



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Sussex Downs College

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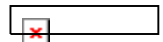
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Basic information about the college



Name of college:	Sussex Downs
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	John Blake
Address of college:	Sussex Downs College Eastbourne Campus Cross Levels Way Eastbourne BN21 2UF
Telephone number:	01323 637637
Fax number:	01323 637472
Chair of governors:	Hugh Burnett OBE
Unique reference number:	133465

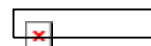
Name of reporting inspector:

Tony Noonan HMI

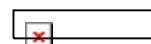
Dates of inspection:

27-31 January and 4-6 February 2003

Part A: Summary



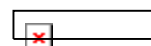
Information about the college



Sussex Downs College is a large general further education (FE) college formed on 1 November 2001 as a result of a merger between Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology and Lewes Tertiary College. It operates on three campuses: two large campuses at Eastbourne and Lewes and a smaller one in Newhaven. The most important employment sectors in Eastbourne and Lewes are the tourist industry and the public sector. The Newhaven area has some significant social and educational deprivation. The mission of the college is 'to fully meet the learning needs of the communities we serve, widening participation and raising achievement through working in partnership'.

The college has provision in all the areas of learning defined by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The most significant areas of learning in terms of student enrolments: are science and mathematics; business; information and communications technology (ICT); health and social care; visual and performing arts; humanities; English, languages and communication; and foundation programmes. Work-based learning has recently been introduced in a wide range of vocational areas, including business, construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and health and social care. The college is designated as a Centre of Vocational Excellence for the performing arts and entertainment industries. In 2000/01, the college had 3,080 full-time students aged 16 to 18, 809 full-time adult students and 12,782 part-time adult students. Some 82% of students classify themselves as white. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is small and reflects the composition of the local population. Female students made up 63% of the student population in 2000/01.

How effective is the college?



The college is effective in providing a wide range of courses that meet the needs of the local community. Inspectors judged the quality of education to be good in science and mathematics; business; ICT; hairdressing and beauty therapy; health and social care and public services; visual arts; performing arts, music and media; social sciences; and English and modern foreign languages. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; construction; hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism; and literacy and numeracy was satisfactory.

Key strengths

- good teaching

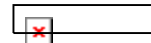
- high pass and retention rates
- clear strategic direction and leadership by senior managers
- good governance
- effective support for students
- strong links with local organisations
- attractive and improving accommodation.

What should be improved

- pass rates of work-based learners
- retention rates on level 2 courses
- key skills provision
- procedures for assessing students' work
- monitoring and evaluation of information on equal opportunities.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

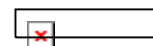


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Good. Retention and pass rates are high, and the proportion of high-grade passes on level 3 courses is above average. Science students have good practical laboratory skills. Tutorials are effective. Theory teaching in some lessons is ineffective and insufficient use is made of ICT in mathematics lessons.
Construction	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on many courses. Teaching links theory and practical work effectively. Students who need it receive good additional learning support. There are too few internal verifiers and some workshop accommodation is cramped.
Business	Good. Pass and retention rates are high. Teaching is of a high standard, particularly at the Eastbourne campus. Key skills are not being developed effectively in lessons. The planning and monitoring of students' progress in tutorials is effective.
Information and communications technology	Good. Pass rates are high. Students develop good practical and analytical skills, but some theory teaching is ineffective. The comprehensive range of courses meets the needs and interests of students, and attendance rates are high.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high, except on some industry-related travel and sport courses. Teaching is good and students produce work of a high standard. Practical facilities for students on sports and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) travel courses are good. Some assessment and internal verification procedures are inadequate.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Retention and pass rates are high. Teaching is highly effective and students' practical work is of a high standard. Learning facilities at the Lewes campus are very good, reflecting current commercial practice. There is a lack of level 1 provision in hairdressing or beauty therapy.
Health and social care and public services	Good. Pass rates are consistently high on most full-time and counselling courses, but they are low on work-based programmes. Teaching is effective and support for students is good. Students on health and social care and early years care and education courses benefit from relevant work experience.
Performing arts, music and media	Good. There are high pass rates and many students achieve high grades. Teachers make effective use of their commercial experience. Students' attainment in music is good. There are extensive enrichment opportunities and strong links with the community. Accommodation and facilities are good on the Lewes campus, but there is some unsatisfactory accommodation at Eastbourne.
Visual arts	Good. Most courses have high pass rates. Students' work is highly creative and innovative. Much teaching is outstanding, although students make insufficient progress in a few lessons. There is good

