



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Lakes College, West Cumbria

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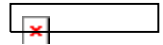
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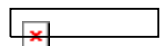
**Basic information about the college**



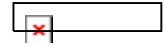
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Name of college:	Lakes College, West Cumbria
Type of college:	General Further Education College/Tertiary
Principal:	Pat Glenday
Address of college:	Hallwood Road Lillyhall Business Park Workington Cumbria CA14 4JN
Telephone number:	01946 839300
Fax number:	01946 839302
Chair of governors:	Andy Fasolino
Unique reference number:	130632
Name of reporting inspector:	Ruth James HMI
Date of inspection:	20-24 January 2003

**Part A: Summary**



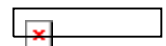
## Information about the college



Lakes College, West Cumbria is a small to medium-sized college serving the west coast of Cumbria. It is based in new buildings on a business park equidistant between Workington and Whitehaven, the two main centres of population. The move to new premises took place in July 2001 and the purpose-built buildings provide a modern learning environment for most curriculum areas. Construction is housed in rented accommodation nearby. The college offers a range of courses at levels 1 to 3 in most areas of learning funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), including short courses, and some work-based learning programmes. The college has a large catchment area of about 750 square miles and this includes the boroughs of Copeland and Allerdale. The catchment area has a population of 166,000, about one third of the population of Cumbria. Much of the area is sparsely populated. The college is in a rural location. West Cumbria has areas of socio-economic disadvantage and receives financial assistance from the European Social Fund (ESF) under objectives 2 and 3. The economy of Allerdale, which includes Keswick and Cockermouth, is dependent on distribution, and the hotel and restaurant trade, while Copeland's economy is dominated by manufacturing.

There are three 11 to 16 and eight 11 to 18 schools in the area, as well as 23 work-based training providers. Participation post-16 is relatively low overall and shows wide variations between localities. For example the post-16 participation rate is 55% in the Southfield area of Workington and 84% in Cockermouth. Unemployment rates in Allerdale and Copeland are above the national average and include a high proportion of the long-term unemployed. Over 27% of the working population have poor basic skills. In 2001/02, there were 810 full-time students at the college. Of these 650 were aged 16 to 18 and 160 were over the age of 19. Part-time students totalled 5,900, of whom 517 were aged 16 to 18 and 5,383 were over the age of 19. Approximately 60% of the student population were female, and 1% were identified as being of ethnic minority origin in 2000/01.

## How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of provision to be good in two of the curriculum areas inspected, satisfactory in four, and unsatisfactory in two. The overall quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory.

### **Key strengths**

- modern and attractive accommodation and facilities
- effective learning resource centre
- good teaching in hospitality and hairdressing and beauty therapy
- high retention rates

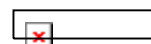
- good external partnerships and responses to local community needs.

**What should be improved?**

- quality of teaching and training in many areas
- pass rates on many courses
- quality assurance
- course and curriculum management in many areas
- management of literacy and numeracy support.

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

**Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas**

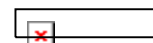


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The pass rate on the City and Guilds 2360 course in electrical installation is low. There are low retention rates on the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 carpentry and joinery, and plumbing and work-based learning programmes. Much teaching is unsatisfactory and students at all levels are not being sufficiently challenged. There are unsatisfactory practices in the assessment of students' work.
Engineering	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are some high pass rates, but many are low

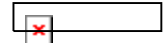
	especially on full-time courses. Resources are good. There is much mundane teaching. The teaching of key skills is not a fully integral part of courses. There are effective links with employers. Some work-based reviews of learners' progress are carried out well. Some learners, however, are not assessed often enough in the workplace.
Business and administration	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high pass rates on some part-time courses, but pass rates for some full-time courses and for work-based programmes are low. Much teaching is mundane and does not meet students' individual needs. Assessment is planned well. The monitoring of the progress of college-based students is rigorous. There are no courses in business at level 1.
Computing and information and communication technology	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> There is some unsatisfactory course management. Much teaching is barely satisfactory and there is some unsatisfactory course management. Pass rates on foundation and intermediate level courses are low, although retention rates are high.
Hospitality and travel	<b>Good.</b> Retention and many pass rates are high. Teaching is good, especially in practical lessons, and students learn effectively. Key skills are taught as an integral part of courses. Support systems for students are effective. Industry links are good. There are insufficient travel opportunities for travel and tourism students.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Good.</b> Many full-time courses have high retention and pass rates. There is much good teaching and the standard of students' practical skills is high. There are good industry links. Assessment processes are rigorous, but there are insufficient clients in beauty therapy. Retention and pass rates on some part-time courses are unsatisfactory. Key skills are not integrated effectively with course content.
Health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is satisfactory overall. There are insufficient resources for practical work. There is poor practice in the promotion of equal opportunities. Many students make slow progress and do not achieve qualifications within the scheduled time. Student support and the tutorial programme are very good.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching on literacy and numeracy courses is good and the students learn effectively. Students' work is of a high standard and students' progress is carefully monitored and recorded. Management has not ensured that key skills are an integral part of vocational courses. There is ineffective use of management information.

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



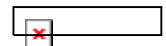
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has made some progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection carried out by the Further Education Funding Council in 1998. Governors provide clear strategic direction. Relations with external partners have improved significantly. The college has moved to purpose-built accommodation. Retention rates have risen and overall they are above the national average for further education (FE) colleges. There is, as yet, no overall upward trend in pass rates and, in some areas, these remain below the national average. The quality of leadership and management of curriculum areas varies and in some instances, is unsatisfactory. The quality assurance system is ineffective.

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



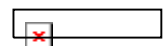
The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college has been successful in widening participation. It has established partnerships with local community groups and has introduced courses at venues in the community for students who find it easier to get to these, than travel to the main college. In some curriculum areas, there is a lack of provision below level 2. There are opportunities for students with learning difficulties both on the main site and in the community. The college has appropriate policies on equal opportunities, disability and racial equality, but many staff and students are not fully aware of their content. There is no systematic monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities.

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



Support for students is satisfactory. The college provides good impartial advice and guidance to prospective students. Students receive good personal support and effective careers advice. Students receive an initial assessment to identify their needs for additional learning support. Some of these needs, and especially those of students with visual impairment, hearing difficulty, physical disabilities and dyslexia, are met well. Student support funds are used effectively. Many students receive financial help with childcare costs, examination fees, books and equipment. It has been decided recently that students support funds will only be given to students in need who attend regularly. A system whereby students mentor one another is being piloted and early indications are that it is successful. All new full-time students are given a structured advice interview and an initial assessment. Their needs for help with literacy and numeracy are identified carefully and arrangements are made to meet these. Only 43% of students, however, take up the offer of help made to them. The effectiveness of literacy and numeracy support is not monitored. Tutorial provision is not consistently implemented across the college.

## 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***

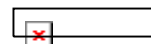
- approachable and helpful teachers
- good access to computers
- the learning resources centre

- enjoyable courses.

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

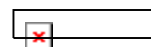
- expensive food and narrow menu choice
- overcrowding in the learning resources centre at lunchtimes
- lack of social activities outside lessons.

**Other information**



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. 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 (LSC). 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 local LSC. The local LSC 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**

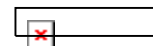


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	48	42	10
19+ and WBL*	67	29	4
Learning 16-18	50	40	10
19+ and WBL*	67	25	8

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

*\*work-based learning*

## **Achievement and standards**



1. The college offers a range of courses at all levels to students aged 16 to 18 and adults. There are substantial numbers of enrolments at levels 1 and 2, with fewer at level 3. An analysis of data between 1999 and 2002 reveals few consistent improvement trends in pass rates on courses across the college. The overall retention rates are above the national average, but many pass rates, particularly those for students aged 16 to 18, are low. Many pass rates in 2001, were lower than those in 2000 or 2002. In 2001, the overall in-year retention rate was high, an improvement of 5% on the rate for the previous year and this placed the college in the top quartile for colleges of the same type.

### **16 to 18 year olds**

2. In the three years to 2002, the overall retention rate for students aged 16 to 18 was in line with the national average. In 2001, it was high for level 2 courses. In 2002, it was high for both level 1 and level 2 courses. In the three years to 2002, the overall retention rate for level 3 courses was in line with the national average. In 2000 and 2001, pass rates were low. In 2002, the overall pass rate on level 1 courses rose to above the national average. The overall pass rates for courses at level 2 and 3 also rose, but remained significantly below the national average. In 2001, the achievement rate for key skills certification was only 3%.

3. Retention and pass rates for work-based learners are unsatisfactory overall. In some areas, retention rates on modern apprenticeship programmes are low, and many learners fail to meet all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework.

