9
19+ and WBL*	66	29	5

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. In 2001, over 9,000 students were expected to complete qualifications requiring one or more years of study. Of these, some 55% were aged 16 to 18. In 2001, the overall pass rates on level 1 and level 2 courses for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults improved notably and, in the two previous years, were close to national averages. Pass rates at level 3 improved slightly over the same period and, in the previous two years, were close to the national averages. As the college acknowledges, recorded overall retention rates for 1998 to 2001 were, on average, some eight percentage points higher than the actual retention rates. Taking this into account, overall retention rates have improved between 1998 and 2000 and were satisfactory in 2000. However, in 2001, retention rates declined slightly at levels 1 and 2 and more significantly at level 3.

2. Overall, the standards achieved by many students in lessons and in their work are satisfactory or better. In engineering, high standards of work are achieved by work-based learners and by students on some courses. In humanities, students have developed appropriate critical and evaluative skills, and demonstrate these both orally and in writing. In information and communication technology (ICT), the standard of students' work in lessons and assignments is high, and students are competent in using computer software. In basic skills, students aged 16 to 18 are successful in

achieving their learning goals, and the attainment of adult students attending courses offered in community centres is good. Most students with learning disabilities and/or difficulties work towards nationally recognised qualifications. They achieve well and progress to more advanced courses. Much of the work completed by science and mathematics students is of a satisfactory standard. On financial management courses, students' written work and oral presentations are of a high standard. The standard of presentation of some students' portfolios in hair and beauty therapy is good.

3. The college works in partnership with another local college and a motor vehicle manufacturer to manage and provide training for advanced modern apprenticeships in engineering. The completion rate of engineering modern apprenticeship frameworks is good, and the retention and pass rates on the advanced General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) undertaken by some 130 apprentices over a period of four years are outstanding. Because the college had only started providing work-based training in construction just prior to the inspection, it is too early to comment on completion rates.

4. Progression rates from GCE A-level courses to HE are good. However, the proportion of students progressing from GCE AS courses to GCE A-level courses in 2001 was low, at 56%. The work of the college was disrupted by two days of industrial action by teachers during the inspection, but overall attendance at 76% was at the average level for colleges of a similar type. Many students are punctual at lessons: some are not.

16-18 year olds

5. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on GCE AS/A-level courses improved in 2001, and, in the three previous years, were close to the national averages. Retention rates on many GCE AS/A-level courses, however, have been consistently below the national average. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate courses have improved and, in 2000, reached the national average. Retention rates on these courses are generally good. Pass rates on the advanced GNVQ, national diploma and national certificate programmes have declined from being above the national average to being slightly below. Retention rates improved over the period 1998 to 2000 to the national average, but declined in 2001. The pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 improved in 2001 on other programmes, having been close to the national averages in the two previous years.

6. The college subscribes to a service provided by an external agency that compares students' grades attained at GCE AS/A-level with the grades predicted from their qualifications at entry to their courses. The analysis shows that in a few subjects, students achieved grades higher than those predicted, but on other courses the grades achieved were as predicted. For students studying vocational courses, the college is developing a system to help improve achievement, but it is too early to assess its impact.

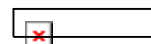
7. Many full-time students aged 16 to 18 study for key skill qualifications as part of their main programme of study. As acknowledged by the college, the effectiveness of the teaching of key skills varies considerably across curriculum departments. Where opportunities for key skills development are a central part of the main programmes of study, students' key skills attainment is generally better than where key skills development sessions are provided separately. The college has evaluated the success of students on these qualifications recently and, as a result, has revised the key skills policy.

Adult learners

8. The overall pass rates on level 1 and 2 courses for adults improved in 2001. In the two previous years they were satisfactory, being close to the national averages. Pass rates at level 3 improved slightly over the period 1998 to 2001 and were above the national averages. Retention and pass rates for GCE A level, for example, were at or above the national average for adults. The numbers of adults enrolling on GCSE courses has declined. Retention rates for these courses over the three years prior to the inspection have been at the national average. Pass rates have improved and were at the national average in 2001. Retention and pass rates for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) qualifications, at all levels, have been at, or above, the national average. Retention and pass

rates for other long qualifications at all levels have been at, or below, the national average with retention rates being mostly below. In 2001, over 7,000 adults enrolled on qualifications requiring short periods of study. The pass rates on short courses improved considerably in 2001, but were poor in the previous two years.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 242 lessons. They judged that teaching is good or better in 57% of lessons, satisfactory in 36% and less than satisfactory in 7%. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in 8 of the 14 curriculum areas inspected and only 22% of lessons are excellent or very good. The percentage of good or better teaching is lower than that observed during the last inspection. The best teaching is in business, administration and secretarial, finance and management, health and social care and visual and performing arts. Where teaching groups are adult or predominantly adult, teaching is more effective. Only 19% of lessons where students are mostly aged 16 to 18 are excellent or very good. Teachers do not give sufficient consideration to the full ability range of students in classes when planning lessons for this age-group. Teachers have more opportunity to attend to the needs of individual students in practical classes where teaching and learning is more effective. The quality of teaching at foundation and intermediate levels is similar, but teaching is significantly better on advanced courses. The integration of students with learning difficulties and students with learning disabilities is consistently good across all the areas inspected and classroom support is effective.

10. In practically based subjects such as construction, engineering and hair dressing and beauty therapy, practical lessons are more effectively taught than theory lessons and motivate students more. In the better practical lessons, teachers plan projects carefully and ensure that the learning needs of all students in the class are met. During such lessons, teachers use time effectively to check students' learning and to reinforce their understanding of the theory underpinning practical activities. Theory teaching is sometimes unimaginative and tedious and insufficient attention is given to the knowledge and understanding required for students to gain full benefit from their practical work. This is particularly the case with less able students. In visual and performing arts, the differing abilities of students are recognised and projects and assignments are developed to meet individual needs and students benefit from the individual attention and tuition they receive. In engineering, students have good opportunities to develop skills in the workplace and art and design students are involved in community projects. On-the-job and off-the-job aspects of work-based training are well co-ordinated. In health and social care, effective use is made of visits, work placements, the involvement of outside speakers and visits to the workplace. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, however, there are insufficient opportunities for students to broaden their industrial knowledge and develop workplace skills. In the best lessons in science and mathematics, teachers conducted the work at a good pace and challenge students to think more deeply through effective questioning. In most curriculum areas, students develop good analytical and communication skills and theoretical concepts are taught most effectively where up-to-date resources and examples are used. Effective teaching of GCSE mathematics is linked to insistence on punctuality and good attendance and regular completion of work and tests. Punctuality and attendance is not good across all areas.

11. Many students aged 16 to 18 study for key skill qualifications. As the college acknowledges, the development of students' key skills is not effective across all curriculum departments. Where key skill development is an integral part of the students' main programme of study, as in the visual and performing arts and health and social care, teaching is effective. In other areas, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, key skills are not always taught as part of the main study and students do not see their relevance. In engineering, practical work is not used to provide evidence for key skill qualifications.

12. Most teachers are well qualified and have appropriate knowledge of their subjects. In many

curriculum areas, schemes of work and lesson plans are not sufficiently detailed. Schemes of work cover the content syllabuses, but do not always clarify the teaching methods to be adopted in sufficient detail. Lesson plans do not pay sufficient attention to the full ability range of students in different classes. Lesson plans for teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities focus too much on activities and learning outcomes and do not develop strategies to help individual students to learn. In humanities and in mathematics, many lesson plans do not take into account students' individual learning needs. The contrary is true in visual arts where planning is based on individual needs. There is insufficient sharing of good teaching practice across the college and insufficient attention to action planning to improve teaching based on the results of lesson observations. There is insufficient direction to ensure coherence and consistency of approach to lesson planning across the college.

13. The college undertook a substantial review of its accommodation strategy during 1999/2000 and restated its aim to dispose of its Harrow Lodge site and locate most activities on the Ardleigh Green and Quarles campuses. A new building was completed at Ardleigh Green in 2001 and areas refurbished to provide bright and attractive accommodation for general education, catering and hospitality and IT. Developments have included refurbishing a motor vehicle workshop and constructing two new resource centres. Most accommodation is of a satisfactory or better standard and there is very good access for students with restricted mobility. There are some unsatisfactory facilities, however. The hairdressing salon is too small and poorly designed for the number of students using it. Although most of the facilities for engineering are of a good standard, particularly those used for work-based learning, mechanical engineering workshops are unsatisfactory. Catering facilities include an inadequate kitchen which is poorly maintained and decorated and contains ageing equipment. Brickwork workshops are of a poor standard.

14. Resources centres are well designed and conveniently located on the three main sites. The range of books, periodicals, video cassettes, CD-ROMs and audio tapes are satisfactory, although book stocks in some areas such as hairdressing and beauty are out of date. Staff at the resource centres are experienced and well qualified and provide students with good support and advice. All staff and students have access to the Internet and the college intranet. Over a two-year period, the college has implemented a strategy to provide a personal computer for every teacher and one for every three students. This target was close to being achieved at the time of the inspection. Students have good access to computers both within classrooms and for independent work and most computers are available on an open-access basis. Computing software packages are up to date. The college has few sports and recreational facilities other than students' common rooms. This weakness is highlighted in the college accommodation strategy.

15. Teachers are well qualified and have appropriate experience and some 90% of teachers have a teaching qualification. Recruitment difficulties have had an impact on learning in some areas. The college offers good opportunities for staff to update their commercial and professional expertise and teachers are encouraged and supported to take HE courses, including research-based degrees.

16. Most teachers assess students' progress in a fair and thorough manner. Criteria for assessment are clear and understood by students. In some cases, for example in performing arts and media, teachers use a wide range of appropriate assessments. Acting skills, for example, are assessed using actors' notebooks to monitor progress during productions. On management and finance courses, additional diagnostic tests are used to assess students' suitability for a 'fast-track' course that has led to improved retention. Internal verification and moderation is carried out systematically and there is effective feedback to assessors with identification of strengths and areas for improvement. In nearly all cases, assessment outcomes are validated by external moderators. Assessment in the workplace is well planned and there are good systems for monitoring the progress made by work-based trainees. Employers are kept well informed about trainees' progress.

17. Systems for monitoring students' progress are applied consistently and are effective in most areas. Information gained through assessment is used in termly case conferences that form part of the tutorial system. Minimum acceptable grades are identified for each student and teachers monitor students' performance against the grades. Careful initial and pre-course assessments of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are used as a base for individual learning plans. However, few specific measurable targets are set following assessment, to help students with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those students who need to develop other basic skills to improve their performance. In these areas as well as ICT, humanities, engineering and health and beauty, action planning following teachers' assessment and case conference reviews is weak. Case conference reports prepared by tutors lack critical analysis and constructive comment or suggestions. Instead, comments following assessment focus on the completion of tasks and instructions to 'do better'.

18. Students' work is set and marked regularly on the majority of courses. Teachers give effective oral and written feedback to most students on written work. They make helpful comments which students can easily understand and act upon. However, marking procedures are not implemented effectively across all the college or within departments. In some areas, for example, humanities and ICT, a standard cover marking sheet is not always used. On basic skills and engineering courses, for example, some teachers offer only a few comments that do not help students to improve their performance.

19. The college provides a broad range of courses in nine curriculum areas. Curriculum planning is effective in most areas, and is well informed by market research. Promotional materials are attractive and carefully designed. The college had successfully increased enrolments of full-time students by 400 during the two years prior to the inspection. Partnerships with local employers and employer organisations have helped the college to respond to their needs. The college is responsible for training advanced modern apprentices employed by a large local motor vehicle manufacturer.

20. Programmes for students aged 16 to 18 include academic and vocational courses at entry level to level 3. Students undertaking a Curriculum 2000 programme at level 3, are able to choose from a wide range of GCE AS and A-level courses, and advanced vocational courses. The Curriculum 2000 offer is carefully constructed to enable students to 'mix and match' vocational subjects with academic subjects, although few students choose to do so. Enrichment programmes include the college's personal initiative programme, which comprises externally validated modules in career development and working with others. Students studying full-time on courses at all levels are encouraged to develop application of number, IT and communication key skills. The college has undertaken an evaluation of the effectiveness of key skills programmes provided in 2001. The good practice identified has been used in a revised key skills policy due for implementation in the 2002/03 academic year. An 'access to FE' programme is offered to those students who are unable to meet the entry requirements of level 1 courses. The access programme is co-ordinated centrally, and comprises the three main key skills, together with problem solving and working with others. Vocational elements are also included. The college works closely with local schools, and offers a programme for Year 10 and Year 11 disaffected pupils. Some 40 pupils participate in this programme, and the progression rate to level 1 vocational courses is good. The progression rate of students aged 16 to 18 to higher level courses within the college and to HE programmes is high.

21. Many adult students study vocational courses and attend part-time. The college is succeeding in widening the participation of adults in FE. Provision is offered at nine community venues. Courses in IT are proving to be popular, and ESOL and basic skills programmes are being expanded. Many courses are arranged at times to suit students. Venues include two high street IT centres and a drop-in IT centre in one of the most deprived areas of the borough. The college has recently established, on behalf of the East Thames Lifelong Learning Partnership, a regional centre for the training of basic skills teachers.