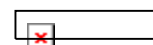
	academic and personal support. Assessment procedures are thorough and effective. Some accommodation at the Lewes campus is poor.
Social sciences	Good. Pass rates on General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced-level (A-level) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses are high, although they are low on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) psychology and sociology courses. Teaching is good. Students' written work is assessed thoroughly. Curriculum management is effective, but the monitoring of students' progress is inadequate.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. There is much good teaching in both English and modern foreign languages. Pass rates are high. Retention rates on some language courses are low. Students are articulate and confident and well supported by their teachers. The range of courses provided is extensive.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Satisfactory. Practical skills are developed effectively and good use is made of work placements. Students receive effective personal support. Individual learning plans are inadequate. The management of challenging behaviour by students is ineffective in some lessons.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Students on level 1 courses are developing appropriate understanding and skills. The teaching of literacy is imaginative and is well supported by good learning resources. Insufficient use is made of ICT in lessons. The progress of students is not assessed and monitored effectively.

How well is the college led and managed?



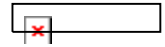
Leadership and management are good. The merger of the two colleges in November 2001 was very well managed. Sussex Downs College is served well by its governors, who have a broad range of expertise and experience. Senior managers have clear strategic vision and communicate well with other staff. The accommodation strategy continues to lead to improved facilities for students and staff. Pass rates are high for college-based students, but not for work-based learners. The quality of teaching is good. The process of self-assessment is thorough. There are some inadequacies in the assessment of students' work.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



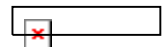
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. There is an extensive and developing range of provision that meets the needs of local communities. Appropriate courses for adults are available in Eastbourne, Lewes, Newhaven and many community venues. Full-time and part-time courses for young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provide them with the opportunity to progress to FE or employment. People with restricted mobility are able to use most facilities on all campuses. Equality of opportunity and good race relations are promoted strongly at a senior management level, although there is insufficient collection and analysis of relevant data to ensure that the policies are being implemented. A broad curriculum is available to students. Many full-time students take additional industry-specific courses and participate in enrichment activities.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive good levels of support from tutors and other staff. The admissions process is effective. The college has strong links with local schools and community groups. Parents and employers receive good feedback on students' progress. Student support services are well managed and provide good advice and information on careers, welfare and other matters. The tutorial programme is effective for full-time students, but less so for part-time and adult students.

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

- helpful teachers

- friendly atmosphere

- high level of personal support and advice

- good facilities and learning resource centres

- effective monitoring of students' progress.

What they feel could be improved

- car parking at Lewes campus

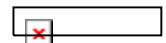
- price of food in canteens and shops

- provision of indoor smoking areas

- key skills teaching

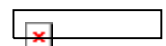
- topics covered in group tutorials.

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, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, 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

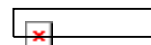


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	70	25	5
19+ and WBL*	70	25	5
Learning 16-18	65	27	8
19+ and WBL*	63	29	8

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. Retention and pass rates across the college are good. Retention rates on short courses for students of all ages are high. The pass rate for key skills qualifications increased dramatically in 2001/02 and is now significantly above the national average. Work-based learners have low pass rates. Only 25% of modern apprentices achieve all aspects of the apprenticeship framework.
2. Pass rates for long qualifications, which are taken mainly by full-time students, are high. For example, the overall GCE AS and A-level pass rates in 2001/02 were 83% and 92%, respectively. These are significantly above the national averages for similar colleges of FE. The proportion of students gaining high-grade passes on these courses is also high. Pass rates on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation courses rose from 29% in 2000/01, to 59% in 2001/02. Pass rates on NVQ level 1 courses increased from 43% to 88% over the same period of time. Retention rates for GNVQ intermediate courses have been consistently high since 1998/99. There was a fall in the retention rates of NVQ students at levels 2 and 3, in 2001/02, to below the national average.
3. The value added to the performance of students in their examinations, relative to their performance at GCSE, is determined for GCE A-level and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) students at the Lewes campus. This information shows that students have added slightly more value to their GCE A-level examination results, for five of the previous six years, than students at other institutions. GCE A-level subjects that have recorded high value added scores over the past three years include dance, ICT, computing, German, music technology and mathematics. Subjects in which students have, on average, achieved lower grades than those predicted on the basis of their GCSE results include GCE A-level history, physical education and economics.
4. A high standard of students' work was observed throughout the college. Students on courses in early years care and education produce interesting and imaginative practical work that helps them to understand how to meet the needs of children. Counselling students are sensitive to the ethical issues that arise in their professional and occupational settings. Students' work in visual and performing arts is highly creative and innovative: the students use specialist vocabulary fluently and give critical evaluation confidently. Many students of music are highly accomplished instrumentalists. Science students demonstrate excellent practical laboratory skills.
5. The development of key skills and independent learning skills is unsatisfactory for some level 3 students, for example in the business curriculum area. Students on the AVCE computing course demonstrate good skills in writing user guides, but some do not have the necessary competences in data flow and data modelling.
6. The students' attendance rate for lessons observed during the inspection was 81%. There are effective systems for recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality. Staff in many curriculum areas send letters to the parents of students aged 16 to 18 when the students' attendance or punctuality causes concern.