4. Overall retention and pass rates for students on General Certificate of Education (GCE) courses at advanced level are very low. There are about 25 students on GCE Advanced-level (A-level) courses. In 2000 and 2001, retention rates on these courses were well below the national average. In 2001, the overall retention rate on GCE A-level courses fell to 57%, which was 18% below the national average. In 2001, the overall pass rate on these courses rose and reached the national average. In 2001, the overall pass rate on the GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses was high, but the overall retention rate was 60%, which was 21% below the national average. Of those students who took the GCE AS examination and progressed to the second year of a GCE A-level course, only 57% achieved a pass grade in 2002. In that year, retention and pass rates on GCE AS courses were very low at 67% and 57%, respectively.

5. The overall proportion of students who gain grade C or above in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects is low. In 2001, when there were just under 120 entries, it fell to 12% below the national average. This proportion varies considerably year on year from one subject to another, but in many instances remains low. In 2001, the proportion of students who gained grade C or above in mathematics was in line with the national average. In 2002, however, this proportion fell significantly to only 7%. The overall retention rate on GCSE courses rose from below the national average in 2000, to well above it in 2001.

6. There are no consistent improvement trends in pass rates on vocational courses. In 2000, retention and pass rates on the intermediate General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses were above the national average, but fell below it in 2001. In 2002, the pass rate on the



GNVQ intermediate health and social care course was 100%, but the retention rate was low. In 2002, the pass rates on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) double award courses in business, travel and tourism and health and social care were high, but a significant number of students had not progressed to the second year of the course. In 2000 and 2001, retention rates on level 2 courses, such as first diploma, were high but pass rates fell by 15% and were in line with the national average. In 2002, the retention and pass rates on the first diploma course in hotel and catering were high. On the certificate in childcare and education course, the pass rate was high, but the retention rate was low. On level 3 courses the overall retention rate was satisfactory in 2000 and 2001, but the overall pass rate fell by 18% to 72%, well below the national average. In 2002, the retention and pass rates were high on the national diploma in computer studies course. Pass rates on other level 3 courses were low. For example, in 2002, no students passed on the one-year national certificate in engineering and the national diploma in engineering courses.

7. In 2000 and 2001, retention and pass rates were high for the small numbers of students on NVQ programmes at level 1. In 2002, pass rates were high on the NVQ bricklaying and carpentry and joinery programmes. In 2000, there were over 100 students on NVQ level 2 programmes and their retention and pass rates were low. In 2001, the retention rate on level 2 programmes was in line with the national average, but the pass rate fell and was low, at 46%; 23% below the national average. In 2002, pass rates were high on food and drink service, beauty therapy, bricklaying, and carpentry and joinery courses. The overall retention rate on NVQ level 3 programmes was satisfactory. In 2000, the pass rate on NVQ level 3 programmes at 74% was well above the national average but in 2001, it fell to 67%, in line with the national average.

8. In 2001, the overall retention and pass rates on short courses were high. In 2002, there were 166 and 78 enrolments on basic food hygiene and paediatric first aid courses, respectively. Retention rates for these courses were high, but pass rates were below the national average. Substantially higher numbers of students were enrolled on courses of over 24 weeks' duration. In 2001, retention rates on these courses were in line with the national average, but pass rates were low. In 2002, many pass rates were low, including those on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses.

### ***Adult learners***

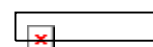
9. In general, retention and pass rates for adult students are higher than those for students aged 16 to 18. In 2000, the overall retention rate for adults was above the national average. In 2001 and 2002, it rose significantly and was high. In 2001, the overall pass rates for adults on courses at levels 1 to 3, fell to below the national average. In 2002, the overall pass rates on courses at levels 1 and 3 rose to above the national average and the pass rate for level 2 courses was in line with it.

10. In general, adult students on GCE AS and A-level courses perform better than students aged 16 to 18. In 2001, the overall retention and pass rates for adult students on these courses were high and above the national average. In 2002, very few adults took GCE A levels, but there were about 20 GCE AS entries and the overall pass rate was 85% compared with a national average of 62%. The retention rate, however, at 63%, was well below the national average. Compared with students aged 16 to 18, a higher proportion of adults gain grade C or above in GCSE subjects. In the three years to 2001, this proportion has been well above the national average. In 2002, the proportion of adults who gained grade C or above in GCSE mathematics was 55%, just above the national average.

11. Between 1999 and 2001, there were about 30 students over the age of 19 on GNVQ advanced courses. In 2001, the overall pass rate for these students was high, but the retention rate was low. On GNVQ precursor programmes, such as national diploma courses, the overall retention rate for adults was high, but the pass rate was low. In the three years to 2001, the pass rates for adults on NVQ level 3 programmes were high and retention rates were never below the national average. In 2001, however, the overall retention rate on NVQ level 2 programmes was in line with the national average, but the overall pass rate was low. In 2002, the pass rate for adults on NVQ level 2 hairdressing course was high.

12. In the three years to 2001, the overall retention rate for adults on short courses was in line with, or higher than, the national average, but pass rates at levels 1 and 2 were low. Pass rates for adults on level 3 courses were high. On other long courses, retention rates were high and most pass rates were satisfactory. In 2002, retention and pass rates were high on basic food hygiene, preliminary cooking, cake decoration and cosmetic make-up courses. Many adult students on childcare courses were successful. Retention and pass rates were high on the diploma in nursery nursing and the certificate in childcare and education course. Retention and pass rates on some other courses were less satisfactory. For example, pass rates on the CLAIT, Integrated Business Technology 2 (IBT 2) and the information technology (IT) diploma courses have been below the national average. The pass rate on the European computer driving licence (ECDL) course was low. The pass rate on the short ECDL course, however, was in line with the national average.

## Quality of education and training



13. In 52% of lessons observed during inspection, teaching was good or better. This proportion is below the national average of 63% for general FE colleges inspected during 2001/02. In approximately the same proportion of lessons, the grading of learning was similar. Overall, the teaching of students over the age of 19 was better than that for students aged 16 to 18. Teaching was graded good or better in 70% of lessons for students aged 19 and over, compared with 48% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18. There is much mundane and uninspiring teaching.

14. There was more unsatisfactory teaching on level 1 courses than on courses at levels 2 and 3. Teaching was good or better in only 44% of lessons on level 1 courses and it was unsatisfactory in 24%. At level 2, teaching was good or better in 52% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 3%. At level 3, teaching was good or better in 52% of lessons, and unsatisfactory in 7%. At entry level, teaching was good or better in 88% of lessons and no teaching was unsatisfactory. Grades awarded for learning were broadly similar except at level 2 where learning was graded good or better in only 42% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 9% of lessons. In two of the curriculum areas, the proportion of good or better lessons was higher than the national average obtained from inspections during 2001/02. In both hairdressing and beauty therapy and hospitality and travel, the percentage of lessons graded good or better was over 10% higher than the national average. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in these areas. The teaching of practical skills was particularly good in these areas. Teachers demonstrated and explained processes carefully. They gave students good guidance and individual support and helped them to develop their skills to a high standard. In construction and computing and IT, less than one third of lessons were graded good or better and around 15% were unsatisfactory. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers failed to engage and excite the students' interest. They did not give the students appropriately demanding tasks which challenged them to use all their skills to the full, and they did not check their understanding. In the other curriculum areas inspected the overall teaching profile was judged satisfactory.

15. Key skills are not effectively taught as an integral component of courses, except in the curriculum areas of hospitality and travel. Much of the teaching of key skills by teachers of vocational subjects is unsatisfactory and fails to meet students' needs.

16. Since the last inspection, the college has moved to a new purpose-built site. The building is clean and well maintained. Students with mobility difficulties have access to all areas of the college with the exception of the construction area and the fitness suite. The learning resource centre provides an attractive and welcoming area for students to undertake private study or research. Learning resource centre staff are experienced and well qualified. Book stocks are satisfactory in most curriculum areas and well managed. The learning resource centre is extremely well used and valued as a resource by most students. There are 90 computers and these provide easy access to the Internet, and e-mail, and have word-processing and spreadsheet software. There is a quiet study room. At lunchtimes, however, the centre is heavily used and some students have difficulty gaining access to a computer.

17. There are 69 full-time staff and 68 part-time staff. Some 79% of staff have a teaching qualification and 44% of staff are qualified assessors. Staff are allocated five days a year to update their professional and vocational knowledge. There are plans for a new crèche and cyber café.

18. A number of pilot projects have been introduced across the college to encourage the use of information learning technology (ILT). Each department has an ILT champion. Staff development sessions on ILT have been well attended. The college has purchased ILT equipment and software. In some curriculum areas, however, there is little use of ILT in lessons and teachers rely heavily on paper-based learning resources.

19. There is inadequate use of resources to provide social activities for students. Many students are unaware of the activities available to them in the sports hall or fitness suite. The new common room is not valued by most students and is too small. The café is often crowded at peak times. Construction students are housed in a site a quarter of a mile from the main building and visit the main building infrequently. Arrangements to enable them to integrate with students on the main site and make use of the full range of facilities there are inadequate. The lack of childcare facilities at the college is being addressed and a crèche is due to open by September 2003.