22. For the majority of students, the support and guidance arrangements provided by the college are good. All full-time students have a minimum of one hour of dedicated tutorial time each week that covers pastoral and academic activities. Arrangements for part-time students are less effective and tutorial support is provided informally by subject teachers during lesson time. During the year prior to the inspection, the college introduced a termly case conference system that gives every full-time student a one-to-one session with their tutor. Parents may be invited to the review at the discretion of the student. Alternatively, where students have difficulties, parents are informed in writing. Attendance and punctuality are monitored and performances, based on teachers' assessment reports, are reviewed. Most of the students value this emphasis on attainment and individual support in the tutorial programme. Underachievement across all subjects is identified and

students are helped to carry out the actions they need to take to improve. Students on GCE AS/A-level courses are aware of their predicted grades and these are used by tutors to monitor their progress. However, the use of these grades in setting targets for individuals and in planning lessons is not well established. The use of targets on other courses is not widespread, and where they are used, they are often no more than imprecise actions for improvement.

23. There are well-understood procedures in place for dealing with problems such as poor attendance and lateness. Students are aware of these systems, but the procedures are not applied consistently in some areas. For example, in one subject area students are turned away if they are more than five minutes late. In other areas, some students were up to 40 minutes late, but were still allowed to join the class, with inevitable disruption to other students. There is very poor attendance in some tutorials. For example, in a science tutorial the maximum present over a period of time was six. For six of the weeks, the maximum present was two. The college has appointed tutorial support co-ordinators for each department to bring more consistency to the implementation of systems and improved communication is beginning to have some effect.

24. In all aspects of student support, documentation is comprehensive. Procedures are clearly set out and helpful forms promote consistency of approach and equity of experience for students. Tutors have a comprehensive tutor pack that clarifies policies and procedures and outlines a programme of work. Questionnaires and feedback forms are used to monitor the overall quality of tutorials. Results are analysed and proposed actions for improvement circulated. However, procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of tutorials are not implemented with consistent rigour, particularly in science, English and humanities. For example, schemes of work and lesson plans for tutorial sessions are inadequate. Observations are part of the monitoring procedure, but some tutors have not been observed for over 12 months.

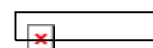
25. Students and parents receive good information about the college through a comprehensive programme of taster days, open days, and school liaison work. Induction for new students is mostly thorough and forms part of the personal initiative programme. Through the programme two elements of tutorial support, induction and career development, are accredited. However, the implementation of the programme is left to the discretion of tutors, which leads to uneven practice and variability in quality. Further, this programme is not always completed despite the fact that the college specifies that these two elements are essential activities for students. Of those tutors who submitted statistics in spring 2001, 79% of students completed the personal initiative programme at level 1 and 50% at level 3. Four courses had completion rates of less than 30%.

26. The college provides comprehensive support and guidance. Futures Careers provide good, impartial advice that forms an integral part of the college induction and tutorial programmes. The service provides practical support and refers students to additional sources of help. There are guidance resources for students who are interested in progressing to HE or employment. Job opportunities are advertised and are regularly updated. There is a substantial team of support staff, including qualified counsellors, youth workers and sports development workers. Staff are provided with good training and attend tutorials on a variety of issues such as improving self-esteem, equal opportunities, drugs and health education.

27. The majority of students are well supported in lessons. Students are initially assessed during induction to identify requirements for basic skill support. Those deemed to need additional help are referred to learning support specialists for further assessment. For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, assessment for identifying learning support requirements is well organised and documented. Results are clearly explained to students and necessary actions effectively implemented. There is particularly good support in classes for students who are visually or hearing impaired. Well-trained learning support assistants work with teachers in classes, the study skills centre and with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All students with special learning needs and those receiving support to improve their basic skills have individual learning plans. However, these do not always have specific objectives and measurable targets. The review of individual learning plans does not include detailed analysis of students' progress and action plans to help students improve are not sufficiently explicit. Students' language support needs are identified through the NFER test and students are referred to the study skills centre where further diagnostic assessment is undertaken. Individual language support is offered at an appropriate level,

but few students take up the support. Some students have their language needs met through the English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. Information from a range of sources, such as case conferences, assessment of basic skills action plans and feedback from teachers where in-class support is offered, is available for evaluating the impact of additional learning support. There is, however, no college-wide system for evaluating the impact of additional learning support on raising standards. The college acknowledges the need to strengthen the co-ordination of basic skills support to ensure that all additional learning needs are met and to improve the take up of support by students identified as needing it. At the time of the inspection, the college was planning to bring adult education, basic skills and learning support together under a new post at director level.

Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of most curriculum areas is satisfactory or good. For example, in the areas responsible for business studies, science and mathematics, and health and social care, course teams meet regularly, quality assurance procedures are followed, targets for attendance, retention and pass rates are agreed and progress towards these targets is monitored. In performing arts, managers provide good opportunities for staff to update skills and engage in research. Aspects of management in some curriculum areas are unsatisfactory. For example, in beauty therapy there is some discontinuity between the level 2 and level 3 NVQ courses. In the basic skills curriculum area, the links between basic skills specialists and teachers in curriculum areas are weak. In humanities, the implementation of policy is inconsistent. Consequently, some students are told too late in their programmes that they will not be allowed to take an examination because they have not reached the required standard.

29. Since the last inspection, the college has made good progress towards the achievement of key strategic objectives. Substantial, good-quality, new buildings have been opened at Ardleigh Green and the Quarles campus. These buildings each contain spacious new learning centres. The college has recruited an additional 400 full-time students over the two years prior to the inspection and substantially increased part-time enrolments. New centres in Romford, Brentwood, Rainham and Harold Hill, and a wider range of programmes at the main sites, have contributed to wider participation in education. Progress has been made in raising pass rates, but retention rates have fallen. In 1999 and 2000, overall pass rates were satisfactory and, in 2001, overall pass rates improved. In particular, there was an improvement in pass rates on short courses. Previously, pass rates on these courses had been unsatisfactory. Overall retention rates were satisfactory in 1999 and 2000. Retention rates fell in 2001, but remained at a satisfactory level.

30. Governors and senior managers set clear strategic objectives for the college. The college operating plan is not explicitly linked to strategic objectives, but it addresses appropriate issues, including raising achievements and improving teaching. The planning framework is satisfactory, but it would be strengthened if departments had operating plans. Just prior to the inspection, governors received their first monitoring report on the college's operating plan. In the past, governors have not received sufficient information about students' achievements, financial forecasts, progress towards strategic objectives, and comparisons between budget and actual expenditure on building projects. This has been recognised and action taken to strengthen the framework for reporting to governors.

31. The college's clear management structure facilitates good communication and helps to ensure that there are high levels of accountability. Senior managers identify unsatisfactory courses at termly meetings with individual course managers. These meetings focus on levels of attendance and retention and pass rates. Under a new procedure, unsatisfactory courses are placed into 'special measures'. Action plans for these courses are required to show how weaknesses will be addressed. Managers also act to identify unsatisfactory teaching. College managers and external consultants observed over 350 lessons in the past year. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, appropriate action is taken, including the appointment of mentors, professional development and further lesson observations. Nevertheless, only 58% of lessons observed by inspectors were judged

to be good or better, compared with 67% at the last inspection.

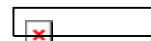
32. The college has comprehensive quality assurance arrangements for both teaching teams and support services, but they are not consistently effective across the college. Self-assessment by course teams is a key feature of the quality assurance system. Some course teams produce thorough self-assessment reports and useful action plans. Others teams' reports lack detail and do not pay enough attention to improving teaching, learning and achievements. Procedures for self-assessment are flawed because the retention and pass rates on two-year courses are evaluated on a year-by-year basis rather than over the full duration of the course. The college provides good opportunities for professional development, including many activities focused on improving teaching. Lesson observation findings are used in annual staff appraisal. Only 60% of staff, however, were appraised in the year prior to inspection.

33. The college has good links with local schools. In several curriculum areas, for example childcare and engineering, pupils attend the college on a regular basis to study on courses linked to their schools. A particular strength is the college's provision for over 50 disaffected 14 to 16 year olds. There are also strong links with major local employers and full involvement in many community projects. For example, the college, in partnership with other organisations, has taken the lead in establishing a basic skills centre of excellence in Rainham. The college provides a wide range of HE courses. This benefits FE students through the progression opportunities it provides.

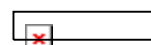
34. The college has recently revised its equal opportunities policy. The new policy clearly states the college's objectives in relation to the gender, race, age and disabilities of its students. The college has been very successful in recruiting students from minority ethnic groups. Some 21% of college students are from ethnic minorities, compared with 3% of the local population. The college also recruits significant numbers of students with learning difficulties, with physical disabilities, and from areas with high levels of social deprivation. The college has been active in professional development related to equal opportunities. There have been many activities designed to raise the awareness and competence of staff on equal opportunities issues. The college has recently begun to monitor the performance of students from different minority groups.

35. In the three years prior to inspection, the college has achieved its enrolment targets. In 2000 and 2001, there were small operating deficits that had not been budgeted for and the cost of the new buildings was significantly over budget. Budgets are appropriately delegated within the college and budget holders have good information on expenditure to date. However, the college does not have sufficient information about the costs of individual courses, although the college has procedures for vetting the cost effectiveness of commercial courses. Pass rate data are not entirely reliable. Several factors have led to the overstatement of retention rates on many courses. The problems have been recognised by the college and action was being taken at the time of the inspection to improve the reliability of data. In addition to the unreliability of some retention data, on a few courses, the presentation of data is also misleading, since retention rates for only the second year of some two-year courses are shown as applicable to the full duration of the course. In its deployment of staff and other resources the college offers satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on most courses
- high levels of attendance
- good progression to HE
- good preparation for examinations
- effective use of resources in biology
- well-equipped modern teaching rooms and laboratories.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on two year GCE A-level courses
- some weak lesson planning.

Scope of provision

36. The college has a good range of GCE AS courses and both one-year and two-year GCE A-level courses in mathematics, biology, human biology, chemistry and physics. Some 190 students enrol for GCE AS courses and around 120 for GCE A level. About a third of the enrolments are for one-year courses. These include evening classes in biology and mathematics. About 250 students enrol for GCSE mathematics, with almost a third attending evening classes taught on three different evenings. Some 70 students enrol on daytime GCSE courses in chemistry, human physiology and health, and physics. There are no vocational science courses.

Achievement and standards

37. Pass rates on most courses are good. For example, over the last three years, pass rates in GCSE mathematics have improved steadily, and are consistently well above the low national average. Pass rates for GCSE sciences are at, or above, the national average, with the exception of human physiology and health in 2001, where a decrease in achievement reflects a change in the composition of the enrolment group. Students, many of whom are aged over 19, who follow the one-year GCE A-level revision courses in mathematics or science subjects, perform well. Both pass

rates and achievement of A to C grades are good and retention rates are high. In contrast, although pass rates for all two-year GCE A-level courses are good, including higher grade passes, the retention rate is well below average. Students of biology consistently do better than would be expected from their qualifications at enrolment.

38. In other subjects, achievement is in line with predictions. Pass rates in GCE AS subjects in 2001 were good, ranging from 77% to 95%, but retention rates for chemistry and mathematics were low. Levels of attendance are consistently high and there is good progression to HE.

39. The formal assessment of students' work is satisfactory and in some cases, for example, biology, practical assignments are of a high standard. Coursework for GCSE mathematics is well presented. GCE A-level students use calculators effectively for trigonometrical and statistical calculations, and are able to relate graphical representation of experimental results to the appropriate equation in, for example, the photoelectric effect.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	285	254	240
		% retention	79	76	67
		% pass rate	47	57	71
GCSE science (human physiology and health)	2	No. of starts	51	60	40
		% retention	76	83	70
		% pass rate	41	52	25
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	33	54	31
		% retention	76	13	45
		% pass rate	52	71	93
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	39	33	*
		% retention	44	39	*
		% pass rate	88	100	*
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	34	37	31
		% retention	62	46	45
		% pass rate	57	94	100
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	21	21	*
		% retention	52	33	*
		% pass rate	64	100	*
GCE A-level mathematics and science (1 year)	3	No. of starts	112	85	45
		% retention	93	96	82
		% pass rate	88	90	68

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

* college data not comparable with previous years

Quality of education and training

40. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but there is a minority of unsatisfactory lessons. Schemes of work cover the subject content required for the examination specification, but do not always clarify the teaching methods to be adopted in sufficient detail. In mathematics, for example, where this is particularly the case, there is insufficient use of teaching aids, including ICT, to help learning. In contrast, biology teachers use models and other resources effectively. For example, there is a good range of models, appropriate to students of varying abilities, to aid teaching on the structure and function of DNA. Imaginative use is made of a digital microscope to provide a range of images and worksheets in teaching biology. In both biology and physics, teachers direct students to relevant websites and some use is made of spectra obtained from the Internet for teaching instrumental methods of analysis in chemistry. There is little use of ICT in science teaching, but a strategy for developing its use was being developed at the time of the inspection and computers are used for data logging. The pace of work in most mathematics lessons is brisk. Students respond well, show commitment to their work and concentrate well throughout lessons. In some weaker science lessons, teachers do not set sufficiently demanding work. A firm emphasis on high levels of attendance and punctuality, and insistence on weekly completion of homework by all students, combined with a regular programme of tests, contributes to effective learning and good achievement in GCSE mathematics. In both science and mathematics, teachers do not pay sufficient regard to the range of students' abilities in their classes when planning lessons.