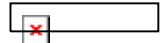
16 to 18 year olds

7. Overall retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have been higher than the national averages from 1998/99 to 2001/02 at levels 1, 2 and 3. The retention rate for students on level 2 courses, however, fell in 2001/02 to below the national average. For level 3 long qualifications in 2001/02, the pass rate was in the highest quartile of results for general FE colleges. There was a large increase in pass rates for level 1 students in 2001/02, but a slight fall for students at levels 2 and 3. Retention rates also fell in 2001/02 at level 1.

Adult learners

8. Retention rates for adults are above the national average at levels 1, 2 and 3, although they decreased at levels 1 and 2 in 2001/02. Pass rates are good for adults at all levels, particularly for level 1 students, where they are in the highest quartile for similar colleges.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 284 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 70% of the sessions observed, satisfactory in 25% and unsatisfactory in 5%.

10. The quality of teaching was good in the visual arts, science, ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy, sports, physical education, leisure and recreation, social sciences, English and modern foreign languages. Teaching was generally least effective for students on level 1 courses.

11. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. They provide good support to individual students. Lessons are well planned and schemes of work are detailed. An appropriate mix of individual, paired and group work takes place in hairdressing and beauty therapy lessons. Teachers of the social sciences develop the problem-solving skills of students with challenging work and good questioning techniques. Teachers ensure that topics for level 3 ICT students are broken down into specific tasks that are achievable in the time available. Performing arts students use improvisation very effectively to generate ideas and create material for performance.

12. Students in performing arts are highly motivated and share their ideas willingly. Teachers of visual arts have high expectations of their students and the students have a very professional approach to their work. Some teachers of literacy and numeracy are imaginative in their approach to learning. They encourage students to bring interesting articles, poems and books with them to college. The teachers incorporate these materials into the lessons and students enjoy studying works that have personal relevance. Teachers and students of modern foreign languages make very good use of the language being studied, often taking part in complex discussions in the relevant language.

13. In less effective lessons, teachers often talk too much and fail to grasp and hold the attention and interest of students. There are insufficient checks to ensure that learning is taking place. In a minority of lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, teachers based too many activities around the use of worksheets. Students became bored and this led to some poor behaviour. There is insufficient use of ICT in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mathematics, construction and literacy and numeracy.

14. There are wide variations in the quality of teaching of key skills across the college. Hairdressing and beauty therapy teachers successfully integrate the vocational applications of ICT into lessons. Students use specialised software to manage the records of clients effectively. In other curriculum areas, such as business and social science, key skills are not integrated with other aspects of the curriculum and students fail to recognise the relevance and usefulness of key skills.

15. Most staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Many teachers, for example in health and social care, visual and performing arts and media, have valuable recent professional or commercial experience. The college has thorough and effective staff development procedures. All new teachers who do not have a teaching qualification are expected to work towards one and are supported in doing so. A wide range of additional courses enables staff to maintain their professional development. There are too few staff qualified as internal verifiers in construction.

16. Most college buildings are less than ten years old and are attractive, clean and well maintained. Effective implementation of the accommodation policy has significantly improved accommodation at both campuses since their last inspection. Most areas of the college are accessible to wheelchair users, but many of the toilets for disabled students lack emergency cord pulls. The college uses its space well, although many of the staff rooms at Eastbourne are cramped. There is no student common room at the Eastbourne campus. This places pressure on other public spaces, for example the learning resource centre, which some students use as a social area. The provision of a student common room in the new building, to be opened in September 2003, should alleviate this problem.

17. Specialist equipment and accommodation is variable in quality and appropriateness. Many specialist resources are of a very high standard, for example, the travel shop at Eastbourne and accommodation for performing arts and media students at Lewes. Other learning environments are less than satisfactory, such as the construction workshops at Eastbourne and the accommodation for visual arts at Lewes. New building works currently underway should lead to improvements, for example, in the construction workshops. Very good training manuals are used on ICT courses. Literacy and numeracy teachers have produced high quality paper-based learning materials, many of which are designed for specific groups or individual students.

18. Learning resource centres at the Eastbourne and Lewes campuses are well organised and offer an adequate range of services and facilities to students. Although the Lewes centre benefits from a number of adjacent small rooms that can be used for group work or individual tutorials, overall there are insufficient places for individual study. The number of books is relatively low for the number of students using the centres. Increasing use of the Internet, and the development of the college's intranet, however, have increased the amount of learning material available to staff and students. The online catalogues of the centres at Lewes and Eastbourne are not integrated, so students from one campus cannot find out easily what materials are held at the other. The college has plans to merge the catalogues in the near future.