20. There are good systems for internal verification and standardisation of assessment. These are implemented effectively in some areas, such as hospitality and hairdressing. In other areas, however, such as construction, internal verification is not carried out consistently. Most assignments are well structured and most assessment is planned well, except in construction. In some areas, such as hospitality and hairdressing, monitoring of students' progress is good. In other areas, including engineering and much of the work-based learning provision, it is poor. The college is beginning to set individual targets based on prior attainment. The college is beginning to collect data on the value added to students' achievements by comparing the final examination results students obtain with their GCSE grades, or level of their attainment, when they joined their course. Teachers are using these value added data to set students' individual targets based on their prior attainment. Communication with the parents of students aged 16 to 18 is effective. Parents receive written reports on progress and are contacted by telephone if their son or daughter is absent. Parents' evenings are also held. Employers are also informed of students' progress where appropriate. In some areas, students receive good written feedback on their work and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve it. In other areas, such as construction, and health and social care, however, students receive insufficient, or unhelpful, feedback. Some schemes of work do not contain references to assessment. On literacy and numeracy courses, a disproportionate amount of assessment relates to the students' completion of worksheets. On vocational courses, there is no systematic method for checking how students learn key skills through their vocational work.

21. The college offers a broad range of provision at all levels that, in the main, meets the needs of students, employers and the community. The college has developed adult and community provision, including support for those who need help with basic skills. In some areas, student numbers are small, the range of provision is narrow and students do not have a wide choice of courses. There is insufficient level 1 provision in a few areas, for example, in engineering and travel and tourism. Few evening or part-time courses for adult learners are available in childcare. The college has expanded its provision of work-based training. It has taken over the training of learners from two other training providers. There are few enrichment activities for students

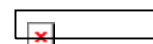
22. Since the last inspection, the college has developed a wide and productive network of links with schools, HE providers, employers, voluntary agencies and other community organisations. Through this network, the college has successfully promoted its provision to persons from groups under-represented on courses, including those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are offered a range of programmes. These include part-time courses for adults, both in community centres and in the college. Students on the access course can attend at times that fit in with family and work commitments. Students on the diploma in childcare education course are offered a 'fast track' option, whereby accreditation of their prior experience and learning counts towards their acquisition of relevant qualifications. Crèche workers can attend on Saturdays to develop their skills. The catering department offers short courses in college and in community centres for those who would not normally attend college.

23. Links with, and responsiveness to, employers have improved significantly. The college has provided courses for employees from a local company who are facing redundancy and are in need of retraining, following a decline in the aerospace industry locally. The college makes flexible arrangements for work-based employees to attend off-the-job training and education. There are particularly strong links with employers in the occupational areas of hairdressing and beauty therapy and engineering.

24. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the number of students undertaking initial assessments in literacy and numeracy. Nearly all full-time students receive initial assessments during induction. Some part-time students on longer courses are also assessed. The student services area is welcoming and staff are approachable, experienced and well qualified. Information materials are clear and attractive. A college induction CD has been produced for students who enrol late. There are four student service leaders who co-ordinate student support and guidance at a departmental level. They monitor and mentor personal tutors. There is a team of part-time counsellors and good links are maintained with specialist counselling and advice services. The counsellors can be contacted by students who wish to use text messaging.

25. Students who are identified as needing help with literacy or numeracy support are referred to the essential skills centre. No action is taken, however, if students choose not to take up the support they are offered. This year, 58% of the students identified as being in need of support have taken it up. The effectiveness of this support is not evaluated. Students who need any other form of learning support negotiate a plan for this with their tutor. Until recently, the college franchised the local education authority to provide support for students, but it now employs a small team of staff who provide this service. During 2001/02, 29 students on full-time or part-time courses received support, they included those with visual impairment, hearing difficulties and mobility problems. Recently, it has been decided that support funds will only be granted to those students in need who are punctual and attend regularly. A system whereby students mentor one another has recently been piloted and early indications are that it is proving successful. Students receive one-to-one tutorials at least three times a year. During tutorials, students discuss progression opportunities and what they will do when they leave the course. Students value the pastoral support offered by staff. In some areas, however, the tutorial system is not fully implemented and there is poor attendance at tutorials.

## Leadership and management



26. Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. The college has made much progress in addressing many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Many students, however, particularly those aged 16 to 18 and those on work-based learning programmes fail to achieve their target qualifications.

27. Governors and managers set a clear direction for the college. The college's mission, values and strategic aims are publicised well. The strategic planning cycle enables governors, managers and staff to play an appropriate part in planning the college's development. The strategic plan clearly outlines the college's priorities and the actions to be taken. The management style is open and consultative. Communications are good. Staff are well informed about developments in the college and make good use of electronic communications. Regular briefings and meetings promote a two-way flow of information. The management structure, however, has not yet proved fully effective. In some curriculum areas, the appointments to key positions are relatively recent. Some teachers and course managers are unclear about their roles and responsibilities. Some staff have not been in post long enough to exercise their management and quality assurance responsibilities fully. The role of the academic board and its relationship to other college committees are unclear.

28. Leadership and management have not been successful in bringing about an upward trend in pass rates since the last inspection. The college has, however, met its overall retention targets. Students' retention rates are above the national average with the exception of those for students

aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses. Strategies to improve retention rates, such as identifying and supporting students considered to be most at risk of leaving early, have been effective.

29. There is a well-planned quality assurance cycle and a calendar of quality assurance activities. There are comprehensive procedures for assessing quality against identified criteria. The self-assessment report acknowledges, however, that some staff need more training in order to gain a better understanding of their role in relation to quality assurance. Course teams set targets for attendance, retention and pass rates. Progress towards reaching these targets is formally reviewed three times each year. The college gathers the views of students, employers and parents. Some course managers gather feedback from students at the end of each unit. Some course reviews lack rigour. Quality assurance arrangements have not been implemented adequately in certain parts of the college.

30. All staff are involved in self-assessment through the course review process. A study day for staff is devoted to self-assessment. Following this, heads of department draft reports that are considered by the senior management team as well as a quality audit team before being submitted to governors. There is a well-established lesson observation process. Within the curriculum areas, use is made of evidence from this to make judgements on teaching and learning in the self-assessment report. The findings from lesson observations are also taken into account during staff appraisals and when identifying the training needs of individual teachers. Overall, the grades awarded by the college for teaching, learning and attainment through its lesson observation scheme were higher than those given by the inspectors. Inspectors did not find as much good teaching as the college observers did. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses cited in the self-assessment report, but they found a number of weaknesses the college had not identified. The college graded two curriculum areas higher than the inspectors did.

31. The financial management of the college is satisfactory. During a recent period when the college had an acting principal, a suitably qualified and experienced person was appointed to ensure that the management accounts were properly maintained. The college moved to purpose-built accommodation 18 months before the inspection. The cost of doing so brought about a significant reduction in the college's reserves and necessitated the taking out of a loan. In the last financial year, the college made an operating loss. Although the college has failed to meet its LSC funding target, it has compensated for the shortfall by securing income from other sources. Resources are managed satisfactorily although class sizes are lower than the sector average. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

32. The college has improved its management information systems since the last inspection. Managers, at all levels, have access to good information about student attendance and in-year retention rates. This information is available online and it is up to date. Course managers are making increasing use of management information systems to monitor aspects of course performance, but their use is not sufficiently widespread. Data on students' achievements are not always accurate or easily available. There are discrepancies between the data relating to students' achievements held centrally and that held by some course managers. There is some uncertainty about the validity of data used when reviewing students' performance or setting targets.

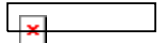
33. The annual appraisal system for staff is now well established. It involves an annual performance review followed up by four-monthly progress monitoring meetings. During appraisals, an assessment is made of the extent to which staff have helped the college to meet its corporate objectives, and their training needs are identified. Heads of department shoulder a significant responsibility, as line managers, for conducting the appraisals of all teaching staff. Some of the records of appraisals show that the follow-up reviews are rather cursory. In one area, appraisals were not completed at all.

34. In its strategic plan, the college identified that it needs to give greater priority to the promotion of equal opportunities. The self-assessment report acknowledges that in some curriculum areas, issues relating to equal opportunities are not addressed adequately. An equal opportunities advisory group meets regularly. Most staff have undertaken relevant training on equal opportunities recently. The college has appropriate policies relating to equal opportunities, disability and racial equality, but some staff and most students are not fully aware of their content. There is no systematic monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities. In some areas, staff and students are not well informed

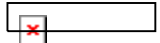
about issues relating to equality of opportunity.

35. Governors maintain good oversight of the strategic direction of the college. They are well informed about financial and educational performance and are strongly committed to improving the college. Between them, governors have an appropriate range of skills and are able to make an effective contribution to key activities, such as business planning, the devising of an accommodation strategy and identification of ways of widening participation. Although some governors have links with particular areas or college services, others do not and such links have not been systematically developed for all members of the corporation. A quality, curriculum and planning committee meets regularly and it closely monitors academic performance. Governors are aware of the courses that have low retention and pass rates, and of the action being taken to rectify weaknesses in provision.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Construction



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

#### **Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 bricklaying
- particularly thorough induction programme for work-based students.

#### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on City and Guilds 2360 electrical installation course
- low retention rates on NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery course
- low retention and pass rates for work-based learners
- inadequate development of students' practical skills in carpentry and joinery

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- inadequate planning of training for work-based students.

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

36. The college offers an adequate range of full-time, part-time and work-based construction craft courses from foundation to advanced levels. The crafts include bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, electrical installation, painting and decorating and plumbing. Of the 222 students enrolled in 2002, nearly half were aged 16 to 18. A further 40 learners undertake work-based carpentry and joinery programmes, and of these 9 are working towards NVQ level 1, 18 towards NVQ level 2 and 13 are on the foundation modern apprentice programme. Courses for construction technicians have failed to recruit. There are no advanced modern apprenticeship programmes.

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

37. Retention rates show considerable variation. On the NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery and NVQ level 2 mechanical engineering services (plumbing) programmes, the retention rates were below the national average in two out of the three years to 2002. Retention rates were consistently above the national average on the NVQ level 3 carpentry and joinery and NVQ level 2 in construction (bricklaying) programmes over the same period. Pass rates for the electrical installation course (City and Guilds 2360) were well below the national average in the period 2000 to 2002. Pass rates for many of the NVQ courses were similar to or above the national average, during the same period. In 2002, the pass rate on the NVQ level 3 in carpentry and joinery course fell by 22%, although it remained in line with the national average.

38. The overall retention and pass rates for work-based learners are low and many learners make slow progress towards achieving NVQs and completing foundation modern apprenticeships.

39. Students' work in bricklaying and painting and decorating is good and, in electrical installation and plumbing it is satisfactory. Students' work in carpentry and joinery, however, is sometimes poor. For example, students formed mortices by hand incorrectly, used the wrong chisel for the job, and worked unsafely. Students were unaware of correct working practice.

40. Attendance during the inspection was low, at 74%.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
NVQ in carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	34	22	29
		% retention	52	75	50
		% pass rate	82	87	85
NVQ in mechanical engineering services (plumbing)	2	No. of starts	6	15	13
		% retention	40	18	67
		% pass rate	100	50	67
City and Guilds 2360-02 electrical installation	2	No. of starts	7	7	19
		% retention	100	80	95

		% pass rate	43	0	17
NVQ in construction (bricklaying)	2	No. of starts	12	14	22
		% retention	92	85	84
		% pass rate	100	91	100
NVQ in construction (carpentry and joinery)	3	No. of starts	13	22	23
		% retention	85	95	100
		% pass rate	100	100	78

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

41. Much teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching of theory and practical is mostly dull. Teachers often show little enthusiasm and do not succeed in engaging and exciting the students' interest. Many students do not participate effectively in learning activities and the pace of lessons is often slow. There is inadequate checking of students' progress. Teaching does not extend the skills of more able students or provide support to those who need it. In many practical lessons, teachers do not demonstrate appropriate basic hand-tool skills and allow poor practice to go unchecked. Students on full-time NVQ programmes have little work experience. In the minority of better lessons, teachers ensure that students are fully involved in demanding activities. They give help to those who need it, set tasks appropriate to individual needs and check work effectively.

42. Assessment is not carried out well. There are some technical inaccuracies and ambiguous questions in students' worksheets and these are not marked adequately. When marking NVQ assignments, teachers fail to correct grammatical and technical errors, and they do not explain to the students what they need to do to improve their work. Internal verification is not undertaken routinely and lacks rigour. Progress reviews for work-based students are not effective and students do not receive a copy of the record of each review. Photographic records of students' work experience do not always provide necessary evidence of their acquisition of requisite NVQ competences. The training advisors' comments on students' portfolio evidence are often brief and insufficiently detailed and do not indicate whether the students have satisfactorily demonstrated NVQ competences or key skills.

43. The construction centre, which includes workshops and classrooms, is approximately a quarter of a mile from the college's main site. There is insufficient space in the plumbing workshop. Power tools are adequate, but some hand tools need to be replaced. Few texts and learning resources are available to students in the construction workshops and classrooms. Arrangements for students to access materials in the learning resource centre on the main site are inadequate. All teachers have vocational qualifications and appropriate industrial experience.

44. Work-based students and employers receive a particularly thorough induction. Work-based students, many of whom require a great deal of help in order to develop their social skills, receive good personal support. Key skills are not taught as an integral part of courses. Many students' key skills are weak. Equality of opportunity issues are not sufficiently discussed during work-based students' progress reviews. The tutorial programme for college-based students is not well structured. There are no effective arrangements to help construction students integrate socially with those on the main college site and give them access to the full range of facilities, including sports facilities. Construction students feel isolated from the rest of the college.

### **Leadership and management**

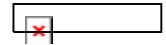
45. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Some teachers do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, particularly those relating to course management. Most teachers have recently had industrial secondments, or have made visits to firms, to update their vocational knowledge and skills. Some, however, failed to draw sufficiently on this recent



industrial experience in their teaching. The continuity of students' learning on some courses, especially those in electrical installation, has been adversely affected by staffing problems. There is little sharing of good practice between teachers of different crafts. The college's quality assurance and internal verification procedures are not followed effectively. Classrooms and workshops are well used, but work-based students are often unable to find sufficient space in which to do their work. Through the college's lesson observation process, the college's observers judged teaching in many lessons more favourably than the inspectors did.

46. The college's business development unit oversees management of the work-based programme. Most employers on the work-based programme are well informed about it and provide good and varied work experience for students. Planning of training, however, is inadequate. For example, the competences gained in the workplace are not always accredited or recorded. The college does not offer students progression routes to the next NVQ level or an advanced modern apprenticeship programme. Learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme are not always provided with adequate work experience and they do not receive enough assessment in the workplace.

## Engineering



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on advanced computer-aided design and basic engineering courses
- effective progress reviews in the workplace for motor vehicle students
- good learning resources
- effective links with employers.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on national certificate diploma and work-based learning courses
- much mundane teaching
- failure to make key skills an integral part of course content

- insufficient workplace assessment in welding programmes.

### **Scope of provision**

47. There are approximately 80 full-time and 200 part-time students. The college offers two full-time courses one is the national diploma course in engineering, and the other is a programme leading to an NVQ at level 2 in vehicle mechanical and electrical systems. The national certificate programme covers electrical and electronics engineering, mechanical and manufacturing engineering, and plant engineering. Part-time courses include those in electrical and mechanical engineering and welding, and the City and Guilds 2010 basic engineering competence course. Evening courses are provided in fabrication and welding at levels 1, 2 and 3, and include a course leading to an advanced award in computer-aided design. There are 46 learners on work-based programmes. Some are working to obtain NVQs, and complete foundation modern apprenticeships, in welding. Others are working towards foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in vehicle maintenance and repair.

### **Achievement and standards**

48. Retention rates are satisfactory overall, and on some courses, they are above the national average. The retention rate for NVQ level 2 in vehicle maintenance and repair was 100% in 2002, following two years when it was similar to the national average. Pass rates on the City and Guilds 2010 basic engineering competences course and the advanced computer-aided design course, have been above the national average for the last two years. In 2002, the pass rate on the one-year national certificate in engineering course fell to 17%, following two years when it was well above the national average. Retention and pass rates on the full-time national diploma course have been low for two years.

49. Few work-based learners meet all the requirements of their apprenticeship framework. Of those who started their programme, 68% are still on it and are making good progress towards completion of their apprenticeship.

50. Some students produce high standards of practical work. Students at level 1 on welding courses produce test pieces of good quality. Their portfolio, assignment and coursework is thorough and well presented. Attendance during the inspection was good at, 82%.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2000 to 2002**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Telematics basic	1	No. of starts	11	43	41
		% retention	82	98	93
		% pass rate	100	86	84
Welding and fabrication practice	1	No. of starts	10	11	14
		% retention	70	64	79
		% pass rate	57	0	91
City and Guilds 2010 basic engineering competences	1	No. of starts	13	13	39
		% retention	92	100	90
		% pass rate	100	85	83
NVQ in vehicle	2	No. of starts	18	18	9

maintenance and repair		% retention	67	72	100
		% pass rate	58	62	78
Advanced award in computer-aided design	3	No. of starts	*	40	31
		% retention	*	98	90
		% pass rate	*	72	89
National certificate in engineering (1 year)	3	No. of starts	46	42	13
		% retention	98	100	54
		% pass rate	96	79	17
National certificate in engineering (2 year)	3	No. of starts	14	8	35
		% retention	36	63	91
		% pass rate	100	40	73

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

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

51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers organise their lessons well. Some teachers relate lesson topics to practical and industrial situations. The teachers involved with work-based learners cope well with classes made up of learners of mixed ability, who are at different stages of their course, because of the flexible recruitment arrangements. In one good lesson on welding, foundation modern apprentices were provided with well-presented learning materials relating to the technical certificate they needed to obtain in order to complete their apprenticeship. Much teaching, however, is mundane. Teachers fail to challenge students to use their skills to the full and give their best. There is little variety of appropriate learning activities and in many instances, students lose interest in the lesson. Some teachers fail to check students' understanding. In general, teachers fail to help students develop skills of problem solving and communication. They do not teach key skills effectively as an integral part of the course.