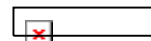
41. Good use is made of initial college assessment of numeracy skills and a departmental test of mathematical skills, to place students in the most suitable GCSE mathematics teaching group. Carefully planned induction helps to build the confidence of adults returning to study mathematics. A regular programme of tests in both mathematics and the sciences prepares students for examinations effectively. Both students and the parents of students aged 16 to 18 are informed when test results are unsatisfactory. Students are given clear guidance and targets for improving their performance. Progress in achieving targets is regularly monitored. Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality are effective. Where students are underachieving, they are well supported and know what they need to do to improve their performance. However, in some cases, students who have repeatedly been told that their work is unsatisfactory have nevertheless been allowed to continue with their studies only to be withdrawn from examinations at a very late stage.

42. Newly constructed mathematics teaching rooms and science laboratories provide good places to learn, although science students are unable to carry out syntheses requiring distillation, reflux or suction filtration due to inadequate water pressure. All the facilities are well equipped with attractive wall displays and mathematics textbooks and other resources are easily accessible. Computers are available in all laboratories and equipment is up to date and in a good state of repair. The range and quality of apparatus, such as microscopes and colorimeters, is above average. There are few ICT resources for mathematics teaching. Most teachers are well qualified in their subjects and there is a carefully targeted programme of professional development. Practical science teaching is well supported by a team of experienced technicians.

Leadership and management

43. Mathematics and science courses are well managed. Teachers work well in teams and pay careful attention to the needs of individual students. Staff development is well planned and informed by lesson observations. The results of GCSE mathematics examinations are carefully analysed according to age, gender and prior attainment, but insufficient use is made of the data when planning the curriculum. GCSE mathematics does not meet the needs of all the enrolled students and there are no formal support arrangements, such as additional workshops, to assist weaker students. Target setting by subject leaders is appropriate, but the overall self-assessment for the area is not sufficiently rigorous and insufficient attention is given to setting targets and action planning for improvement. For example, the report does not identify the low retention rates on two-year courses.

Construction



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

Strengths

- effective teaching
- high-quality resources for electrical installation courses
- good support for students
- good pass rates on electrical courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on several courses
- poor implementation of development plans
- inadequate brickwork workshop facilities
- restricted range of craft provision.

Scope of provision

44. The college offers craft courses in painting and decorating, carpentry and joinery and brickwork at foundation and intermediate levels; the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in construction and City and Guilds electrical installation courses. Most students are enrolled on courses leading to foundation level qualifications. Opportunities are available for foundation students to progress to electrical installation, brickwork, wood and decorative occupations at intermediate level. School-link, City and Guilds evening courses and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are being used successfully to widen participation for all age-groups.

45. At the time of the inspection, there were 673 learners on construction courses, of whom 126 were attending full-time. Some 30% of students are aged 16 to 18. The college also provides

training for approximately 25 work-based trainees and 100 students on school-link and special needs courses.

Achievement and standards

46. Enrolments on to electrical installation courses are high. Retention rates are good and pass rates are above the national average. Retention rates and pass rates for the AVCE are also high. Pass rates and retention rates on several courses, including NVQ level 1 craft and the GNVQ advanced construction, have declined and are below national averages. Standards of attainment on the practical electrical installation courses are good. Students on the AVCE construction technician programme produce good-quality coursework and there are several examples of excellent town planning assignments. There is good progression to HE from this course. Work-based learning provision had only been introduced by the college during the year of the inspection and comparative pass rate data were not available at the time of the inspection. Retention rates on work-based training courses are good and trainees are developing good practical skills and making good progress. Trainees collect work-based evidence systematically and efficiently. Students are generally enthusiastic about their work, particularly the practical aspects. Attainment is good in practical electrical and craft workshop sessions. Attainment in craft lessons is mostly satisfactory, but, in many lessons, the standards of students' finished work are not consistently good with insufficient attention being paid to detail, for example, in pointing brickwork. Acquisition of key skills is satisfactory overall with all AVCE students achieving the requirements of the course. NVQ level 1 full-time students who are not able to produce evidence for key skill qualifications gain basic skill achievement awards. Students from the electrical installation courses participate in student exchanges with colleges in Paris and the Ascension islands. AVCE construction students undertake architectural study visits to European Union countries.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 6315 basic woodwork skills	1	No. of starts	**	34	24
		% retention	**	65	58
		% pass rate	**	44	54
NVQ occupations, various crafts	1	No. of starts	33	42	73
		% retention	76	83	69
		% pass rate	40	60	39
City and Guilds 2360-07 electrical installation part 1	1	No. of starts	**	31	98
		% retention	**	84	71
		% pass rate	**	26	73
City and Guilds 2360-07 electrical installation part 2	2	No. of starts	97	74	75
		% retention	82	78	72
		% pass rate	40	45	74
City and Guilds 2380 16th edition IEE wiring regulations (short course)	2	No. of starts	49	61	43
		% retention	92	89	88
		% pass rate	76	83	84
GNVQ advanced construction and the built environment	3	No. of starts	8	13	11
		% retention	88	62	73
		% pass rate	83	75	50
AVCE in construction	3	No. of starts	**	**	19

and the built environment	% retention	**	**	84
	% pass rate	**	**	81

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

**course did not run

Quality of education and training

47. There is much good teaching. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a range of effective learning resources to retain students' interest in their work. An effective lesson on domestic, commercial and agricultural wiring systems was well planned. The teacher explained the objectives of the lesson clearly and explained how different types of cables are used for common wiring systems. Students' understanding was carefully checked through careful questioning and their interest was maintained through the use of different teaching methods. Students worked effectively in groups and identified the hazards encountered in agricultural buildings. Completion of handouts reinforced their learning. Practical projects in carpentry and joinery are well designed. Brickwork projects allow students to work at their own pace, but the work is often repetitive due to the cramped accommodation. Students often have to demolish models and start again to improve their skills. Students are treated with respect and have a good rapport with teachers and contribute well to discussions. In an advanced lesson on resource management, the class responded well to technical questions about materials, plant and labour scheduling and identified the importance of scheduling work to provide continuity of employment and avoid layoffs. Teachers have developed teaching and assessments methods that are highly participative. These stimulate and motivate students in areas such as electrical wiring. Electrical installation students, for example, work on realistic practical wiring assignments and follow guidelines and tolerances competently. On-the-job and off-the-job aspects of work-based training are well co-ordinated.

48. The electrical installation and auto computer-aided design (CAD) draughting resources used for teaching are of a high standard. The spacious and well-equipped electrical installation workshop provides a good teaching and learning environment. Work-based learners have opportunities to experience a range of working environments, including large-scale developments, domestic work and small-scale developments, such as extensions to domestic dwellings. The construction brickwork workshop is inadequate. Working space is restricted and students are able to work only on basic projects which limits the opportunities for their assessment and their acquisition of skills. Painting and decorating units are also often cramped for some groups. The theodolites used by AVCE students are not of an appropriate standard. Most teaching and support staff are well qualified and experienced in their respective areas. The staffing of certain courses, particularly brickwork, has proved difficult resulting in some part-time classes being cancelled.

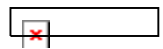
49. Internal verification is well documented and effectively implemented. The sampling of assignments for verification purposes is appropriate and the standard of most students' portfolios and practical work is satisfactory. Teachers provide regular feedback on practical exercises and assignments. Assessment is effective and fair and teachers use a range of methods to assess students' competence. Students understand the assessment arrangements. At the time of the inspection, a newly developed, work-based recording system was being implemented effectively to monitor and review students' progress on the NVQ level 2 and level 3 courses in electrical installation. The development of the procedures has also helped to develop and consolidate employer links. These are now well established, particularly in electrical installation and through multi-skill short courses developed with major employers.

50. Full-time students are well supported through a tutorial programme. There is good basic skills support for NVQ level 1 students, which is provided through the college study skills centre. Progress reviews for day-release students are not as well structured, but students have access to learning support if it is required. The progress of work-based learners is reviewed on a monthly basis either on site or through pre-arranged tutorials at the college.

Leadership and management

51. A series of development plans for the area have been produced since the last inspection, but these have not been implemented fully. Retention and pass rates continue to be a weakness in some areas and facilities for brickwork courses have not been improved. Management at course level is satisfactory. Teachers meet regularly to review programmes and quality assurance procedures are implemented systematically. The involvement of some staff in self-assessment is limited. Courses are based on two sites and there are insufficient opportunities for reviewing progress and sharing good practice across the area. The development needs of teachers are identified through the college appraisal system, but staff shortages restrict the ability of some teachers to attend courses. New managers were appointed to lead the area just prior to the inspection, but it is too early to assess the effect of these changes on standards.

Engineering



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **outstanding (grade 1)**

Strengths

- outstanding retention and pass rates in work-based learning
- high standards of students' work
- good progression to HE
- effective teaching and good group work
- thorough monitoring of students' progress
- productive partnerships with a major employer and a neighbouring college.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on some courses

- unsatisfactory mechanical engineering workshop facilities
- initial assessment and tutorial support for part-time students
- insufficient monitoring of self-assessment action plans.

Scope of provision

52. The college and its partners provide a good range of courses, for all age-groups, at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, including advanced modern apprenticeships. There are 108 full-time and 15 part-time students aged 16 to 18. Most adult students are on part-time courses. Some 130 work-based students follow advanced modern apprenticeship programmes at a major employer. The programmes offered by the college are relevant to the needs of local industry and match the aspirations of students. Modes of attendance include block and day release, full time and evening only. In addition, there are opportunities for pupils from local schools to attend a variety of engineering taster courses and day events.

Achievement and standards

53. There are high retention and pass rates on the intermediate and the four-year advanced GNVQ engineering programmes. Retention rates are below the national average on the two-year advanced programme and pass rates are declining. Retention rates on the NVQ vehicle and mechanical and electronic systems have declined to below the national average, but pass rates are high. The retention and pass rates on work-based learning courses leading to advanced modern apprenticeships awards at a major vehicle manufacturer are outstanding and there are good pass rates in key skills. In both college and work-based training there are examples of students producing work of a very high standard. Progression opportunities to FE and HE are good and students are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities provided. Student attendance on some college courses is poor, as low as 40% on some courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems (2 year)	2	No. of starts	20	20	21
		% retention	70	60	57
		% pass rate	43	92	82
GNVQ intermediate engineering (1 year)	2	No. of starts	52	50	52
		% retention	94	86	88
		% pass rate	100	91	89
National certificate in engineering (2 year)	3	No. of starts	24	32	16
		% retention	79	47	38
		% pass rate	100	56	83

GNVQ in advanced engineering (2 year)	3	No. of starts	21	30	11
		% retention	52	53	55
		% pass rate	91	93	67
GNVQ in advanced engineering (4 year)	3	No. of starts	**	90	39
		% retention	**	100	95
		% pass rate	**	100	100

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

**course did not run

Quality of education and training

54. Teaching is mostly good or better and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Lessons are well planned and schemes of work allow for flexible teaching of modules to meet the learning needs of students. Teachers encourage students to work in groups and students support and learn well from each other. Teachers and tutors provide individual help and support in practical lessons and make regular checks of students' learning. Practical teaching in electronics and computer technology is particularly effective. In a successful lesson on the application of electronics, for example, students worked on individual projects and were visited in turn by the teacher. They were questioned carefully to determine their understanding of the topic and the learning needs of individual students were met. Across the area, however, there is insufficient teaching of theory to enable students, particularly less able students, to gain full benefit from their practical work. Training provided through work-based learning exceeds the framework requirements and extension opportunities are provided for the more able students. Key skills are assessed through classroom-based activities, as required by awarding bodies, but opportunities for gathering evidence through practical, work-based activities are missed.

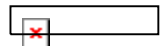
55. All full-time students follow a planned induction programme and undertake an initial learning assessment. Individual support needs are identified and support is provided through a well-structured tutorial system. Termly case conferences provide individual students with feedback on their progress, pastoral support and impartial guidance on progression routes. Students' progress is thoroughly monitored. Appropriate targets are set for individual students, at all levels, to help them improve their performance. Employers and parents are regularly informed of students' progress following assessments. Students attending the college on a part-time basis are not provided with an initial assessment or formal tutorial support. Students' work is assessed regularly, consistently and thoroughly. The outcomes are recorded systematically and students are informed of the actions they need to take to improve their performance. Clear procedures are in place for internal verification but these are not always followed. Verification procedures are inappropriate in some areas due to teachers setting and verifying their own assignments.