19. The college is currently implementing and extending a high quality virtual learning environment, based on the college's intranet. In addition to text-based resources and links to other websites, teachers are now beginning to add sophisticated interactive learning materials. These include graphic representations of theoretical concepts, for example, food webs in biology. Self-assessment tests have been added which teachers use to monitor responses to topics which students find difficult. The virtual learning environment also enables students to take part in discussion groups, share ideas with each other, and to seek additional help from teachers. Currently, it is being used by over 500 students a week, a significant proportion of which is during the evenings and at weekends. The provision of computers available for students is satisfactory and the provision for teachers is good.

20. The procedures for the assessment of students' work are inconsistent across the college. They are thorough, detailed and fair in most curriculum areas. For example, English and modern foreign language teachers set interesting and varied tasks. They mark the work carefully and return it promptly to students, with a helpful commentary. Some course teams ensure that newly appointed staff are advised on assessment procedures by experienced colleagues.

21. Other course teams have poor assessment practices. There are no qualified internal verifiers for many construction courses. Internal verification is also weak in hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism. Individual learning plans for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not contain enough information and they are not seen by all the teachers and support staff who work with the student. For most modern apprentices, there are inadequate assessment arrangements in the workplace. Formal assessment takes place once every 12 weeks. This is not frequent enough for the trainees to provide evidence of their competence in their day-to-day working practice. The assessment of key skills is poor. Many curriculum areas do not assess key skills as part of the students' normal coursework.

22. The college provides a diverse curriculum. The two main campuses are in the south of the county. Courses are offered in the north of the county through arrangements with community schools and other providers. The bulk of the provision is for level 3 students. Some curriculum areas, for example, business administration, science and construction, offer little provision at level 1. The

college is seeking to extend its provision at levels 1 and 2. For example, pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools now attend vocational lessons at college for one day a week.

23. The college places considerable emphasis on the government's widening participation and social exclusion agenda. It works closely with an extensive range of other partners and agencies to identify and meet local learning needs. This is particularly evident at Newhaven, where a wide range of courses and activities are offered to widen participation and, through the Newhaven Economic Partnership, to meet identified skills shortages in the Newhaven area.

24. The college seeks to meet the needs of specific groups of users by organising its provision as 'learning brands'. For example, provision for employers is marketed effectively through the 'training solutions' brand. This learning brand includes work-based learning and training activities designed to meet the specific needs of individual employers. There are good links with higher education (HE) institutions, particularly through a partnership with a local university. In 2002, 81% of university applicants were successful in gaining a HE place.

25. Students at both campuses benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities. These are more fully developed at Lewes than at Eastbourne. Work placements are a feature of most vocational programmes. Well-organised 'Weekend College' provision occurs at both main campuses, with an emphasis on recreational courses at Lewes and on vocational courses at Eastbourne.

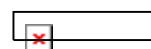
26. Students benefit from the well-managed and well-organised student services. Advice, guidance and support are good, particularly for full-time students. All students have access to a wide range of information and welfare services that cover housing, financial and health issues and personal counselling. Careers advice is effective and college staff work well with the local careers company to provide students with individual interviews. Teachers also arrange for guest speakers to provide further information on career opportunities.

27. Student applications are dealt with effectively. College publicity materials are attractively presented, easy to follow and relevant to potential students' needs. They are widely available and outline course entry requirements clearly. Students are positive about the induction procedures that help them settle into their courses effectively. They quickly become familiar with the college and the requirements of their courses.

28. The initial assessment of full-time students, to identify any learning support needs, is thorough. Most students who are identified as needing additional help with literacy or numeracy take up their entitlement. A specialist team of additional support staff work closely with personal tutors. The support received by modern apprentices in health and social care is particularly good. Teachers are not aware of the learning needs of their students in some curriculum areas.

29. The college has an effective and varied tutorial programme for all full-time students. Students have regular individual and group tutorials to monitor their progress and help to develop life skills. Personal tutors provide effective support to students. Most tutorials observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better. Parents and employers are kept well informed of the progress of students through termly reports and effective personal contact with tutors and other staff. Parents' consultation evenings are organised effectively and are well attended by parents. Tutorial arrangements for part-time students are less effective. Some tutors lack resources for group tutorials and there is little sharing of good tutorial practice across the college. The college is piloting a number of schemes to improve tutorial provision.

Leadership and management



Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology and Lewes Tertiary College formed Sussex Downs College. The merger has been well managed. An event was held for all college staff to celebrate the launch of the new college. This event enabled staff from the two merged colleges to meet and to begin to develop good working relationships. Prompt action was taken to ensure that the needs of students, staff and the local community were taken into account in the merger. There is a clear policy for improving the facilities of the new college and new accommodation is being built on all campuses.