52. Assessment is effective. Students are given some good assignments and usually receive helpful feedback from their teachers on their performance in these. Assessment procedures are good, but some teachers do not give students sufficient written feedback on the quality of their work. Some of the work-based learners' portfolios contained no feedback from teachers. Motor vehicle learners receive effective progress reviews in the workplace. Learners benefited from the training adviser's wealth of experience in the motor trade and in training.

53. Teachers are suitably qualified. They are keen to help learners succeed. Staff responsible for work-based programmes within the business development unit have good up-to-date industrial experience. Classrooms and laboratories are good. The small engineering workshop is well laid out and suitably equipped. Machine tools and work positions are easily accessible to students. The motor vehicle training workshop provides a good simulated work environment. Specialist computer-based learning packages are available to students. Training for work-based welding learners is provided in two separate buildings located near the construction workshops. The welding workshop is of a good size, well equipped and has enough workstations to meet learners' needs. The classroom and social facilities on this site, however, are inadequate.

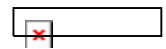
54. The college has good links with employers. There is employer representation at all course reviews and at meetings to develop new programmes. Employers providing work-based training speak highly of the college. Learners on work-based programmes receive good training and personal support. Many gain permanent employment on successful completion of their apprenticeship. However, training advisers overlook good opportunities for work-based assessment, especially in welding.

55. Most students and work-based learners receive good support. During their induction, learners have their needs for additional learning support identified effectively, and these are then met. Attendance is monitored well. Most teachers follow up students' absences rigorously. Group tutorials are not always effective and some students do not receive individual tutorials.

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

56. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a new manager in post who has begun to take action to address identified concerns. Most courses are well organised. Some teaching staff are unclear about their roles and responsibilities and lines of communication. In 2001/02, except for teachers of work-based learning, few staff received appraisals of their performance. Some course reviews lack rigour and there is insufficient use of target setting as means of improving provision and performance. The self-assessment report acknowledges many key weaknesses. Insufficient attention is given to measures for raising the low retention and pass rates on the national diploma in engineering course. The development plan that accompanies the self-assessment report does not address ways of improving the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning. Work-based learning is well managed. In some instances, new staff receive inadequate support.

### **Business and administration**



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

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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on call centre techniques and word processing courses
- rigorous system for monitoring and reviewing student progress
- effective arrangements for assessing full-time students' work through use of ICT
- high success rate of work-based learners in progressing to employment.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on some full-time courses
- inadequate provision at level 1 in business

- failure of some teachers to meet learners' differing needs in lessons
- failure of many learners to meet the requirements of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- ineffective use of individual learning plans on work-based learning programmes.

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

57. The college provides courses from foundation to advanced levels in business, administration, accounting and management. There is no specific business provision at level 1. There are specialist part-time courses in accounting and medical secretarial studies. Leadership and management courses have recently been introduced and introductory book-keeping courses are now offered in the community. Work-based learning provision includes NVQ training programmes and advanced and foundation modern apprenticeship programmes.

58. Currently, there are 61 full-time students, 340 part-time students and 56 work-based learners. Approximately 70% of the work-based learners have work placements.

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

59. Retention rates on most courses are similar to the national averages or higher. Retention rates for word processing and audio transcription courses have been consistently above the national average. Pass rates on call centre techniques and word processing courses have been consistently above the national averages for the past three years. Pass rates on most full-time courses, however, are significantly below the national average. For example, in 2002, the pass rate on the level 2 administrative and secretarial procedures course was 29% and no student passed on the level 3 course. The pass rate for GNVQ advanced business fell from 78% to 41% between 2000 and 2001. In 2002, the pass rate for the AVCE business (double award) was 100%, but for the single award it was 55% and few students progressed from year one to year two. The standard of most students' work is high. Assignments are well presented. Portfolios contain clear evidence of students' acquisition of good IT skills.

60. Few learners meet all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework. The retention rate on the foundation modern apprenticeship course is low and in 2001/02, 43% of learners left early. Current learners are progressing well and demonstrate competency in most office tasks. There is a wide range of good work in most portfolios. Learners are well matched to work placements, many of which offer extensive learning opportunities. Many learners gain employment during or after training.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in business and administration, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Word processing part 2	1	No. of starts	36	90	98
		% retention	100	93	95
		% pass rate	86	83	80
Call centre techniques	1	No. of starts	15	211	95

		% retention	100	95	88
		% pass rate	80	85	88
Business administration II/certificate in administration and secretarial procedures*	2	No. of starts	47	18	21
		% retention	91	100	81
		% pass rate	58	50	29
Audio transcription 2 part 2	2	No. of starts	57	39	11
		% retention	91	100	100
		% pass rate	58	46	64
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	28	14	12
		% retention	75	86	67
		% pass rate	67	58	100
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	22	14	12
		% retention	91	93	67
		% pass rate	90	92	75
GNVQ advanced business/AVCE business (double award) **	3	No. of starts	43	37	8
		% retention	69	65	75
		% pass rate	78	41	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\*college replaced business administration II with certificate in administration and secretarial procedures in 2002

\*\* AVCE replaced GNVQ in 2002

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

61. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. The best lessons are well structured and teaching materials are well prepared. In many lessons, students are encouraged to exercise initiative in their learning, explore ideas and concepts and develop the skills of working responsibly on their own. In the less effective lessons, all the students were set the same tasks and these were too difficult for some and too easy for others. Even when the class size was small, some teachers failed to ensure that learning tasks were matched to the different needs of individuals. Two observed lessons finished before the scheduled end time. In another lesson, the pace of the class exercise was too fast for some students and they were unable to keep up.

62. In the workplace, learners have regular contact with training advisers. Some learners are not given sufficiently challenging tasks or allowed to plan their own progress in conjunction with employers. Some learners have to carry out tasks at the college for training and assessment purposes, which they have already completed in the workplace. Many individual learning plans are not tailored to meet learner's individual needs or take account of learner's personal attributes. Learners' progress towards reaching targets is seldom measured effectively. All learners attend college for half a day a week and complete a word processing course. For some learners already using word processing skills at a high level in the workplace, this course is inappropriate.

63. Specialist accommodation includes a call centre classroom and several computer suites. Staff are appropriately qualified. Tutorial support for full-time students is effective. Group tutorials are well structured and students of all ages participate in them and benefit from the range of planned tutorial activities. Tutorial records specify targets individual students have been set and focus on the students' progress towards reaching them. Value added data informs individual target setting on the

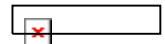
AVCE business course. Students value the support they receive. Students on business and administration courses benefit from the prompt marking of their work, which they e-mail to teachers.

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

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are kept well informed of current developments in the college and their curriculum area through regular meetings. Course reviews contribute to the college's self-assessment report and some contain some clear action points that have been implemented. For example, on the AVCE business course, staff have restructured assessments in an effort to raise retention and pass rates. Many reviews are insufficiently detailed and fail to analyse retention and pass rates against targets, or identify appropriate action for raising them. Course timetabling does not always give students enough scope to work on their own, using the study facilities in the college. Timetable changes are not always communicated effectively to students.

65. The business development unit manages the work-based learners. Significant changes have recently been made to staff roles and responsibilities and these have yet to make a significant impact. The internal verification system is not fully effective. Newly qualified assessors receive insufficient guidance. Quality assurance procedures are not sufficiently rigorous and fail to identify issues in their early stages.

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



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates
- excellent specialist resources
- high rate of students' progression from one course level to the next.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on foundation and intermediate level courses
- slow progress of many students
- poor attendance on intermediate and advanced level courses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient recording of individual students' learning in workshops
- some unsatisfactory course management
- failure of some learning materials to meet individual students' needs.

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

66. The college offers ICT and computing courses from foundation to advanced level. Students can progress to higher level courses in computing within the college. At advanced level, the college offers a national diploma course in IT and 40 students have enrolled on this. There are 22 final-year students completing the national diploma course in computer studies. Part-time courses include the new CLAIT course and the ECDL course. Part-time enrolments at the time of inspection were 344. Part-time courses are also provided in a number of centres based in the community.