56. Resources are well matched to students' needs, particularly the in-plant facilities for work-based learning. Teachers are well qualified and work-based instructors have recent industrial experience of the areas in which they work. Effective employer involvement and good partnership links with a neighbouring college enable the provision of well-resourced courses for apprentice training. Classroom accommodation at both college sites is well furnished and resourced. Practical facilities for microelectronics and computer applications at the Quarles site are good and there is a well-equipped computer-aided design (CAD) suite at the Ardeigh Green site, although there is a shortage of computers for work-based computer numerical control (CNC) training. The college is aware that mechanical engineering workshops are unsatisfactory and is addressing this weakness. Effective use is made of resources through clear assessment links between different areas of work such as electronics servicing, computer maintenance and computer technology. Similarly, in mechanical and motor vehicle engineering, common units are combined to provide hybrid programmes that meet the needs of students and employers and make effective use of resources.

Leadership and management

57. The area is effectively managed. Partnership arrangements are particularly effective and provide excellent opportunities for work-based learning. Communication between staff is good and teachers are committed to effective teaching and to helping individual students achieve. There are few female engineering students or students from minority ethnic groups. Students on advanced modern apprenticeships are required to complete a full, four-year training period regardless of whether they have completed their advanced modern apprenticeships framework. The college self-assessment report accurately identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses in the area. However, there is no systematic monitoring of the implementation of action plans to bring about improvement.

Business administration and secretarial



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

Strengths

- good range of courses and with progression opportunities
- good retention and pass rates on many courses
- much good teaching
- good access to IT within classrooms
- well-managed provision.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on GNVQ advanced business
- poor retention rates on the AVCE business course.

Scope of provision

58. The college offers a good range of full-time courses for all age-groups in business studies and business administration. The offer includes GCE AS and A levels and the AVCE in business studies and GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate levels. Business administration courses include NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3, the Pitman diploma in administration and secretarial procedures at levels 2 and 3, a diploma in medical secretarial studies and a legal secretarial diploma at levels 2 and 3. Many of the administration courses are available on a part-time as well as a full-time basis. A wide range of short courses is also provided. At the time of the inspection, there were 598 full-time and 53 part-time students aged 16 to 18 studying within the area together with 115 full-time and 771 part-time adults. There are good opportunities for students to progress from foundation or intermediate and through to advanced level. There are also progression opportunities to HE at the college.

Achievement and standards

59. Retention and pass rates on the majority of courses are good. All the students who enrolled on the GNVQ foundation course in 2000 completed and 82% achieved the qualification. Retention rates on the intermediate level course are also high and pass rates are at the national average. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ advanced course declined to below the national average in 2001. The number of students enrolling on this course who came from a disadvantaged area increased from 18% to 49% during the previous three years. The AVCE course established in 2000 is not proving successful. Only 49% of the students who enrolled for the course in 2000 were still attending at the time of the inspection.

60. Retention and pass rates on GCE A-level business management and office studies have improved over the three years prior to the inspection. The retention rate in 2001 was just below the national average, but the pass rate was well above. Retention and pass rates for the first year of the GCE AS course were satisfactory.

61. Retention and pass rates on the business administration programme are good. All the students who completed the NVQ level 1 course in 2001 completed and achieved the qualification. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ levels 2 and 3 were both above the national average as were those on the legal secretaries diploma and the diploma in medical secretarial studies.

62. Both the students aged 16 to 18 and adult students are enthusiastic and committed to their studies and work effectively in lessons. In almost all lessons, students work at a level commensurate with the course they are studying and display appropriate levels of skill and ability. Most students tackle the tasks set for them with enthusiasm. Many are able to apply the experience they have gained in the workplace to the work they are carrying out in the classroom. Written work is generally satisfactory. Attendance in a number of classes is poor. During the inspection, attendance averaged 74%, but in some classes it was well below this figure. Over the three years prior to the inspection, attendance in the AVCE classes has been low. In one lesson observed during the inspection, only 2 of the 17 students who were expected arrived. In a number of lessons, students arrived late, but they did not disrupt the class.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	32	37	34
		% retention	88	97	88
		% pass rate	75	83	70
NVQ business administration 1 year	2	No. of starts	69	26	19
		% retention	84	100	89
		% pass rate	45	54	100

GCE A-level business management and office studies	3	No. of starts	66	46	59
		% retention	67	59	70
		% pass rate	82	74	93
GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	76	79	60
		% retention	62	61	58
		% pass rate	66	81	65
NVQ administration	3	No. of starts	15	16	23
		% retention	100	88	100
		% pass rate	93	93	83
Legal secretaries diploma	3	No. of starts	18	16	45
		% retention	83	88	91
		% pass rate	87	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

63. Most teaching is good or better and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Inspectors observed some very good teaching across all modes of attendance and for all age-groups. In these lessons, teachers explained complicated business concepts well and gave students clear instructions about the work they needed to carry out. The pace of the work was brisk and students' interest was maintained. Careful questioning was used to check students' understanding and to secure the involvement of the whole class. Students were challenged to justify their answers and explain their reasoning. In an evening class looking at organisational structures and cultures, students studying for the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national certificate were encouraged to compare the cultures in their own workplaces and were made to justify their responses by the teacher. Despite the small number of students present, there was lively debate and excellent interaction within the group. In a legal secretaries class aimed at improving shorthand speeds, the teacher dictated exercises at increasing speeds. After each exercise she reinforced learning by getting the students to check their work by reading it back to the class. This enabled them to consolidate their skills and improve their speeds. Most lessons are well planned and teachers display a sound knowledge of their subject. Teachers often draw on students' experience to illustrate points. In a number of classes, teachers use humour effectively to maintain students' attention and to ensure that learning is taking place.

64. The assessment of written work is thorough and the feedback provided to students is constructive and supportive. Students are given useful advice on how to improve their work and achieve higher grades. During lessons, teachers provide similarly constructive and critical advice when returning assignments. Students' progress is monitored and recorded effectively. In some areas, individual students are not given sufficient support and guidance to help them improve their performance. Improvement targets set for students are too general and there are too few, measurable, short-term targets to help individual students improve their performance.

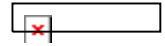
65. Teachers are well qualified and have a breadth of vocational experience. They display good, up-to-date knowledge of commercial practice. Classrooms are good, with sufficient space for the sizes of classes being taught. There is good access to computers within the classrooms.

Leadership and management

66. The area is well managed. GCE AS and A levels are provided through a different department to the rest of the business curriculum. Course teams meet regularly and quality assurance procedures are implemented systematically. Targets for enrolment, attendance, and retention and pass rates

are set and monitored. Course teams produce course self-assessments that feed into an overall departmental report. Course reports are good and are self-critical, but the departmental report lacks detail. Lessons are observed once a year and the observations are used as part of the staff appraisal system. Lesson observation grades awarded by the college were, on average, one grade higher than those awarded by inspectors.

Finance and management



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

Strengths

- good retention rates
- high pass rates on management courses
- good progression routes
- much good teaching
- wide range of programmes to meet local needs
- good physical resources.

Weaknesses

- lack of rigour in classroom assessment
- inadequate arrangements for updating commercial skills and experience of teachers.

Scope of provision

67. The college offers a wide range of book-keeping, accounting, management and professional

courses. Students can attend short introductory book-keeping and advanced payroll courses or progress through the range of NVQs in accounting at foundation, intermediate and technician levels. Programmes are available at different times of the week on a full-time or part-time basis. The flexible arrangements are helpful, particularly to those students negotiating day release with employers. Management training is provided either on general management programmes such as the certificate in management studies or through more specialised awards such as the certificate in personnel practice. Some introductory, community-based training is provided as well as specifically designed programmes for large employers. There are some 528 part-time and 23 full-time students attending 44 college-based courses, with an additional 78 students studying on a further 9 community or local employer-based sites.

Achievement and standards

68. Pass rates on management courses are high. Retention and pass rates on general programmes, such as the National Examining Board for Supervision and Management (NEBSM) certificate and the certificate in management studies are high with 100% pass rates on these courses in 2001. Retention and pass rates on specialist courses such as the certificate in personnel practice are also high and above national averages. Pass rates on purchasing and supply awards decreased during the three years prior to inspection. Retention rates on finance courses are consistently at or above the national average and are generally good. Pass rates in both the international association of book-keepers and the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) programmes for part-time students have been good or satisfactory at all three levels offered by the college. Pass rates for full-time accounting students have declined at level 2 while generally improving at level 3 over the three years prior to inspection.

69. Most students are punctual and attentive in lessons, and work diligently to complete their work and make good progress. Management students develop good critical and evaluative skills and are able to apply theory to practice in the workplace. Students apply their developing understanding of management theory to issues in their workplaces and become much more confident in using budgets and costings for planning and managing operations. Accounting students show confidence in performing a wide range of calculations in lessons. Written work in portfolios and assignments is of a good standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Pitmans computerised accounts	2	No. of starts	73	75	65
		% retention	90	87	94
		% pass rate	52	66	52
NVQ accounting AAT intermediate	3	No. of starts	67	84	102
		% retention	86	83	90
		% pass rate	42	59	57
NEBSM management certificate	3	No. of starts	82	20	12
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	84	90	100
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	20	21	16
		% retention	95	100	88
		% pass rate	95	100	93
NVQ accounting AAT technician	4	No. of starts	79	65	62
		% retention	82	89	84

		% pass rate	35	47	45
Certificate in management studies	4	No. of starts	20	17	13
		% retention	95	100	85
		% pass rate	89	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

70. Most teaching is good or better. All teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, and organise and prepare their teaching competently with detailed lesson plans and schemes of work. In the best lessons, teachers use an appropriate range of teaching and learning methods to encourage their students to learn. For example, the use of interactive methods with management students simulated actual working environments. Learning is also enhanced through teachers' use of up-to-date resources and examples to illustrate points. In one management class, the teacher used the morning's newspapers to discuss the effect of consumer confidence on share prices. In a minority of lessons, teachers rely too much on exposition and theoretical concepts to present information. In these lessons, the work lacks pace and teachers fail to inspire students.

71. Promotional information is clearly presented and all students are interviewed by staff who are qualified in the subject area and guided on to appropriate programmes. Students have effective tutorial support and have access to further help, such as specialist dyslexia support, as required.

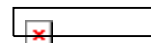
72. Assessment requirements and procedures are explained to students at the start of their courses. Teachers mark assignments on time and provide constructive written feedback. Internal verification procedures are not always consistently implemented. Some teachers pay insufficient attention to assessing students' progress in class either through poor questioning techniques or by not sufficiently checking individual students' progress.

73. Accommodation is of a professional standard at both college centres and students have good access to computing and library facilities. Staff are experienced teachers and many have business experience. Recruitment of specialist staff, particularly in finance and accounting, has been difficult in recent years. There is some commercial updating of teachers' skills, but this does not take place in a systematic manner. The college has recognised this weakness and was preparing plans to provide teachers with opportunities for commercial updating at the time of the inspection. Good use is made of community-based resources for teaching the curriculum. Introductory book-keeping, for example, is provided at a community centre. Management training programmes for local employers are well established and new links are being developed on a regular basis. The training provided is proving beneficial to the operations of these organisations.

Leadership and management

74. Courses are well organised and ably managed. Management has been effective despite specialist staffing shortages. Staff morale is good and there is a clear sense of purpose. Teachers work together well to ensure that improvements are made to the courses offered. Quality assurance procedures are implemented systematically. Lesson observations and appraisals are conducted and monitored regularly. However, some course teams are not effective in their recording of reviews and in action planning for improvement.

Computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- good retention rates on City and Guilds courses
- good standards of students' work
- much good teaching
- good accommodation and resources for learning
- comprehensive range of computing and IT courses
- effective management of community IT learning centres.

Weaknesses

- declining retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate course
- declining pass rates in GNVQ foundation course
- poor written feedback on some assessed students' work
- inadequate implementation of quality assurance processes at course team level.

Scope of provision

75. The college provides a comprehensive range of courses in computing and IT for 3,500 full-time and part-time students, of whom 11% are full time. Students aged 16 to 18 account for 77% of the full-time students, whereas 92% of part-time students are adults. Full-time courses include GNVQs

at foundation and intermediate level, the AVCE in ICT and a national diploma in computer studies. Part-time provision includes computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), programming, introduction to the Internet, and the City and Guilds course in computing. Part-time courses are provided both at college sites and at several community-based centres. Community IT learning centres offer courses aimed at developing skills in the use of office technology software. On the main college campus, there is also more specialist courses in networking and a number of specific vendor qualifications. There are good progression opportunities to degree level.