31. Governors have made a full contribution to the success of the merger. Many current governors were also members of the boards of the previous colleges and contributed fully to the negotiations that led to the merger. Governors have a wide range of skills and commercial experience covering various professional areas. They provide strong strategic direction and worked closely with senior managers to develop a clearly written strategic plan. They are well informed about the college and they monitor its academic performance closely. The college is in a strong financial position, but the financial information presented to governors' meetings since the merger has lacked detail. This is mainly as a result of the new college having to reconcile the different accounting systems that were in use in the previous colleges. Each member of the corporation has links to a curriculum area or another aspect of the college's work. This process is informal and although it has helped to inform some governors, others have not made full use of opportunities to meet staff.

32. Communication between senior managers and other staff are good. Staff feel that senior managers are approachable and ready to listen to them. Regular newsletters are sent to all staff, employers and other college stakeholders. Senior managers use the college's intranet to keep staff informed. Most staff have good access to computers in their workrooms and make good use of the college's e-mail system for communication. Course teams meet regularly and part-time staff often attend these meetings. Communication between staff located at different campuses is not always good. Opportunities are missed for the sharing of good practice. Cross-curriculum boards have been established to improve this situation, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. The college has yet to introduce a uniform system for the collection of management information. The systems in use at both the Lewes and Eastbourne campuses are robust, however, and are used effectively by managers to monitor the quality of provision.

33. College staff have developed good links with employers, community groups and a wide range of other outside agencies. Some of these links are formalised into partnership arrangements and they have led to successful projects that meet the needs of the local community. For example, the college has worked with one local company to recruit modern apprentices in dry lining, an area of the construction industry where there are skill shortages. The college has established strong links with schools. There is good provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 in a number of curriculum areas, including catering.

34. The college has recently introduced new procedures for quality assurance. They are clearly written and are carried out thoroughly, but it is too early to judge their impact on the quality of provision. The self-assessment process involved governors and staff. The views of students and employers were also taken into account. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report. New procedures for lesson observations have been introduced. Work-based learning is not part of the scheme. Some staff in performing arts have not been observed teaching for over a year and have not been appraised by their managers.

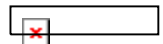
35. There is a comprehensive staff training programme. Staff are informed regularly about courses and training events. A well-planned training event was held for all staff over two days in 2002 and the college plans to hold a similar event annually. Good use has been made of the Standards Fund to train staff in the use of computers for teaching. All staff undertake teacher training if they are not already qualified. The college currently has 159 members of staff taking teaching or assessor awards. However, the effectiveness and impact of staff training is not evaluated adequately.

36. Equality of opportunity is promoted appropriately throughout the college. Students study in an atmosphere where respect for diversity is advocated. The college has produced a detailed policy with clear reference to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. Equal opportunities are a standing agenda item on the college's human resource and curriculum and standards committees. In

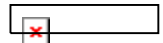
construction and hairdressing, attempts have been made to break down gender stereotyping. The college has only recently started to monitor students' retention and pass rates by ethnicity and have yet to use this information to develop targets and to inform planning.

37. The college is performing well. The quality of teaching is good and students learn effectively. The majority of curriculum areas have good provision and none were judged to be unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates are above the national averages on most courses. Students receive effective support from college staff. The financial health of the college is sound.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention rates

- high pass rates and a high proportion of high-grade passes

- effective tutorial support

- high standard of practical work by science students.

Weaknesses

- ineffective theory teaching in some lessons

- insufficient use of ICT in the teaching of mathematics.

Scope of provision

38. The college provides GCE AS and A-level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, geology, mathematics, applied mathematics and further mathematics. In addition there are AVCE single and double awards in science. GCSE courses are provided in physics, physical science, human physiology, chemistry and mathematics. Courses for adults provide entry to HE in biotechnology and medicine. There are 1,535 students aged 16 to 18 enrolled on courses in this curriculum area and 188 adults. Most of the courses are taught at the Lewes campus.

Achievement and standards

39. Retention and pass rates are well above national averages for most courses. A high proportion of GCE A-level students achieve high-grade passes in mathematics and all science subjects. Value added information shows that most students achieve GCE A-level grades higher than might have been expected of them, based on their performance at GCSE. Students are well motivated and work productively. Students' notes are clear and detailed. Practical laboratory work is of a high standard. For example, in a first-year AVCE science lesson, students carried out an intricate organic distillation with a very high standard of precision and skill.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics (grades A* to C)	2	No. of starts	328	316	359
		% retention	74	78	74
		% pass rate	51	41	50
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	6	38	34
		% retention	50	82	85
		% pass rate	67	97	83
GCE AS human biology	3	No. of starts	*	65	89
		% retention	*	88	84
		% pass rate	*	86	75
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	44	44	41
		% retention	65	76	85
		% pass rate	86	100	89
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	30	22	25
		% retention	59	90	92
		% pass rate	94	83	95
GNVQ/AVCE science	3	No. of starts	16	13	9
		% retention	88	92	100
		% pass rate	79	73	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

40. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and motivate students to learn. They use questions effectively to help students to extend their understanding. Students in most lessons make

good progress and learn well. They participate in discussions and are able to speak confidently and with understanding about their subjects. During an outstanding geology lesson, students carrying out a case study of the Lewes Road tunnel engaged in lively and informed discussion.