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

67. Pass rates on advanced level courses are significantly above the national average. For example, in 2002, the pass rate on the national diploma in computer studies course was 94%, compared with the national average of 84%. Pass rates on part-time foundation and intermediate level courses are below the national average. Retention rates have been consistently above the national average on courses at all levels. During the inspection, attendance on intermediate and advanced level courses was poor, averaging 70% and 65%, respectively. Students' attainment in the lessons observed is unsatisfactory. The assignment work of students on the full-time intermediate IT course is good. Many full-time students progress from one course level to the next.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in computing and information and communication technology, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Computer literacy and information technology	1	No. of starts	358	334	447
		% retention	93	95	93
		% pass rate	40	35	59
Integrated business technology	2	No. of starts	132	137	209
		% retention	92	96	94
		% pass rate	27	42	53
European computer driving licence	2	No. of starts	32	135	350
		% retention	97	100	85
		% pass rate	39	62	52



National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	16	23	19
		% retention	63	87	100
		% pass rate	78	90	94
Integrated business technology	3	No. of starts	25	14	44
		% retention	96	100	84
		% pass rate	71	64	65

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

68. Much teaching is uninspiring. In the better lessons, students are highly motivated and keen to complete tasks that link theory to practical activities. For example, in one lesson students dismantled and reassembled a personal computer and tested that it worked properly. They put into practice their understanding of motherboard configurations. In unsatisfactory lessons, students were given learning tasks which did not match their ability and aptitude. In some lessons, students did not remember the lesson content of the previous week and required significant help to complete their assignments effectively. Teachers often fail to explain tasks clearly and students are confused about what they have to do. The teacher then uses up valuable lesson time telling individual students what is expected of them. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers do not inspire students. They sometimes spend considerable time helping individual students and give insufficient attention to others who have difficulty with much of the lesson content. Teachers do not match teaching materials to individual students' needs. There is over-reliance on the use of standardised commercial workbooks. In workshop sessions, for example, students worked on their own using learning guides. These had not been adapted, however, to meet the needs of individual students. There was little recording of the competences students had developed and demonstrated during workshop sessions. Students are not encouraged to monitor their own learning and skill development. Teachers do not give students on advanced level courses enough feedback on the quality of their work, or show them how they can improve their performance. Students on the full-time advanced level course have a three-week placement in a local company. Records show that students value the complexity of the work they undertake in these placements and are able to draw on their work experience to complete their course assignments.

69. Students' attainment is unsatisfactory in the majority of lessons. On many part-time courses, students were behind in completing their assessments. On the advanced level courses, students had difficulty understanding and applying basic concepts and relied too much on help from the teacher. Course registers show erratic attendance by many students. Tutors do not follow up students' absences in tutorials. Few enrichment opportunities are available to full-time students.

70. On all courses, assessment and verification are carried out in line with awarding body requirements. On the full-time course in IT at intermediate level, assessment is carried out well and students engage in effective action planning to improve their performance. Students maintain exemplary portfolios. Verification of assessed work is not always timely. Students receive individual reports on their progress and these identify their strengths and weaknesses. The reports do not, however, always indicate what students need to do to improve their performance.

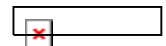
71. Teachers are well qualified and between them, they have a range of commercial experience. Computing and IT facilities are very good. Software applications are up to date. Students have established an intranet on the college website and are developing it as part of their course projects. These involve the setting up of interactive message boards with inter-related topics, linked effectively using a range of programming languages.

### **Leadership and management**

72. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. A number of measures intended to improve the

quality of provision through self-assessment have been implemented recently. These include changes in the roles and responsibilities of staff, and the restructuring of course management. Some course management is still unsatisfactory and there is poor monitoring of the implementation of action plans to address weaknesses. Course reviews do not indicate whether action identified as necessary through previous self-assessment, has been carried out successfully. Action to rectify newly identified weaknesses is not always specified. Action plans are not drawn up to improve courses on which retention and pass rates are low. Many course reviews focus on rectifying weaknesses in resources rather than addressing quality issues and poor student attendance. Course managers are set targets and their performance is reviewed at termly meetings on the quality of courses.

## Hospitality and travel



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on the majority of courses
- good support and guidance for students
- much good teaching of practical skills
- effective development of students key skills in lessons
- good links with industry.

### ***Weaknesses***

- slow progress in securing adequate provision for students at level 1
- insufficient travel opportunities for travel and tourism students.

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

73. There are 46 students on full-time courses and approximately 200 on short and part-time courses. NVQ catering courses at level 1 and level 2 mainly recruit students aged 16 to 18, while most of the students on level 3 courses are adults. Other full-time courses include a GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course and the AVCE travel and tourism single and double award course. There is no level 1 provision in travel and tourism. Full-time students can work towards additional qualifications including 'welcome host', first aid, keyboard skills and basic food hygiene awards. Short courses for adults are provided at the college and in the community, and include those leading to cookery and basic food hygiene qualifications.

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

74. Retention and pass rates on most courses are at least satisfactory and many are high. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 1 courses introduced in 2001 were high, at over 90%. In 2001 and 2002, the retention rate on the NVQ level 2 food preparation course was high and in 2002, the pass rate rose significantly to 80%. The first diploma in hotel and catering studies also had a very high pass rate of 100% in 2002. Both pass and retention rates for the one-year AVCE travel and tourism (single award) were well above national average. However, progression to the second year of the course was poor. Attendance at lessons observed was good at 84%.

75. Students' work is of a high standard. Students are provided with good work experience placements which help them to extend the range of their personal skills.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality and travel, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
First diploma in hotel and catering studies	2	No. of starts	19	18	12
		% retention	89	83	75
		% pass rate	94	73	100
NVQ 2 food preparation	2	No. of starts	22	33	5
		% retention	76	91	100
		% pass rate	53	23	80
Basic food hygiene certificate (short)	2	No. of starts	145	172	546
		% retention	99	99	100
		% pass rate	87	91	92
AVCE travel and tourism (single award)	3	No. of starts	*	14	17
		% retention	*	92	88
		% pass rate	*	85	87
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism/AVCE travel and tourism (double award)**	3	No. of starts	14	13	12
		% retention	79	68	92
		% pass rate	64	85	100
NVQ 3 food preparation	3	No. of starts	10	18	7
		% retention	70	44	100
		% pass rate	53	88	80

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

*\*\*AVCE replaced GNVQ in 2002*

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

76. Overall, teaching is good. Teaching activities are well structured. Practical food preparation and food service lessons take place in the kitchen and training restaurant. These facilities provide students with a realistic work environment where they are required to work to high standards and follow best industry practice. Feedback to students on their work is constructive and appropriate to individual needs. The atmosphere is relaxed. Students have confidence in their own abilities and are eager to participate in learning tasks. In practical sessions, students are given constructive feedback verbally and sessions conclude with self-assessment of individual and team performance.

77. Students use a range of learning materials in lessons. The teaching of students with learning difficulties is particularly good. Teachers set the students challenging but realistic targets and addressed their needs sensitively. In lessons, key skills are taught effectively as an integral part of the curriculum. Students understand that these skills are essential to them if they are to perform effectively in the workplace. Teachers have an excellent rapport with the students. They offer students good support during and outside lessons to help them achieve their targets. In two lessons, students used computers in the classroom well to obtain information.

78. With the aim of strengthening their understanding of theoretical principles, students go on trips and visits, and are given talks by outside speakers from local businesses. All students are offered good work placements. Close links with a local tour operator provide good work experience opportunities for travel and tourism students and helps many obtain employment. Travel and tourism students, however, undertake little travel in the United Kingdom and abroad as part of their course. All staff are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience. Resources are good. The kitchen offers a bright well-ventilated learning environment with all the necessary equipment to enable students to be trained to industry standards. In the training restaurant, students take part in themed events. These give them a variety of experience of presenting and serving food in different ways and enable them to develop a full range of requisite NVQ competences.

79. Assessment is well planned and effective. Students are motivated to succeed through being made aware of the extent of their progress and achievements. Internal verification is rigorous and follows college procedures. There is little provision of additional vocational courses to help AVCE travel and tourism students broaden their experiences.

80. Good advice and guidance are provided to students with the aim of ensuring they are placed on the right course. Students understand progression routes and career opportunities available to them following completion of their courses. Students are given every encouragement to apply to higher education (HE) institutions and receive good help and guidance to enable them to do so. The tutorial system is well structured and students value the guidance and support they receive. Absences are rigorously followed up. Individual students receive reviews of their progress. During these, they are given good support, engage in action planning, and are set targets. All students receive an initial assessment to identify their potential and also their preferred learning styles. Teachers take the results and findings of initial assessment into account when planning lessons and deciding how much help and support individual students need.

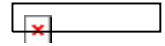
### **Leadership and management**

81. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers were slow to take action to raise low retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 catering courses in 2000 and 2001. The introduction of level 1 courses in catering has widened the range of options for students and has met a need. A level 1 course in travel and tourism is to be offered from September 2003.