Achievement and standards

76. Retention rates on the majority of courses are satisfactory and are above the national averages on the City and Guilds course. Pass rates on most courses have been inconsistent and often below national averages in the three years to 2001, although on the certificate in programming the pass rate has remained above the low national average during that period. Pass rates for GNVQ foundation have declined over three years to below the national average. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate have declined and pass rates are below the national average. Declining pass rates were recognised as weaknesses in the college self-assessment report and changes in the structure and teaching of the course were being introduced at the time of the inspection in preparation for the next academic year. The standard of students' work is good. Students demonstrate a good level of understanding of their subject during lessons and through completed assignments. Students are competent in the use of computer software and assignment work is well presented. For example, students working on a database project were able to show good knowledge of data normalisation. In the community learning centres, students gain confidence and make good progress in developing their IT skills. Students are interested in their work and attendance is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	16	18	18
		% retention	94	100	94
		% pass rate	85	83	65
City and Guilds 7261 certificate in computer applications (short and 1 year)	1	No. of starts	663	860	473
		% retention	84	87	86
		% pass rate	57	52	92
City and Guilds 7261 certificate in programming (short and 1 year)	1	No. of starts	105	315	188
		% retention	92	90	87
		% pass rate	69	72	62
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	493	521	972
		% retention	92	98	87
		% pass rate	41	39	70
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	60	62	58
		% retention	92	90	76
		% pass rate	65	63	52
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	55	18	40
		% retention	45	67	51
		% pass rate	32	58	65
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	52	61	20

computer studies	% retention	77	95	65
	% pass rate	85	61	85

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

Quality of education and training

77. Most of the teaching is satisfactory and two thirds is good or better. There are detailed schemes of work and most lessons are well planned. In a well-structured lesson on an introductory Internet course, the teacher effectively developed students' practical skills and theoretical knowledge enabling them to carry out searches and explain the principles behind them. Terminology was carefully explained and individual students' understanding determined through careful questioning and discussion. Previous learning was reinforced. In some less successful lessons the teacher talked too much and the pace of work was too slow to retain the attention of all the students in the class. The work is not sufficiently demanding and not varied enough to take account of the needs of the full ability range of students in the classes. Under such circumstances, the use of questioning to check students' understanding and build their confidence is not effective. On some occasions, teachers fail to provide demanding work for more able students. Students who complete tasks early distract others in the class because they are not set additional work to complete.

78. Initial guidance and course information are appropriate and students are enrolled on to courses at the correct level. Induction programmes are well planned and full-time students undergo diagnostic assessment during the induction period to identify their additional learning needs. Attendance is monitored regularly by course team leaders and appropriate action is taken when students are absent. Student support is well structured and enables all students to participate fully in the learning process. Students with hearing impairments, for example, are allocated a signer for every lesson.

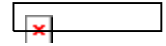
79. There are effective systems for monitoring students' progress. The progress made by full-time students is reviewed three times a year and regular meetings are held to discuss attendance and students' progress. Although some teachers give detailed and constructive feedback on students' work, there is also some poor written feedback. Many comments are brief and do not clarify the actions students need to take to improve their performance. Internal verification identifies weaknesses, but does not result in systematic planning and monitoring to bring about improvement.

80. Learning is supported by good IT equipment and a wide range of software. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable about their subjects. Staff development is well planned and teachers take advantage of the opportunities provided. New teachers, who are unqualified, are required and helped to gain teaching qualifications. Staff in community-based IT learning centres take basic skills teaching qualifications to help them support students with low levels of attainment. Teaching accommodation is generally good and well maintained. Teaching materials are of a good standard and aid learning, but there is insufficient access to LCD projectors in some classrooms.

Leadership and management

81. Community-based IT learning centres are well managed. The implementation of quality assurance procedures at course team level is inadequate. While self-assessment reports and development plans are produced by course teams, the implementation of action plans is not monitored systematically. Course team meetings have been infrequent and minutes do not identify actions for addressing weaknesses. The management and organisation of the area was restructured just prior to the inspection, but some key posts had not been filled at the time of the inspection. The college acknowledges that there are weaknesses in aspects of the management of the area and has devised strategies to rectify them. It was too early to assess the effect of changes at the time of the inspection.

Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on catering courses
- outstanding pass rates in 2001 on the public services courses
- good work placements for catering students.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on travel, leisure and public services courses
- poor pass rates on most leisure and tourism programmes
- lack of punctuality on sport, travel and public services courses
- ineffective and undemanding teaching on most courses
- insufficient action planning to improve student achievement
- insufficient range of additional qualifications.

Scope of provision

82. The college provides courses at foundation and intermediate level in catering, and intermediate and advanced levels in the public services, leisure and tourism for approximately 330 students. The majority of the provision is full-time and is predominantly undertaken by students aged 16 to 18.

Only around 80 students enrol on catering courses. There is a small amount of part-time provision for adults in catering and tourism. The range of courses in the area is small and some students are inappropriately placed on intermediate programmes in leisure and tourism and the public services. The college has recognised this weakness and is developing foundation programmes for September 2002. There are insufficient additional qualifications available to leisure, tourism and public services students. Only two leader awards are offered. There is also access to an online sport qualification for interested students. There is a lack of progression opportunities for catering students completing intermediate level programmes.

Achievement and standards

83. In 2001, retention rates on the advanced diploma in leisure and tourism and the national diplomas in leisure studies and public services were below, and in some cases very significantly below, national averages. Registers for 2002 indicate that there has been no improvement in retention rates on these courses and retention rates on the first diploma course in public services and the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course are declining. There are good retention rates on catering courses. Six of the eight catering courses completing in 2001 had retention rates at, or better than, national averages. Provision in catering is a small proportion of the work of the area overall. Pass rates on the national and first diploma public services courses were outstanding in 2001, but had been below, or well below, the national average in previous years. Pass rates have been satisfactory over the three years prior to inspection for catering courses and have been well above the national average on the City and Guilds progression award in cookery. The intermediate and advanced GNVQ in leisure and tourism, the national diploma in leisure studies and the AVCE in travel and tourism all had pass rates significantly below sector averages in 2001. In the intermediate and advanced GNVQ diplomas in leisure and tourism, pass rates have been significantly below national averages for the last three years prior to the inspection.

84. Public services courses have good progression rates to related employment. In catering, students' attainment is very good. The levels of skill and knowledge demonstrated by students on the NVQ level 1 food and drink service course are very high. Some students are able to apply theory to practical situations effectively, but others are not. A national diploma public services student led a good warm-up activity for a sports session that demonstrated a clear understanding of safe, effective working practice. Other students struggled to apply theory to practice. Some students on the AVCE travel and tourism programme, for example, were unable to apply the principles of analysis to a case study of a travel company. Students develop good IT skills on most courses. There is often a lack of punctuality on sport, travel and public services courses. Students were late for half the lessons observed and in one lesson seven students were late.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	33	22	26
		% retention	70	95	88
		% pass rate	39	67	48
BTEC first diploma in public services	2	No. of starts	33	25	34
		% retention	94	68	74
		% pass rate	42	76	96
City and Guilds progression award in cookery	2	No. of starts	**	13	17
		% retention	**	85	88
		% pass rate	**	82	93
NVQ 2 food preparation and service	2	No. of starts	29	20	17
		% retention	79	70	70

		% pass rate	78	86	75
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	20	25	18
		% retention	65	72	44
		% pass rate	67	59	63
BTEC national diploma in leisure	3	No. of starts	13	14	14
		% retention	85	86	43
		% pass rate	90	100	67
BTEC national diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	45	28	35
		% retention	71	79	69
		% pass rate	67	59	100

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

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

85. Most teaching is satisfactory, but there are also a significant number of unsatisfactory lessons. In the best lessons, students participated enthusiastically and teachers lead discussions effectively through careful questioning. For example, in a public services lesson, students demonstrated a good level of understanding and were able to analyse moral issues affecting decision-making by people in authority. They reviewed and commented on a number of scenarios from recent controversial military and medical incidents. In a less effective sports leadership lesson, the student nominated to lead the session had not been asked to prepare for the task. Consequently, the group did little more than play a game and very little learning ensued. Much teaching lacks challenge and pace. In a travel and tourism revision lesson session, the pace of work was too slow and undemanding and resulted in some students losing interest. The teacher did not check sufficiently that all students were engaged in the work. Lesson planning is sometimes rudimentary and does not structure learning effectively. For example, some lesson plans in specifying the timing of activities, inadequately described them in terms such as 'teacher speaks', and 'students listen'. Work experience in catering is organised for second-year students and offers them the opportunity to gain experience in a good range of establishments, which have a national reputation, and provides them with an excellent insight into the industry.

86. Induction is effective and the system for identifying the learning support needs of students is consistently applied. Learning support is not always taken up by students and in a number of cases the support provided is not in the context of the students' programme of study. Students value the support they receive from course tutors and teachers and the tutorial programme is effective in terms of pastoral care. Tutorial support is not consistently effective in raising students' individual performance. There is good access to careers and other personal guidance.

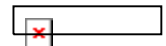
87. Assignments are well planned, particularly in catering. Practical assessment in catering is effectively linked to theoretical aspects to ensure that students' basic knowledge is reinforced. Key skills assessment is well integrated. Internal verification is generally effective and procedures are applied consistently. However, there is insufficient action planning to improve students' performance. There is little detailed analysis of the quality of students' work. Assessor feedback sheets are not always completed and graded. Assessor feedback is often vague and insufficiently detailed to help students improve the quality of their work. For example, 'brief but still to the point' was the only comment given in feedback on a student's assignment. There are a number of examples of weak assignment work from students displaying a lack of analysis and evaluation skills, and poor referencing and use of bibliographies. These weaknesses are largely unrecognised by assessors or recorded as action points for students to address. The college's case-conferencing system of individual review does not focus sufficiently on the quality of students' work and specific actions to bring about improvement.

88. Access to IT is good. There is a small commercial travel office at the Ardleigh Green site which offers students valuable short periods of work experience. There is a small, but attractive, training restaurant at the Quarles campus. One of the kitchens in the catering area is unsatisfactory. The range of catering equipment is adequate but ageing. Sport and leisure facilities are available only at the Quarles site, but they are inadequate and limit the range of activities that can be carried out.

Leadership and management

89. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The college system of self-assessment and quality review is not applied effectively. The college has a system of 'special measures' applied to under-performing courses. The intermediate and advanced leisure and tourism programmes were identified as being in this category, but course leaders only informed in February 2002. This was much too late to have any impact on students completing in 2002. The self-assessment report for the area is weak. Significant weaknesses are not identified or understated. For example, the weaknesses in teaching and learning, student punctuality and action planning to improve achievement were not identified.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on part-time and some full-time programmes
- effective teaching in practical lessons
- good standard of accommodation and equipment for beauty therapy
- good support for students
- students' demonstration of good practical skills in lessons.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on beauty therapy courses at levels 2 and 3
- insufficient opportunities to develop workplace skills

- unsatisfactory course planning
- unsatisfactory hairdressing salon.

Scope of provision

90. A good range of courses is provided in hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies for students of all ages. These include beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3, diplomas in reflexology, body massage, aromatherapy, advanced nail techniques and Indian head massage. Other courses are offered in sports massage, beauty consultancy, hairdressing NVQs at levels 1 and 2, nutrition and the foundation certificate in complementary therapies. Some 120 full-time and 20 part-time students aged 16 to 18 enrol annually with 45 full-time and 220 part-time adult enrolments. Courses are provided during the day and evening, and there is some provision on Saturday. There is no work-based provision in either hairdressing or beauty therapy.

Achievement and standards

91. There are good pass rates on part-time and some full-time programmes, including NVQ level 2 hairdressing, the foundation certificate in complementary therapies and the diplomas in aromatherapy, reflexology, advanced nail techniques and Indian head massage. Retention rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing fell from above, to well below the national average in 2001. Pass rates on the beauty therapy level 2 progression award were poor in 2001. Some students who stayed on until the end of the level 2 programme completed their assessments the following term while working towards level 3. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 3 beauty therapy course fell to below, and well below, the national average, respectively, in 2001. All level 3 beauty therapy students who completed their course in 2001 found employment. Students develop at least satisfactory practical skills. Most students conduct themselves professionally and have a high standard of appearance. Students' portfolios are of a good standard and students make effective use of IT. Progression opportunities are unsatisfactory for some students who have to wait nine months to move from level 2 to level 3 beauty therapy courses, because of the start and finish dates of the programmes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Beauty therapy progression award	2	No. of starts	**	149	163
		% retention	**	85	79
		% pass rate	**	79	46
Foundation certificate in complementary therapy	2	No. of starts	**	**	15
		% retention	**	**	73
		% pass rate	**	**	90
Diploma in advanced nail techniques	2	No. of starts	**	**	19
		% retention	**	**	95
		% pass rate	**	**	100

NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	22	29	13
		% retention	100	93	54
		% pass rate	63	48	100
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	34	30	53
		% retention	97	83	70
		% pass rate	73	80	36
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	60	**	24
		% retention	80	**	83
		% pass rate	73	**	95

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001). **course did not run

Quality of education and training

92. Teaching is satisfactory or better. Practical teaching is particularly effective and teachers help students on an individual basis to develop good practical skills. For example, students applied artificial nails to each other competently in one session and another group designed and performed facial treatments. However, there are insufficient numbers and types of clients available in the college salons to meet students' practice and assessment needs. Client sessions are introduced late in many programmes and insufficient opportunities are provided for students to develop workplace skills. Theory teaching is often unimaginative and tedious. In revision lessons, tasks do not stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm sufficiently and there is not enough productive interaction between teachers and students. Key skills teaching and assignments are not always related to mainstream subjects and students do not see the relevance of key skills to their courses.

93. Opportunities for students to broaden their industrial knowledge are not offered. All full-time students are encouraged to find part-time employment in salons, but this does not ensure that they gain experience of working in more than one type of establishment. There is a good range of industry-related enrichment activities such as short courses in tanning, visits to exhibitions and talks by outside speakers. However, almost all of these take place at the end of the programme rather than being scheduled more suitably at regular intervals. The timing of these activities does not motivate students' interest and enable them to apply their developing understanding of theory and practice.