41. Teachers ensure that students carrying out experiments in which hazardous chemicals are used do so safely and effectively. Students undertake laboratory work enthusiastically and work well. GCSE human physiology students carried out an investigation on the activity of enzymes. They interpreted their findings and deduced the nature of the enzyme with accurate and precise techniques. In the minority of ineffective theory lessons, too much talking by the teacher left students with little to do apart from listen and take notes, which did not hold their attention. In these lessons, teachers made insufficient checks on whether the students had understood the concepts being taught.

42. Staff are well qualified and have relevant teaching or technical experience. Science laboratories are well furnished and equipped and efficiently serviced by technicians. There are good displays of students' work in classrooms and a broad range of textbooks and laboratory manuals is available. By contrast, mathematics lessons take place in general classrooms, in which specialist resources are not readily available. Many rooms in which mathematics is taught do not contain computers. There is insufficient use of ICT in mathematics lessons to support learning. The learning resource centres have appropriate learning materials and are used effectively by students.

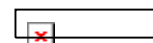
43. Students receive good support from teachers and personal and academic tutors. Target grades are set and the progress of students towards these targets is monitored regularly. Initial diagnostic screening is carried out during the induction programme to identify any additional support needs. Any support deemed necessary is provided promptly and effectively by learning support specialists. Students are able to attend a wide range of regular workshops to help them with their coursework. This support is valued highly by students. Students' work is marked carefully. Teachers make constructive comments and give helpful feedback. Assessed coursework is well planned, interesting and leads to purposeful learning. The parents of students aged 16 to 18 are kept up to date on the progress of students through regular reports and contact with tutors.

44. College staff have good links with local schools. Taster days enable school pupils to sample college life. Links with local universities enable students to gain experience of HE. Effective work experience placements are organised for AVCE students in their first and second years. These placements take into account the specific interests of students. All students are given subject-specific careers guidance to help them prepare for university and employment interviews.

Leadership and management

45. Individual subject areas are well organised by curriculum leaders. The large programme of GCE AS and A-level courses is effectively co-ordinated by the curriculum manager. Subject teams meet regularly. There is a very good staff appraisal system, which includes regular classroom observations followed up by feedback and professional development. New staff are supported by a mentor and receive adequate induction. There is no overall co-ordination of subject areas across the two main campuses. Each campus has different recruitment strategies and practices. For example there are minimum entry requirements for the GCSE mathematics course at the Lewes campus, but not at the Eastbourne campus. Retention rates are markedly lower in this subject for students studying at Eastbourne.

Construction



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

Strengths

- effective linking of theory and practical teaching
- high pass rates on many courses
- high retention rates on basic woodworking course
- good provision of additional learning support.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on NVQ level 2 courses
- insufficient internal verifiers
- inadequate accommodation for practical work.

Scope of provision

46. Courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels are available in bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing and electrical installation. The college discontinued a number of courses last year, including the foundation level GNVQ courses in construction and the built environment. Around 125 students aged 16 to 18 and 50 adults are on full-time courses and 180 students aged 16 to 18 and 350 adults study part time. Some 75 of these students are work-based learners on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. A wide range of link and taster courses is offered for school pupils aged 14 to 16. Through the college's 'increasing flexibility' initiatives, 17 school pupils are undertaking construction training in the college.

Achievement and standards

47. Pass rates are high on many courses. They are improving on the City and Guilds basic woodworking skills and NVQ level 2 bricklaying and plumbing courses. On other courses, such as the NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery course, they declined in 2001/02. Retention rates for several courses were high and rising until they decreased to below the national averages in 2001/02.

48. Most students work well in lessons, particularly in the craft workshops. They produce satisfactory practical work that meets industrial standards. For example, electrical installation students constructed a two-way lighting circuit using mineral insulated cables. They cut, stripped and terminated the cables, paying due regard to the associated health and safety risks. In bricklaying,

NVQ students received good technical advice from the teacher as they built a variety of structures, including inspection chambers and cavity walls. Carpentry and joinery students crafted timber framework and pipe casing of a high standard. The standard of written assignment work is satisfactory for most students. Attendance at the lessons observed was low at 72% and many students were not punctual.