82. Staff appraisals have identified staff training needs. Industry placements have helped all staff to keep up to date with current industrial practice. New staff receive support from mentors. Managers and staff work well as a team. Students value the way in which teachers work together to support them. At staff meetings, key issues are addressed and necessary action is identified. Checks are

made to ensure this action is carried out. The self-assessment report failed to identify as a weaknesses the low proportion of students who progress from year 1 to year 2 of the AVCE travel and tourism course, and the lack of organised travel in this country or abroad for those on travel and tourism courses. Neither of these weaknesses is addressed in the curriculum development plan arising from the self-assessment report.

## **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

### ***Strengths***

- much good teaching
- high standard of students' practical skills
- high retention and pass rates on full-time NVQ level 2 courses
- rigorous internal verification and assessment practice
- good links with employers
- good work placements.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient beauty therapy clients for students' assessment purposes
- ineffective integration of key skills with course content
- low retention and pass rates on part-time beauty therapy course

- some poor teaching materials.

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

83. The section offers a range of courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Hairdressing provision includes full-time and part-time courses at NVQ levels 1 and 2. Foundation modern apprenticeship programmes are also offered. Beauty therapy courses include those leading to NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in beauty, and at level 3 in holistic and sports therapy. A range of part-time and evening courses include those in body massage, aromatherapy, and reflexology and Indian head massage. Taster and short courses covering a range of holistic therapies are offered at 13 community venues. There are good links with schools and provision is offered to Year 10 and Year 11 pupils. There are about 30 full-time students, 25 part-time students and 25 modern apprentices on hairdressing courses. There are approximately 50 full-time students, and 100 part-time students on beauty therapy courses.

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

84. There are high retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and beauty therapy. In 2002, for example, the retention rate on the hairdressing course was 83% and on the beauty therapy course it was 88%, compared with the respective national average of 63% and 70%. In the same year, the pass rate on both the hairdressing and beauty therapy courses was 100%, compared with the national average of 76% and 79%, respectively. Retention rates are high on the part-time courses in Indian head massage and aromatherapy. In 2002, the retention rate was low on the part-time course in cosmetic make-up and reflexology. Pass rates on some part-time courses are low. For example, in 2002, the pass rate was low on the cosmetic make-up and reflexology courses, and on the body massage course, it was well below the national average. Many students progress to further courses or employment. Students' practical skills, especially in hairdressing, are of a high standard. Attendance is good at 87% and students are punctual.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	6	16	57
		% retention	83	75	70
		% pass rate	100	100	78
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	2	No. of starts	12	13	24
		% retention	55	82	75
		% pass rate	100	75	100
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	19	12	6
		% retention	47	58	83
		% pass rate	100	86	100
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	13	12	16
		% retention	77	75	88
		% pass rate	100	67	100
Cosmetic make up	2	No. of starts	23	20	13
		% retention	65	45	69

		% pass rate	94	89	100
Body massage diploma	3	No. of starts	20	*	16
		% retention	90	*	81
		% pass rate	82	*	44
Reflexology	3	No. of starts	8	14	17
		% retention	75	100	71
		% pass rate	100	36	51

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\*course did not run

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

85. Teaching is good. In most lessons teachers are well organised, use a variety of learning styles and provide students with individual support and guidance, and help them to acquire good skills. Teachers have a good rapport with students and draw effectively on students' own ideas and experiences. Questioning techniques are effective in engaging all students and checking their understanding. In practical lessons, teachers demonstrate and explain techniques clearly. Teachers ensure that students concentrate and work hard and they expect them to achieve high standards. Teachers give individual students good support, know the extent of their progress and what their needs are. Some effort has been made to improve the teaching of key skills, but there has been little attempt to make it an integral part of the curriculum. Some written teaching materials, and in particular workbooks, are of poor quality, badly photocopied or have spelling and grammatical errors. There is little use of ILT in teaching.

86. The assignment schedule is well planned. Internal verification and assessment procedures are rigorous. On hairdressing courses, teachers monitor and review students' progress particularly well. Students' portfolio evidence is well ordered and of good quality. Homework is set on a weekly basis. In some practical sessions on beauty therapy courses, there were not enough clients to enable all students to be assessed while providing treatments.

87. Satisfactory additional learning support is available to those students who need it. Some students, however, who are identified as being in need of learning support, do not attend the sessions when this is provided. Students value the good support and guidance subject teachers give them. There are good links with employers which lead to good work experience placements for full-time students. Reviews of individual students' progress are carried out effectively. Most group tutorials are carried out satisfactorily, but some lack clear objectives and purpose. The system for monitoring and following up absentees is good. Few enrichment activities are available to students.

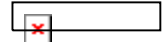
88. All teaching staff have relevant industrial experience and appropriate qualifications. The college provides good staff development opportunities to enable teachers to develop their skills. Hairdressing and beauty therapy have new purpose-built salons of industrial standards. There is little storage space for students' personal clothing and equipment. Library stocks are unsatisfactory. Some books are old and out of date. There are insufficient books to enable students, particularly those on beauty therapy courses, to work on their own. There are few non-printed resources such as CD-ROMs or videos, and no learning materials are available on the college intranet.

### **Leadership and management**

89. Leadership and management are good. There is clear direction from curriculum managers regarding target setting, management of resources, course review, curriculum development and standards. Staff meet formally twice a term, but there are weekly informal meetings to discuss students' attendance and progress. There are, however, no formal arrangements to enable part-time

staff to attend meetings. The hairdressing and beauty therapy staff work closely together and share good practice. New staff are now mentored and assessed by experienced colleagues. The staff appraisal system is thorough. Staff are set targets and their progress towards meeting them is reviewed. The training needs of staff are identified during appraisals. In 2002, all teaching staff took the opportunity to update their industry skills. Little action has been taken to recruit more male students to courses.

### **Health and social care**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good examination results on the childhood and education certificate course
- good tutorials
- good teaching of health topics
- particularly good support for students
- high attainment of students on most level 3 courses.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- some unsatisfactory teaching of childcare topics
- insufficient resources for practical work
- some poor practice in the promotion of equality of opportunity
- poor strategic development of the provision



- slow progress of students towards achieving some qualifications.

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

90. The section offers courses in health and social care and childcare and education from pre-foundation to level 3. There are approximately 200 full-time students and a similar number of part-time students, many of whom are enrolled on courses off the main site. Recently, staff have been developing childcare courses jointly with community partners. Other community courses include the certificate in youth work course, a drug awareness course and short first aid courses. All full-time and part-time students can also take short courses leading to additional qualifications, such as those in first aid and basic health and safety. There are few courses for part-time students on the college's main site.

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

91. Overall, retention and pass rates are satisfactory. In the three years from 2000 to 2002, retention rates on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate course in caring for young children have been high, at between 88% and 100%. In 2002, the pass rate on this course rose to 89%. The pass rate on the CACHE certificate in childcare and education has also risen and was well above the national average in 2002. The retention rate on this course was above the national average for two out of the last three years. In 2002, the proportion of students on the CACHE certificate in childcare and education course who obtained high grades exceeded the national average by 45%. Students currently enrolled on level 3 courses in both health and social care and childcare have good levels of attainment. However students on the CACHE diploma in nursery nursing make slow progress towards completing their qualifications and many do not achieve the qualification until after the scheduled end date.

92. A high proportion of students who successfully complete level 3 courses in health and social care progress to HE to train as nurses. Most students on level 3 childcare courses take up relevant employment, and none progressed to HE in 2002.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
CACHE certificate in caring for young children	1	No. of starts	9	8	9
		% retention	100	88	100
		% pass rate	67	71	89
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	11	12	33
		% retention	91	67	85
		% pass rate	70	75	93
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	26	27	12
		% retention	83	73	67
		% pass rate	70	58	100
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	31	36	24
		% retention	60	72	75
		% pass rate	65	87	76

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

93. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In some lessons, there is very good teaching, particularly of health-related topics. In these lessons, the teachers inspire the students with their expertise, set them challenging tasks and spur them on to give of their best. Teachers help students to extend the skills and knowledge they already have. They give students encouragement to help them grow in self-esteem and become more sure of themselves as learners. Many students on level 3 courses contribute to group discussions with confidence and produce work of a high standard. Teachers manage lessons well and ensure that all students participate fully in learning activities. They make good use of learning resources, such as videos. Questioning techniques are effective in encouraging students to think and reason.

94. In less effective lessons, some students are not challenged to think and use their skills to the full. Group work is often uninspiring and poorly organised. Some teaching on childcare courses is unsatisfactory, failing to meet the needs of childcare practitioners. For example, some teaching of practical craft skills fails to cover the play and learning needs of younger children adequately. There was some poor practice in the promotion of equality of opportunity. Some teachers used inappropriate language on occasions. In one lesson, the needs of a student with dyslexia had not been adequately considered.

95. The learning resource centre has a good supply of books and journals. Students have good access to computers, which they use frequently and well. It is difficult for them to carry out practical activities because running water is not easily accessible, and there are few storage facilities. There is a great deal of students' work on display in classrooms and teachers refer to this and use it as a learning resource in lessons. Some rooms are too small for overhead projectors to be used in them effectively. The layout of furniture in rows in some rooms is not conducive to effective group work. In lessons, some staff make good use of ILT, such as powerpoint and interactive whiteboards. All staff have, or are working towards, relevant teaching qualifications. Staff update their professional expertise through the college's staff development programme.