94. Students' written work and assignments are at least satisfactory and some students prepare work of a very good standard. Good use is made of photographic evidence to record progress. The marking of students' work is mostly satisfactory, but written feedback from teachers is often too concise to help students to improve. There is frequent informal assessment of students' practical work and verbal feedback is given, but there is insufficient action planning to address weaknesses identified in students' skills or their grasp of theoretical principles. Clear timescales for improvement are not given. Practical activities are not always suitably linked to the specific skill development needs of students. Internal verification is thorough and students' progress is effectively monitored. Little use is made of evidence gained in the workplace, even though a number of students have part-time jobs in salons. This results in students duplicating activities in order to complete assessments.

95. New strategies for monitoring attendance implemented during the year of the inspection are contributing to improvements in retention rates. There is good support for students to improve their basic and study skills, both on an individual and whole class basis. Students' additional learning needs are effectively met. Support teachers and subject specialists work well together to provide vocationally relevant materials for students. Carefully prepared materials are used to simplify the teaching of complex mainstream subjects such as anatomy and physiology.

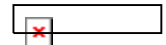
96. Accommodation for theory and practical beauty lessons is of a good standard. The salons are

new and equipment and products are of a commercial standard. The hairdressing salon is too small and there is insufficient space between workstations. Students are unable to move around clients easily when most workstations are being used. Storage facilities for students' belongings are inadequate and equipment bags clutter the salon. Some hairdressing students are not always suitably dressed in accordance with the salon dress code and they do not project a professional image. Work packs are clear and well prepared. There is a good range of videos that teachers use to illustrate lesson topics. However, much of the library stock is out of date. The books available do not provide students with up-to-date information when they are researching for projects and assignments.

Leadership and management

97. During the year of the inspection, significant changes were made to the management of the area at course team level. Issues for improvement have been identified, but insufficient action has been taken to improve the design of programmes. There is insufficient contact with employers. Their support and views about the quality and suitability of the provision are not sought. Course team leaders meet with their teams at least twice each month to discuss course management issues. Teachers have developed common schemes of work and good-quality work packs. Target setting and monitoring procedures are understood by course team leaders, but sufficient attention is not always given to planning for improvement.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- pass rates above the national averages on most courses
- much good teaching
- well-managed and effective work placements
- effective assessment and marking of coursework
- wide range of provision meeting diverse community needs
- effective teamwork in managing and teaching courses.

Weaknesses

- declining retention rates on level 2 counselling courses and the diploma in childcare and education
- unsatisfactory pass rates on the City and Guilds certificate in care management
- poor scheduling of assignments on full-time courses.

Scope of provision

98. In 2001, the range of full-time courses in childcare and health and social care was extended and now offers progression opportunities from foundation level to level 4. Childcare courses recruit well, attracting some 120 full-time students. Numbers are much smaller on health and social care courses with 18 full-time students enrolling on courses at foundation and intermediate levels. The AVCE course did not recruit in 2001. The college seeks to meet employer and community needs through its wide range of part-time courses in childcare, counselling and health and social care. There are 314 students enrolled on a wide range of part-time courses in childcare, including 143 students on NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3. In addition, there is an expanding range of community-based programmes in childcare, some of which are provided in liaison with the local Early Years Partnership. Counselling courses are provided at levels 1 to 3 and recruit well. In 2001, some 213 students enrolled on these courses. There are no NVQ courses in health and social care, although some 37 students are enrolled on other types of part-time courses. Full-time students take up a range of supplementary courses, such as first aid, and many follow the personal initiative programme.

Achievement and standards

99. In 2001, pass rates on most courses were above the national average. Although pass rates on intermediate and advanced counselling courses have improved, and are above the national average, retention rates have declined and are below the national average. Both retention and pass rates on the first diploma in caring have improved and pass rates are above the national average. Conversely, pass rates on the City and Guilds care management course have consistently declined to below the national average. Pass rates for the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma in childcare and education have remained high, but retention rates have declined following changes in the requirements of the awarding body in 2001.

100. Students on care and counselling courses are enthusiastic about their work, understand what is expected of them and produce work of a good standard. Diploma and advanced diploma students attain well and use higher level skills to complete tasks and assignments. Most health and social care students produce work of a satisfactory standard. Students are not always punctual for lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
CACHE foundation	1	No. of starts	**	**	16

award in caring for children		% retention	**	**	88
		% pass rate	**	**	100
First diploma in caring	2	No. of starts	**	14	10
		% retention	**	50	70
		% pass rate	**	29	86
Counselling	2	No. of starts	39	57	24
		% retention	97	86	83
		% pass rate	100	86	95
NVQ in early years care and education	3	No. of starts	75	57	37
		% retention	93	100	100
		% pass rate	74	58	69
City and Guilds certificate in care management	3	No. of starts	21	18	16
		% retention	90	94	94
		% pass rate	95	82	80
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	59	62	51
		% retention	100	94	82
		% pass rate	85	91	88

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

**course did not run

Quality of education and training

101. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is good or better in 75% of the lessons and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are well planned. Learning resources are appropriate, well prepared and effectively used by teachers and students. On full-time courses, teachers make frequent and effective links between theory and work placements. Teaching is enriched through useful visits and involvement of outside speakers. Teachers use probing questions well to check students' understanding and extend their learning. In most lessons, there is an appropriate mix of teacher exposition and student activities. Small group activities are well managed and provide good opportunities for students to reflect on and consolidate their learning. In a well-structured lesson on promoting literacy skills in children, students explored storytelling and the importance of using books with children from an early age. The teacher used well-prepared short expositions of key theory supported by clear handouts, interspersed with activities that enabled students to reflect on the theory and link it with activities in the workplace. The students then chose storybooks appropriate for different ages and justified their choice. Team teaching is effective. For example, in a lesson taught jointly by a subject and key skill specialist, application of number skills were well integrated into the main course unit. Students analysed a range of interesting newspaper and journal articles with statistical information directly linked to illnesses explored in the unit. They used their analyses to explore trends over time and differences in United Kingdom regions. In a few cases, there are poor starts to lessons. Teachers do not effectively recapitulate previous work and learning outcomes are not shared with students. A few handouts are too long and key points are lost in long tracts of prose. Teachers are not effective in the way they deal with students who turn up late for lessons.

102. Work placements for full-time students are effectively managed and monitored. Students speak highly of the value of placements and of placement monitoring visits in helping them make progress on their programmes. Providers of childcare placements appreciate the calibre of the students they receive. Providers receive good information from the college and find it easy to contact relevant

staff.

103. A good range of learning resources is available for students to use. Course base rooms are appropriately equipped. Classrooms are enhanced by displays of students' work and most have overhead projectors and screens, televisions and video recorders as well as whiteboards. The library provides a pleasant place to study and houses relevant journals and a good supply of up-to-date reference books. Full-time and part-time teachers are well qualified. Students have good access to modern computers. Some classrooms are small for the number of students using them. In a few classrooms, it is impossible to use visual aids other than handouts in bright weather because the windows have no blinds.

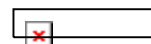
104. Criteria for assessment are clear and shared with students. Written feedback on assignments is constructive and gives specific pointers for improvement that the students can easily understand and act upon. Teachers give more detailed, oral feedback at regular one-to one-review sessions with students. There are clear arrangements for assessor visits to students in the workplace. However, the timing and frequency of visits is not appropriate in some cases. On full-time courses, deadlines for assignments are unclear and there is bunching of assignment deadlines that prevents students working effectively.

105. All students have a personal tutor. In most cases, tutors also teach the students they are responsible for and get to know the students well. Students on full-time courses are well supported and are aware of the range of support services that the college provides. Learning support is offered to both full-time and part-time students who have identified needs. Most students take up the offer and consider it a help to achieving the qualification they are aiming for rather than a remedial activity. Learning support is integrated with foundation courses through learning support assistants who work with students in lessons. Part-time students are allocated set tutorial times, but some part-time students do not know how to access student services or what help is available.

Leadership and management

106. Curriculum management in this area is generally good. Teachers are well informed and well supported by their line managers. Course teams meet frequently and the minutes are circulated to relevant staff, both full time and part time. Full-time teachers support the large numbers of part-time staff who teach in the area. Course teams are involved in setting and monitoring course targets. They identify action points for improving performance where targets are missed. Teachers have good opportunities for developing and updating their skills. Equality of opportunity is an integral element of the curriculum in childcare, health and social care and counselling, and equality of opportunity is effectively promoted in many lessons.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- good or better teaching on most courses

- effective encouragement of students' independent learning

- effective integration of key skills in media and art and design
- imaginative curriculum and resource management
- good progression to HE.

Weaknesses

- retention rates below national averages on some media and art and design courses
- insufficient technician support at key times.

Scope of provision

107. The college provides an extensive range of vocational programmes at intermediate and advanced levels in art and design, media, performing arts and advanced programmes in popular music for some 325 full-time students. Additionally, there are opportunities for studying visual and performing arts subjects at GCSE and GCE AS and A level. The area has an inclusive approach to learning and programmes meet the needs of both young people and adults. Managers are sensitive to the needs of individuals and students with minority interests. Imaginative timetabling enables students to follow minority courses in fashion and textiles and photography and mainstream courses have been carefully designed to meet the needs of individual students, particularly adult returning to education. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively integrated on to mainstream programmes and have access to instruments and to popular music facilities once a week.

Achievement and standards

108. Students are punctual and attendance is good, but the retention rate of students on some art and design and media programmes is below national averages. For example, the retention rates on GNVQ advanced art and design declined over a three year period to well below the national average and retention rates on foundation art and design and GNVQ intermediate art and design also fell in 2001 to below and well below the national average, respectively. However, pass rates are around or above national averages on most courses and are well above in GNVQ intermediate media, and the first and national diplomas in performing arts. Progression to HE is good across the area and students who do not progress to HE programmes within the college are accepted at prestigious institutions, often in the face of intense competition. Students often display considerable technical skills in their respective areas and particularly in media where intermediate students demonstrate effective use of IT when digitally editing their video productions in preparation for final submission. Art and design students have been successful in winning national awards in both graphic and web site design.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	28	24	29
		% retention	79	88	83
		% pass rate	91	95	100
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	18	15	22
		% retention	88	93	55
		% pass rate	47	93	75
National diploma in graphic design	3	No. of starts	36	23	33
		% retention	81	87	85
		% pass rate	88	89	85
GCE A-level communication and media	3	No. of starts	16	22	28
		% retention	88	72	50
		% pass rate	75	69	100
Foundation art and design	3	No. of starts	22	41	27
		% retention	90	90	78
		% pass rate	74	100	95
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	47	32	33
		% retention	66	88	70
		% pass rate	89	100	96

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

Quality of education and training

109. Teaching is consistently good and the relationship between staff and students is excellent; students appreciate the efforts made on their behalf and the respect and encouragement afforded to them. Teaching is enhanced through the use of current practitioners who often have exceptional vocational experience. Assignments are imaginatively designed to test acquired and developed skills and students are required to work independently on major projects. In an effective intermediate level media lesson, students demonstrated their practical awareness of the psychological impact of 'point-of-view' camera work. Performing arts students are required to take responsibility for aspects of their own rehearsals as in the production of 'Ubu Roi' at the time of inspection. Teachers are assiduous in monitoring the work of individual students and constantly appraise their work as it is being developed. Teachers are not prescriptive in the commentary and advice that they offer and final decisions are the sole responsibility of students. The differing abilities of students are recognised through the use of individual assignments and all students benefit from the individual attention and tuition that they receive. Where appropriate, tutors agree action plans for development with individual students. Effective use is made of group tutorials, particularly to help students progress from GNVQ intermediate art and design to AVCE art or to related employment. Live assignments are fundamental to the vocational programmes and advanced students are engaged in designing and implementing murals for local community groups. Pre-degree, foundation students benefit from past students, who are on degree programmes, returning to the college to talk both about their (often excellent) work and what can be expected from degree programmes. Extra-curricular events and activities are arranged to extend learning through regular visits to theatres, galleries, television studios and international trips. The development of key skills is effectively integrated with several programmes by a key skills co-ordinator working closely with specialist teachers. Aspects of application of number are incorporated into interior design projects for GNVQ intermediate art and design students. Similar examples are evident in media courses, where

teachers effectively incorporate aspects of communication into course assignments.

110. A range of appropriate assessment methods is used. In the performing arts, these involve major integrated assignments that are usually public performances. Running concurrently are unit-based assignments that are planned in advance to avoid bunching of assessment. Although internal verification is not always consistent, assessment is carried out to the required national standards. Students' work is marked thoroughly and returned promptly usually with helpful and supportive annotation.

111. Performing arts students have a one-day induction three weeks prior to the beginning of the academic year and a week-long programme in September. In art and design, the positive effect that good induction can have on retention rates is not always recognised. Students are well supported and their progress is effectively monitored with regular, formal case conferences. At any time up to the first case conference in October, students can change courses. The excellent relationships that exist between staff and students ensure that individual concerns are brought to the attention of relevant staff quickly.