49. The college has recently begun to offer construction training for work-based learners. This provision is very much in its infancy and systems and procedures are still being developed. While no learners have yet completed their apprenticeship framework, most are making satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual learning plans. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored on work-based learning programmes and regular reports are sent to employers.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 6135 basic woodworking skills	1	No. of starts	*	14	32
		% retention	*	100	91
		% pass rate	*	79	97
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	32	28	36
		% retention	44	59	53
		% pass rate	57	87	89
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	51	35	40
		% retention	73	74	62
		% pass rate	70	80	71
NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing)	2	No. of starts	36	36	53
		% retention	67	75	62
		% pass rate	90	89	97

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

50. The quality of teaching is good or satisfactory. No very good or outstanding teaching was observed. Lesson plans are detailed, and include clear and specific learning outcomes. Schemes of work are comprehensive. Teachers regularly check students' progress and understanding by effective questioning. Good use is made of learning materials that are matched to the varied abilities of individual students. Theory lessons are effectively linked to practical workshop tasks. For example, in one theory lesson in plumbing, students were taught effectively about the functions of the components of a central heating system. This helped them benefit fully from the follow-up lesson in the workshop.

51. A variety of teaching styles is used, but there is little evidence of ICT being used to support the learning process. Computers are not readily available in classrooms and workshops. Few students' assignments are word processed. Training is undertaken in cramped workshops with inadequate facilities. This restricts the range of skills that students can learn. For example, the electrical installation workshop lacks tiled surfaces, thus preventing students from learning how to install components in kitchens and bathrooms. College staff acknowledge this weakness and new workshop accommodation is being constructed.

52. Teachers are well qualified in their trades and have relevant industrial experience. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. The portfolios assembled by plumbing students are

particularly thorough. Evidence of work-based activity is photographed, witnessed and included in portfolios. Apart from plumbing, there is a lack of staff qualified as internal verifiers. Staff from neighbouring colleges carry out internal verification for the other construction trades.

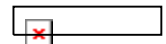
53. Students have initial diagnostic assessments to establish their individual learning needs. They receive appropriate help and support from teachers and other college staff. Regular meetings take place between teachers and individual students to discuss progress and agree action plans.

54. The college has an expanding programme of links with local schools. The employment prospects of students are enhanced by the availability of short courses, such as the gas courses offered by the plumbing section. There are no foundation level courses in construction or courses that would qualify craft students to progress into HE.

Leadership and management

55. The management of the construction curriculum area has recently been re-organised, following the departure of several members of staff from the college in June 2002. A new head of school was appointed in September 2002. Lines of communication are improving. Regular team meetings are held. External verifier reports are reviewed and lead to action plans. Targets for retention and pass rates are set, but there are no strategies to improve retention and achievement. The shortage of internal verifiers impacts adversely on quality assurance procedures. No course reviews have been undertaken recently.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates

- good teaching at the Eastbourne campus

- good rate of progression to other courses

- effective support for individual students.

Weaknesses

- ineffective teaching in a small number of lessons

- poor development of key skills.

Scope of provision

56. Nearly 6,000 students take a wide range of full-time and part-time business courses. The college provides courses from levels 1 to 4 at the Eastbourne and Lewes campuses. These courses include GNVQ foundation and intermediate business, AVCE single and double award business, personal assistants' diploma, intensive secretarial, GCSE business, GCE AS and A-level business, economics and accounting. NVQ administration at levels 2 and 3 is provided for part-time students in employment. A small number of students undertake modern apprenticeships in business administration. Courses for trade union representatives and accounting are provided at the Newhaven campus.

Achievement and standards

57. In 2001/02, retention and pass rates were above national averages on most full-time courses. A high proportion of students gain high-grade passes on GCE AS and A-level business and GCE AS economics courses. Analysis of the value added to the GCE AS and A-level business and accounts grades of students at the Lewes campus over a three-year period indicates that they have performed marginally above what would be predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. However, the small number of GCE A-level economics students achieved results significantly below their predicted grades.

58. Students make effective contributions to most classroom discussions. Students' portfolios show a high standard of work in relation to the level of the course. AVCE business students produce some very good assignments. Students progress well from one course to another. For example, almost all of the GNVQ foundation students moved on to the intermediate course in the following year.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	16	13	9
		% retention	75	77	89
		% pass rate	50	80	100
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	81	77	*
		% retention	83	87	*
		% pass rate	88	94	*
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	19	19	19
		% retention	89	84	89
		% pass rate	35	81	53
AVCE business	3	No. of starts	*	10	25
		% retention	*	80	92
		% pass rate	*	25	83
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	*	71	105
		% retention	*	83	89
		% pass rate	*	95	63

GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	41	61	42
		% retention	59	59	90
		% pass rate	79	83	97

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

59. Most lessons are well planned. They have clear objectives that are shared with students and reviewed at the end of the lesson. Teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date knowledge of the world of business. They are enthusiastic about their subjects and organise a variety of appropriate learning activities. Good use is made of visual aids, handouts and specially prepared exercises and case studies. Students participate willingly in classroom activities and their attention is maintained throughout the lesson. Good use is made of group work and there are frequent checks on individuals' progress. Teaching was particularly good at the Eastbourne campus, less so at Lewes.