96. Students have a good range of relevant work placements. The tutorial system is well established and effective. Personal tutors provide students with particularly good personal and academic support. Data on the value added to students' achievements are used effectively in target setting and for monitoring students' progress on courses. Tutors provide students with effective feedback on the quality of their work and give them guidance on how they can achieve targets and obtain high grades. Assignments are carefully scheduled to ensure students have a reasonable workload. Teachers mark assignments promptly and provide students with written feedback on how they may improve their assignment work. This feedback is mostly helpful, but in a few instances, the written comments were inappropriate in the light of the grade awarded. There are effective systems for the internal verification of students' assessed work. External verification reports confirm compliance with national standards. All full-time and many part-time students receive an initial assessment to identify their need for additional learning support. Some students, however, are reluctant to take up the support they are offered. When planning lessons, some teachers fail to consider the learning support workers who will be present in the classroom to give help to those students who need it.

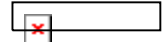
97. Students extend their learning through visits and talks on a diverse range of topics by outside speakers. Childcare students take part in a well-organised residential visit to London where they visit the playwork facilities of a large children's hospital or nurseries.

### **Leadership and management**

98. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff development programme is effective and provides good opportunities for staff to update their professional skills. Course teams work well together. All staff take part in the department's self-assessment process, but this is insufficiently rigorous. Inspectors found weaknesses the staff had not identified and the grade they awarded was

lower than that given in the self-assessment report. The curriculum development plan does not include responses to local and national initiatives in health and social care, and childcare. There are no systematic arrangements for enabling students to contribute their views to course reviews.

## **Literacy and numeracy**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching in literacy and numeracy
- high standard of students' written work on literacy and numeracy courses
- good target setting on literacy and numeracy courses
- good review and monitoring of students' progress on literacy and numeracy courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities
- ineffective recording and use of management information
- inadequate management of basic skills and key skills teaching across all the college courses
- ineffective integration of key skills with vocational course content.

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

99. The college describes its literacy and numeracy courses as 'essential skills' courses. In 2001/02, there were about 130 enrolments for literacy courses and about 70 for numeracy courses. All full-time students aged 16 to 18 are offered teaching in key skills.. The core adult basic skills curriculum

is offered at entry levels 1 to 3 and new national tests for literacy and numeracy are being introduced in 2002/03. Students can work towards a range of open college certificates in literacy and numeracy. Provision is offered on the main site and also in outreach premises. For example, family literacy and numeracy programmes are available in community development centres. Provision is arranged flexibly and meets the needs of a wide range of adults and young people.

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

100. There are insufficient reliable data in this area to judge performance trends over a three-year period at either course or college level. In part, this is due to changes in qualifications in literacy and numeracy, but also to the ways in which college information systems capture data relating to qualifications, students' achievements, retention and attendance. Data in the table below are valid and show retention rates are consistently below the national average and pass rates are at, or below the national average. Students benefit from their courses and teaching in many ways. In addition to gaining accreditation of their achievements, they develop greater independence, become more confident in helping their children with schoolwork, are able to apply their learning successfully in unfamiliar situations, and attain demanding learning goals. Students express a great deal of satisfaction with their provision and grow in self-esteem through their achievements.

101. Students achieve consistently high standards in their work and demonstrate good personal and learning skills. The new adult basic skills core curriculum aims to help learners develop research and problem-solving skills.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy and numeracy, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
FAME foundation certificate in mathematics	entry	No. of starts	24	28	69
		% retention	75	100	76
		% pass rate	11	46	62
FAME foundation certificate in English	entry	No. of starts	89	143	45
		% retention	82	81	67
		% pass rate	16	52	82

*Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)*

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

102. The majority of teaching on literacy and numeracy courses is good or better. The teaching of key skills on vocational courses is often unsatisfactory. Good lessons are well planned and help students to meet their individual learning plan goals and personal needs. In many lessons, teachers use a narrow range of classroom methods and students are required to spend a disproportionate amount of time on commercially produced worksheets. There is little group work. Lesson plans, students' individual learning plans and teaching materials contain little reference to the promotion of equal opportunities.

103. Some teaching of key skills is unsatisfactory. The students are given confusing instructions, are unsure what they have to do, and their confidence is undermined by unhelpful teacher comments. Planning of some lessons is poor and the teacher has failed to adapt teaching methods and learning materials to take account of the diverse needs of students of differing abilities in the class. For example, a student in one group had been identified as able to work towards certification in mathematics at level 2. The student, however, had to do work at level 1, which was too easy for him.

104. There is a lack of good display materials in some classrooms. Some rooms are small and there is not enough room for the students to carry out some activities effectively, such as properly

organised discussion, role-play exercises and some forms of group work. Staff who teach literacy and numeracy are appropriately qualified. An extensive programme of training on the teaching of essential skills is available to all teachers in the college. There is, however, no systematic monitoring of the extent to which staff participate in this training and no evaluation has been carried out of its impact on the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning

105. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are carried out well on literacy and numeracy courses. There is also some careful recording of students' development of key skills on hospitality and catering courses, but this is not carried out with consistent thoroughness across other vocational areas. On entry to the college, all full-time and some part-time students undertake an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. The results of these assessments are taken into account when setting students targets. Students' progress towards achieving these targets is monitored regularly. Internal and external verification are well organised and systematic.

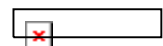
106. Literacy and numeracy courses at the college and off site are good. These are organised flexibly to meet the needs of students, for example, parents with young children or those who have to make baby-sitting arrangements, families sharing transport, and shift workers

107. Overall there is good guidance for students. They value highly the personal support they are given and the careful diagnosis of their needs. Staff give students a great deal of support. The good relationships between staff and students, built on mutual trust, help the students to learn effectively. Staff who teach on literacy and numeracy courses do all they can to help their students succeed. They have good interpersonal skills and are able to deal effectively and sensitively with people who are feeling vulnerable. Students value the help they receive from tutors, the opportunity to work at their own pace and the support they receive from other students in the class.

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

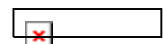
108. The management of literacy and numeracy courses is good. The management of literacy and numeracy teaching, which forms part of all courses in vocational areas across the college, however, is unsatisfactory. Staff in the additional support, essential skills and key skills teams are not given overall leadership to help them work together to make the teaching of key skills an integral part of courses in vocational areas. Responsibility for the way key skills are taught rests with the individual vocational areas. Few staff in these areas, however, have qualifications for the teaching of key skills. As part of its staff development programme, the college provides teachers with a good course on 'essential skills'. The effectiveness of this course has not been systematically evaluated and its impact on the teaching and learning of essential skills has not been assessed. The college's management information system cannot provide literacy and numeracy course teams with accurate performance data for the purposes of target setting and monitoring students' retention and pass rates. There has been little evaluation of the teaching observation scheme on the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the college.

## **Part D: College data**



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

Level	16-18	19+
1	25	35



<b>2</b>	28	37
<b>3</b>	17	10
<b>4/5</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	30	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

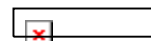
Source: provided by the college in autumn 2002

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2001/02**

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>16-18 No.</b>	<b>19+ No.</b>	<b>Total Enrolments %</b>
Science and mathematics	534	1,271	16
Land-based provision	23	16	0
Construction	115	165	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	324	133	4
Business administration, management and professional	246	1,061	12
Information and communication technology	280	1,782	18
Retailing, customer service and transportation	7	115	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	545	753	12
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	121	152	2
Health, social care and public services	400	992	13
Visual and performing arts and media	94	182	2
Humanities	191	421	6
English, languages and communication	27	76	1
Foundation programmes	488	597	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,395</b>	<b>7,716</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2002

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**



Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	443	326	347	341	192	375
	Retention rate (%)	86	86	82	87	85	88
	National average (%)	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	68	59	61	59	63	45
	National average (%)	59	65	68	60	66	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	571	743	686	447	508	626
	Retention rate (%)	80	77	84	83	81	88
	National average (%)	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	79	62	55	84	69	58
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	69
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	406	373	469	406	651	556
	Retention rate (%)	76	74	73	80	79	85
	National average (%)	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	77	68	68	74	75	52
	National average (%)	72	74	76	62	66	69
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	32	40	0	195	131	22
	Retention rate (%)	100	900	*	89	80	100
	National average (%)	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate (%)	100	75	*	94	87	81
	National average (%)	64	66	55	56	56	53

*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, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.*

*2. College rates for 1997/8-1998/9: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.*

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

\* too few students to provide a valid calculation

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	51	42	7	41
Level 2 (intermediate)	52	46	3	33
Level 1 (foundation)	44	32	24	25
Other sessions	75	25	0	12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>111</b>

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