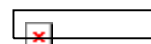
112. Though some of the accommodation for visual and performing arts is old, effective use is made of permanent visual displays at the Harrow Lodge site to stimulate and motivate students. Imaginative management of resources ensures that most aspects of two, three and increasingly four-dimensional study are available in art and design. A well-used learning resource centre is located at the site. The performing arts block at the Ardleigh Green site offers a generous range of studio spaces for rehearsals and workshop performances. Additionally, there is a spacious, fully equipped dance studio and students also have opportunities to perform at local professional venues. At the time of the inspection, plans were at an advanced stage for relocating the visual and performing arts to a new building on the main site at Ardleigh Green.

113. There has been a steady expansion of the ICT equipment that students can use on an open-access basis. Teachers are encouraged to develop their own professional work and are supported financially to update their research activities, where appropriate. The contacts teachers develop through their professional work help students to become involved in live assignments. Though the area has good technician support, it is often stretched at key times in the academic year.

Leadership and management

114. The area is well managed. Managers understand their roles and there is effective teamwork and delegation of responsibilities. Lines of communication are clear and there is an effective system of team meetings, although students are not represented at course team meetings. The individual needs of students are effectively addressed through curriculum planning and considerable attention is given to helping teachers update their skills and experience. Action planning to bring about improvement is effective. Course reviews are used to improve the provision, although there is some confusion in the self-assessment report as to what constitutes a strength and what is a basic requirement.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good or improving pass rates on most courses

- good-quality learning materials
- good development of students' critical and evaluative skills
- effective monitoring of the standard of students' work.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on GCE A-level courses
- low proportion of students achieving higher grades in most subjects
- ineffective support for students at risk of leaving courses
- poor organisation of some courses.

Scope of provision

115. Advanced level courses are offered in psychology, sociology, law, history and geography. Most students are full time and aged 16 to 18. GCSE courses are also available in all these subjects except geography. There were approximately 300 enrolments on GCE AS courses in 2001, ranging in number from over 100 in psychology to 15 in geography. At the time of the inspection, there were 54 enrolments on GCE A-level courses in the humanities. Geography at GCE A level was not run because of low demand. Government and politics, which had been run for several years, was discontinued in 2001. Most subjects are offered to adults in the evening, with around 60 enrolments in total.

Achievement and standards

116. Overall, students' achievements in humanities are satisfactory. Pass rates are good in GCE A-level psychology and on the GCSE courses in law and psychology. In GCE A-level sociology, pass rates are satisfactory, and in law they are improving. Pass and retention rates and the proportion of students achieving high grades are poor in GCE A-level history. There are good pass rates on GCE AS courses in all subjects other than law. Some students are not making the progress expected of them on the basis of their GCSE results. The proportion of students achieving high grades at GCE A level is low in all subjects except psychology and sociology. Poor achievements in government and politics led the college to the decision to discontinue the course. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses are significantly below national averages. Over the three years prior to inspection, only around a half of the students who commenced two-year GCE A-level courses completed them.

Enrolments to GCE AS courses in September 2001 had reduced by a third at the time of the inspection. The proportion of students progressing from GCE AS courses to GCE A-level courses is low.

117. The standard of students' work is good in some lessons. Students develop appropriate critical and evaluative skills, and can express their ideas fluently both orally and in writing. For example, psychology students demonstrated an appropriately critical stance towards psychological research methodologies and findings. Second-year students had developed a good overview of their course, making coherent links between different areas of psychology. Law students demonstrated a sound knowledge of relevant case law and could apply this to legal problems. History students could discuss Germany's foreign policy during the Weimar Republic to good effect. At its best, students' written work was both analytical and perceptive, with appropriate use of academic terminology.

118. Attendance at lessons was poor during inspection, at 58%, although college records reveal that average attendance over the academic year on the courses inspected was over 80%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE law	2	No. of starts	24	65	35
		% retention	75	78	83
		% pass rate	44	39	48
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	32	19	14
		% retention	50	53	79
		% pass rate	75	70	55
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	37	28	*
		% retention	62	46	*
		% pass rate	87	77	*
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	53	34	*
		% retention	51	41	*
		% pass rate	96	100	*
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	16	19	14
		% retention	56	53	57
		% pass rate	44	90	63
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	21	37	*
		% retention	67	32	*
		% pass rate	50	75	*

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

* data not comparable to previous years

Quality of education and training

119. Nearly all teaching is satisfactory or better. The best lessons are conducted at a quick pace, and teachers use question and answer techniques effectively to develop students' powers of analysis and communication skills. For example, in one sociology lesson on childhood, students

demonstrated a good understanding of sociological ideas about social change in relation to the family, drawing on their own biographies and cross-cultural material to make sense of changing conceptions of childhood. In psychology, the teacher encouraged students to develop their evaluative skills through asking probing questions on the credibility of research on multiple personality disorder. In law, students showed good knowledge of relevant statutes and case law on offences against the person. In many subjects, good use is made of current affairs to help students to develop their interpretative skills.

120. Not all teaching is as successful. In some lessons, students learned too little or too slowly because the tasks they were asked to complete were insufficiently demanding. In other lessons, students complete work in class that could be done in their own time. In an unsatisfactory GCSE lesson, the teacher read from an examination board marking scheme without checking that students understood either the content of the text or the point of the exercise. In another dull lesson, students learned little by reading aloud from a textbook and answering a series of questions on their own.

121. Some courses are well planned. Schemes of work and lesson plans are well conceived in law, outlining in detail exactly what is to be achieved and how. However, poor organisation on other courses has a negative effect on students' learning. Planning pays insufficient attention to developing students' independent research skills and addressing their individual learning needs. Lesson plans are often vague and learning outcomes are not clearly defined. Arrangements for setting and submitting externally moderated coursework are unsatisfactory. In some subjects, for example, psychology and sociology, teachers were struggling to cover the specification in the required time. New material was being taught when lessons should have been focusing on revision.

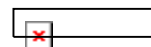
122. The quality of learning materials used in most lessons is good. In psychology, there are good resource books summarising each key study area in detail. In many subjects, media reports are used well to help students to make links between the subject matter and contemporary events. Most handouts present material in a stimulating way, although the quality of some handouts in history and sociology is poor, with some outdated material in the latter subject. Within departments, there is a good range of magazines, texts and other resources for students to use. However, the library contains few textbooks on the new examination specifications, and many texts are obsolete. IT is increasingly being used as a resource to help students to learn outside the classroom, although it is not yet integrated with teaching and learning. A new dedicated computer suite within the humanities area is well used by students for coursework and other tasks.

123. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are effective overall in the humanities. Work is regularly set, and the quality of most feedback on students' work is good. Regular formal assessments ensure that students know whether they are meeting the required standard of work. However, procedures for supporting students who fail such assessments are inadequate. Most teachers give good levels of support to individual students. A tutorial support co-ordinator contacts and supports students whose attendance slips or who are having academic or personal problems. However, in some subjects insufficiently high expectations are held of students' chances of success. As a consequence, too many students choose to leave subjects if they are having difficulties.

Leadership and management

124. There is a clear focus on raising achievement in the humanities, and the aim of improving standards is shared by all staff. Teachers work well together, particularly on an informal level, and are mutually supportive. Communication between subject staff and middle managers is good, and teachers appreciate the support they are given at this level. However, there is a lack of clarity about the roles and functions of middle managers. As a result, there is insufficient management control over actions taken at course level. Policies on the criteria for students staying on courses and progressing to the next stage are not clear. Strategies to improve retention rates are not consistently implemented. Data have been interpreted incorrectly to show improvements in retention rates. As a consequence, the self-assessment report failed to recognise as a weakness the significant proportion of students who leave courses before completion.

English and communication



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

Strengths

- above average retention rates in GCE A-level and GCSE English language
- good teaching in most lessons
- good support and guidance
- effective management of GCSE English language.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates and declining retention rates in GCE A-level communication
- low enrolment on GCSE English literature
- insufficient use of targets to improve standards
- inadequate self-assessment and action planning.

Scope of provision

125. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in English literature and communication and GCSE English language and English literature. Some 54 full-time students enrol on GCE A-level English literature and 109 take the subject at GCE AS. Of the 230 enrolments in GCSE English language, 190 are on full-time courses and 40 are part-time evening students. About 10 students study GCSE English literature. The college also offers an open-learning programme that some 25 students follow, with around 16 taking GCSE English language and the remainder GCE AS or A-level English literature. Some 24 students enrol on GCE AS and advanced level courses in

communication. Most students are aged 16 to 19 and are studying full time.

Achievement and standards

126. Pass rates in GCE A-level English literature were below the national average in 2001, but roughly in line with expectation based on students' qualifications at enrolment. Pass rates in GCSE English language are in line with national averages. Pass rates for the small number of students on GCSE English literature are above average. Pass rates for GCE A-level communication are well below national average. Retention rates are high in GCE A-level and GCSE English literature, but lower than average in GCSE English language. Enrolments and retention rates in GCE A-level communication have declined significantly and retention rates are significantly below the national average of 73%. However, students performed better on the GCE AS communication course in 2001. Some 79% of students were retained of whom 93% passed and 60% gained A to C grades. Students following the new GCE AS English literature syllabus in 2001 achieved a pass rate of 80% with 30% high grades (A to C) and a retention rate of 77%.

127. Standards achieved in most lessons, in students' files, and in their marked work and coursework are satisfactory or better. Many advanced level students have achieved a good standard of critical analysis and logical argument and can speak confidently and fluently about a range of topics and texts. The most able GCSE students can read and respond to a range of texts from English and other cultures and express their ideas well, drawing together examples from a variety of appropriate sources. However, in some GCSE lessons, students' attainment is unsatisfactory and students are unable to demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding of the texts being considered.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English literature	2	No. of starts	19	15	9
		% retention	79	80	56
		% pass rate	40	92	80
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	291	276	306
		% retention	79	80	78
		% pass rate	43	55	50
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	57	48	47
		% retention	68	88	89
		% pass rate	80	97	79
GCE A-level communication	3	No. of starts	40	12	15
		% retention	68	83	33
		% pass rate	50	40	40

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

Quality of education and training

128. Teaching in most lessons is good or better with only a minority being less than satisfactory. Teachers have good up-to-date knowledge of their subjects and clearly communicate their enthusiasm to their students. In the most successful lessons, teachers help students to acquire the appropriate skills and knowledge to analyse language and text and develop the higher-level thinking skills necessary for literacy criticism. Through the use of effective question and answer techniques teachers developed students' ability to think logically and engage in coherent argument. Some

lesson plans are no more than a list of activities, but other teachers carefully structure their lessons and include a range of teaching methods and a variety of learning activities. Schemes of work are inadequate. Learning objectives and assessment opportunities are not identified and there is insufficient sharing of good practice across the area.

129. There is good, in depth, textual analysis in GCE A-level English lessons including effective structuring of material to help students acquire the appropriate examination skills. Students in their study of Robert Graves' 'Goodbye to All That' were able to identify other texts focusing on trench warfare, citing the explicit details of wounding in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen and the lack of food in 'Journey's End'. The most able could distinguish between primary and secondary sources identifying, Robert Graves' work as a primary source. GCE A-level communication students demonstrated the acquisition of higher level thinking skills through their analysis and interpretation of visual and contextualised data. Using advertisements of a well-known clothing manufacturer as a basis for discussion, they provided a well-reasoned argument supporting their view that the main purpose of the advertisements was to shock. Most GCSE students improve their grammatical accuracy and increase their vocabulary. In one lesson, students successfully identified linguistic features of personification and simile in the non-fiction text 'Driving over Lemons' by Chris Stewart and could explain their function and impact. Some students successfully compared this text with 'Falling Angels' in terms of descriptive features and use of language. In less successful lessons, objectives are unclear, there is a lack of variety and pace in the work and students are not sufficiently involved in the learning. Where teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, activities are often inappropriate, there is no clear structure to lessons and students do not co-operate with the teacher.

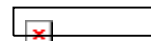
130. Assessment procedures are well structured. There is effective moderation across teaching groups and accurate marking, validated by external moderators. Students are given helpful feedback that raises the standard of their work. There is good support and guidance within the subject areas as well as through the well-developed tutorial system. Subject teachers and tutors liaise closely to monitor the progress of individual students who value highly the help and support they receive. All students on GCE AS and A-level courses are set minimum target grades based on their GCSE grades. While there is some monitoring of students towards the achievement of target grades on an individual basis, the use of targets as a strategy for raising standards is not well established.

131. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and have undertaken training for new syllabuses. There are adequate resources for learning, including an appropriate range of texts, videos, audio visual equipment and access to digital technology. However, there is little use of new technologies. There is a well-stocked section in the library that is well used by students. In English, learning is enriched through activities such as trips to the theatre and galleries.

Leadership and management

132. Day-to-day management at course level is good. It is particularly effective in respect of GCSE English language, which caters for a large number of full-time and part-time students with different learning needs. Students express a high degree of satisfaction with the course and retention rates are above average. Regularly scheduled team meetings cover tutorial, academic and whole college issues and enable staff to address matters that affect the quality of provision in the area. There are a range of structures in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. These include lesson observation, course evaluation and review of examination outcomes. Self-assessment and action planning for improvement, however, are inadequate. Self-assessment reports for different programmes for 2000 and 2001 are incomplete and the identification of many of the strengths and weaknesses lacks clarity. There is insufficient analysis of data. Action plans do not effectively address specific weaknesses and there are no specific targets for raising achievement.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- wide range of full-time provision
- effective, well-implemented learning support systems
- good teaching on foundation and vocational courses
- good achievement of nationally recognised awards.

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning and target setting to meet individual needs
- small range of teaching and learning methods
- insufficient focus on learning and key skills acquisition.

Scope of provision

133. The college is a major provider of full-time courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and caters for the needs of some 130 students with a wide range of learning and support needs. Three programmes, namely 'towards independence', 'pathways' and the 'progression programme', are designed for those needing skills and confidence to live more independent lives and attract some 75 students. The college also provides foundation and vocational access courses for 26 and 38 students, respectively. The vocational areas offered are limited to construction, care and catering. There are good links with local special schools to enable Year 11 and 12 pupils to follow 'taster' and short-term courses. There is currently no part-time provision. The college works with local health agencies to provide opportunities for users of mental health services.

Achievement and standards

134. All the courses except one are nationally accredited and pass rates are above the national average. However, the range of accredited courses is limited in scope and variety. There is no recognition of achievement at different entry levels or for basic learning skills. Many students achieve well and progress to more advanced courses over a number of years. A lack of measurable

learning targets limits the recognition and recording of progress in basic skills. Attendance and retention rates are satisfactory. Students enjoy their college experience and acknowledge their increased skill and confidence. Students' late arrival is occasionally a problem, resulting from transport arrangements.

A sample of retention and pass rates in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Vocational access certificate	entry	No. of starts	10	28	36
		% retention	100	100	72
		% pass rate	80	89	*
Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN): towards independence	entry	No. of starts	20	29	52
		% retention	100	100	92
		% pass rate	80	75	98
Asdan: FE award	entry	No. of starts	20	29	25
		% retention	100	100	96
		% pass rate	80	75	96
Association Examining Board (AEB) achievement tests: literacy	entry	No. of starts	**	**	44
		% retention	**	**	90
		% pass rate	**	**	100
AEB achievement tests: numeracy	entry	No. of starts	**	**	44
		% retention	**	**	90
		% pass rate	**	**	100

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

*unreliable data

**course did not run

Quality of education and training

135. Teaching on the foundation and vocational access courses is good or better, but some teaching is unsatisfactory. The more successful lessons are well planned and well structured with a variety of activities and opportunities for learning. Communication is effective and students are involved in discussions and decision making. Some teachers create situations that require students to think for themselves through the use of effective questioning techniques and small learning steps. In a communications session, for example, students were required to research a vocational area that they hoped to enter. The teacher was careful to establish links with previous work and related the exercise to interviews that were to be held by the careers service. Careful questioning, based on students' personal experience and knowledge, was used to elicit responses. Many students were developing their personal skills and confidence. Teaching is effective where the particular needs of individual students are identified. One student, for example, had a specific target to read the dial on a tumble dryer correctly; having successfully done so the teacher was careful to celebrate the achievement. Outside visits, residentials and visiting speakers are used effectively to help students practise their skills.

136. Learning support staff work effectively alongside teachers. Clear work targets are set and shared. However, for many lessons there is little detailed planning. Too much attention is given to activities and insufficient emphasis to learning outcomes. In these lessons, strategies are not developed to help individuals learn and teaching materials are not designed to meet the range of students' abilities in the classes. In one session, for example, students were asked to fill in forms using only their names, addresses and dates of birth. Most of the students could complete the task and more complex forms were not provided for the more able. Questioning was repetitive and clear standards had not been set for measuring the progress of individual students. There was little variation in the activities set and completing the activities took precedence over developing the underpinning skills needed to complete the tasks. Instruction is often given rather than support for learning. In a catering session, one student was asked to complete a table setting, but was told what to do by the support assistant who also folded the napkin. There is little constructive use of ICT.

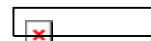
137. The support required by individual students is identified through careful initial assessment and individual learning plans are prepared. These relate to the level of support required to complete different tasks. Plans do not include specific measurable targets. Formative assessments do not provide sufficient constructive comment and suggestions for improvement and verbal comments focus on the completion of tasks. There is little assessment of the skills required to complete tasks and the key skills needs of individuals are not addressed sufficiently. Consequently, reviews of students' progress, though well managed and documented, produced only general comments with few specific targets for improvement.

138. Some classrooms for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are attractively decorated, but others are shabby and crowded. Access for students with restricted mobility is good at the Quarles site, but poor at Harrow Lodge. Resources to support students with physical disabilities are good. Students on vocational courses have access to some specialist rooms, but these are not always of an appropriate standard. In one lesson, use of a small, poor-quality dark room, which was badly shuttered, led to failure in developing film and loss of photographs taken by students. A substantial number of staff have only recently gained teaching qualifications and very few have specialist qualifications for teaching students with additional learning needs.

Leadership and management

139. There is little effective monitoring of the quality and teaching of the courses in the area, although the appointment of new managers is beginning to have an effect on planning. The team of five course leaders work well together to support the various programmes. Many teachers teach on several courses, which ensures effective communication and a shared understanding of students' needs. Learning support assistants attend weekly team meetings, which facilitates transfer of information. Records of the meetings indicate a business-like approach to the administration and day-to-day running of courses, but heavy reliance on part-time staff hinders the effective implementation of procedures for raising standards. This has resulted in little critical evaluation of the provision and the identification of only a few weaknesses by team members and their leaders.

Basic skills and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good achievement and progression

- good levels of support for students
- flexible and responsive provision for adults.

Weaknesses

- poor lesson plans
- ineffective individual learning plans
- poor integration of basic skills support.

Scope of provision

140. The college offers separate specialist courses in basic skills and ESOL for adults both in college and in the community. Additional basic skills support is provided for students on the three main college campuses. All full-time students whose basic skills are identified, on assessment, as being below level 1 are offered literacy, numeracy or language support individually or in small groups. In March 2002, some 221 students were receiving basic skills support. The provision also includes a full-time access to FE course designed to provide a choice of vocational options, key skills and basic skills for young people. Some 84 students are enrolled on six access to FE courses.

141. The college is developing a range of courses to encourage participation and meet the needs of adults. Workplace ESOL training has been established in partnership with a large national employer. Since January 2002, 25 students have enrolled on this programme. The college is developing its community links and ESOL courses are also provided in community venues. Flexible, modular short courses are offered at the college's dedicated basic skills centre and strategies such as open learning are being developed to provide greater choice and flexibility.

Achievement and standards

142. Levels of achievement of nationally recognised qualifications are high. Pass rates on entry and foundation courses are above the national average. Adult students in community provision and ESOL classes in the workplace make satisfactory progress. While attendance can be irregular, often because of domestic or work commitments, retention rates are high. ESOL courses do not have external accreditation. ESOL students' attainments in lessons are appropriate to the level of course they are studying. Young people without qualifications are enrolled on appropriate full-time courses. They make satisfactory progress and are successful in achieving their learning goals. As progress is made and achievement validated, many adults and young people make significant gains in skills and confidence. Students' portfolios are well maintained and contain evidence of a range of learning activities. Progression from the access course to FE has increased from 69% in 1998 to 88% in 2000. Some basic skills support sessions lack a sufficiently explicit focus on the development of literacy skills and specific, clearly stated learning outcomes. There is no systematic analysis of the effect of basic skills support on retention and pass rates on students' main

programmes of study.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Key skills entry	entry	No. of starts	**	**	54
		% retention	**	**	74
		% pass rate	**	**	85
Numberpower	1	No. of starts	34	**	**
		% retention	100	**	**
		% pass rate	68	**	**
Wordpower	1	No. of starts	50	**	**
		% retention	100	**	**
		% pass rate	74	**	**
AEB literacy	1	No. of starts	**	42	54
		% retention	**	100	98
		% pass rate	**	100	100
AEB numeracy	1	No. of starts	**	39	49
		% retention	**	100	98
		% pass rate	**	100	100
Key skills level 1	1	No. of starts	**	**	44
		% retention	**	**	68
		% pass rate	**	**	73

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001). **course did not run

Quality of education and training

143. Most teaching is satisfactory and some is good. Teachers promote a productive and purposeful working atmosphere. In the best lessons, teaching is well planned and well organised and teachers provide stimulating learning activities that take account of students' individual learning needs. In one ESOL group, students working on a large construction site used role-play and group activities to become familiar with safety equipment, to practise safety instructions and to warn others of danger. In less successful lessons, teaching is not demanding enough and teachers do not use different materials and methods that take account of the differing needs of all students. Lesson plans, particularly in communications lessons, do not contain specific learning objectives against which learning outcomes can be measured effectively. They are not sufficiently detailed to structure lessons adequately, to identify the specific roles to be undertaken by learning support assistants or to indicate different teaching and learning activities which meet the individual needs of students.

144. Students' work is marked regularly and teachers provide good verbal feedback to students, but make few written suggestions to help students identify how they can improve. Students' progress on full-time courses is monitored regularly through case conferences. The progress of adult students and those receiving basic skills support is reviewed regularly. The recording of progress through individual learning plans is mainly a record of activities covered rather than of the progress students have made in developing their skills. Learning goals set out in students' individual learning plans are too general to enable students to clearly understand their targets, or to measure how far they have

progressed.

145. The additional basic skills support activities that students assessed as having low levels of literacy and numeracy skills undertake are not linked effectively to the literacy and numeracy demands of their main programme of study. There is insufficient liaison between basic skills and subject specialists. Basic skills support staff are often not aware of the specific elements of a course that students may be covering at a particular time or the learning materials the class teacher is using. Individual learning plans are not shared with all teachers who work with particular students. Course materials are rarely used in support sessions to develop the skills students need to complete their courses successfully.

146. All students speak highly of the support they receive. Careful guidance is provided prior to entry to ensure that students make an appropriate choice of courses. Learning support assistants are used extensively on full-time courses to provide additional individual support. However, some assistants are not sufficiently skilled in helping students to learn on their own and there is a need to clarify their role and responsibilities in lessons. Class sizes are small and students generally receive the individual attention they need.

147. Some staff are experienced and well qualified, others are relatively new to this area of teaching. Staff are encouraged to undertake training and the good range of staff development activities is well used by teachers. Staff without a basic skills qualification are required to complete one. The quality of accommodation used for basic skills support on the Ardeleigh campus is excellent. Accommodation elsewhere is adequate. Students have good access to ICT on most courses. There is good use of ICT for the development of communication skills on access to FE and adult programmes. Little use is made of ICT in basic support sessions or in numeracy lessons. The use of ICT is not identified in group lesson plans or individual learning plans. Worksheets are attractive and well produced, but there is an over-reliance on worksheets and standard assignments that do not always meet the needs of individual students.

Leadership and management

148. Leadership and management of courses are satisfactory. There is a commitment to improving standards and developing learning opportunities for adults and young people. Communication between programme area managers, course team leaders and teachers is good. There are weekly meetings of course teams which focus on attendance, retention and pass rate targets, students' progress and development and the sharing of good practice. Staff are involved in self-assessment and development planning and feel well informed about the department's targets and priorities. There is insufficient, regular communication between the basic skills support team and course tutors. Observation of teaching is undertaken regularly and actions are agreed to improve performance. However, the process is not leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Data are collected, but not analysed regularly to enable the college to measure the effectiveness of basic skills support in improving retention and pass rates on students' main programmes of study.

Part D: College data

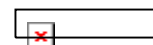
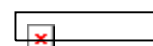


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18	19+
-------	-------	-----



	%	%
1	12	30
2	49	21
3	29	13
4/5	0	7
Other	10	29
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	2,516	6,163	39
Agriculture	0	41	1
Construction	170	472	3
Engineering	561	401	4
Business	961	2,023	13
Hotel and catering	215	213	2
Health and community care	388	1,488	8
Art and design	612	469	5
Humanities	3,496	1,778	23
Basic education	257	258	2
Total	9,176	13,306	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001.

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000
		1	Starters excluding	1,399	1,003	1,189	754

	transfers						
	Retention rate (%)	87	88	87	82	83	84
	National average (%)	82	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	64	69	62	71	49	65
	National average (%)	59	62	66	61	63	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,890	1,936	1,792	1,540	1,853	1,557
	Retention rate (%)	75	82	85	79	81	80
	National average (%)	77	76	77	80	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	77	73	71	78	68	68
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,364	1,865	1,658	1,236	1,104	1,067
	Retention rate (%)	85	83	84	84	80	87
	National average (%)	78	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	76	72	72	74	71	74
	National average (%)	70	72	73	63	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	27	25	29	383	623	377
	Retention rate (%)	81	72	79	84	84	86
	National average (%)	84	83	81	85	84	86
	Pass rate (%)	56	65	67	61	64	50
	National average (%)	64	65	69	58	61	60

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

Sources of information:

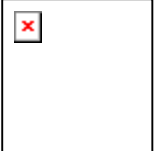
- 1. National averages: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.*
- 2. College rates for 1997/98 - 1998/99: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1998/99): Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.*
- 3. College rates for (1999/2000): provided by the college in spring 2001.*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:				No of

	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	sessions observed
Level 3	64	33	3	110
Level 2	54	36	10	58
Level 1	50	43	7	42
Other sessions	53	31	16	32
Totals	57	36	7	242

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



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