60. Classroom discussions are enlivened with references to topical business examples to illustrate general principles. One group of AVCE students had formed a company within the Young Enterprise scheme. They were asked to generate a profit for charity through commercial activity. After brainstorming for ideas, the group used a personal contact to secure the services of a well-known television celebrity. The group eventually organised an evening performance with the celebrity at the Eastbourne Winter Gardens. Over 700 tickets were sold for £10 each and a large profit was earned.

61. Learning activities ensure that students are able to apply and handle newly acquired knowledge and understanding. A very successful accounting lesson on variance analysis taught students how to handle data comfortably and work together productively in teams.

62. The small number of unsatisfactory lessons provided little challenge for more able students. The pace of the lessons was slow. Too many of the teachers' questions were not directed to individuals, and only one or two students responded. Students had undertaken insufficient preparatory reading prior to these lessons.

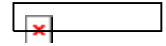
63. Teachers provide good support to individual students. Students who are finding a topic difficult are given individual attention from the teacher while the other students carry on working on their own. Additional learning assistants are available to help foundation students. Teachers take care to explain basic terms to aid the understanding of students whose first language is not English. Feedback on students' work is thorough and helpful. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of students through written reports and parents' evenings.

64. Teachers paid insufficient attention to the development of students' key skills. For example, when students made oral presentations or carried out numerical calculations, teachers failed to consolidate the underlying skills in a way that would enable students to develop a deeper understanding or to transfer the skills to other situations.

Leadership and management

65. Course teams manage the day-to-day running of courses effectively. Target setting for individual students and the monitoring of progress are done well through the tutorial system. While some very good management and teaching takes place in the business curriculum area, this good practice is not sufficiently shared between teams. Communication between academic and personal tutors is not effective.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- good development of students' practical and analytical skills
- comprehensive range of courses
- high attendance rates
- many opportunities for adults to gain qualifications at community venues.

Weaknesses

- low pass rate on IBT course
- some ineffective teaching of theory.

Scope of provision

66. The range of courses in computing and information technology (IT) meets the needs of full-time and part-time students. Full-time provision includes GCE AS and A-level courses in computing and ICT, the AVCE in ICT, GNVQ foundation and intermediate ICT, and City and Guilds IT courses. A wide range of part-time courses is available at the main campuses and at many community venues. These part-time courses include an introduction to computers, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), desktop publishing, Integrated Business Technology (IBT) 2, accessing the Internet, basic web page design, the European computer driving licence (ECDL), and open college network (OCN) ICT qualifications.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass rates are high on many courses. Those on GCE AS and A-level computing and ICT and the AVCE ICT courses have been consistently above the national averages. GNVQ foundation ICT

pass rates have improved considerably and were 96% in 2001/02. The proportion of high grades achieved by students is also significantly above the national average for all vocational and GCE A-level courses. Pass rates are consistently low on the IBT course.

68. Retention rates have improved on GCE AS and A-level courses. They are now above the national averages on GCE A-level courses, and also on part-time level 1 and level 2 courses. The retention rate on the AVCE ICT course improved last year and is now at the national average. On GNVQ ICT foundation and intermediate courses, retention rates declined last year to slightly below the national average. Students are punctual and attendance rates are high, at 88%, in the lessons observed during the inspection.

69. Students use the Internet competently and develop very good ICT skills. Some projects and assignments are produced to a professional standard. Second-year AVCE students provide effective support to other users of IT in the college and demonstrate good skills in writing user guides. A minority of second-year GCE A-level students have weak data flow and data modelling skills, and their research and analytical skills are also underdeveloped.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	1,438	1,292	1,134
		% retention	91	92	92
		% pass rate	56	47	65
IBT 2	2	No. of starts	353	256	277
		% retention	92	90	88
		% pass rate	56	56	50
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	56	64	73
		% retention	86	89	78
		% pass rate	69	61	68
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	66	66	64
		% retention	68	61	72
		% pass rate	96	88	87
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	13	68	96
		% retention	77	78	82
		% pass rate	90	89	82
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	26	43	40
		% retention	58	72	85
		% pass rate	92	97	97

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

Quality of education and training

70. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. They produce detailed schemes of work. Their comprehensive lesson plans contain information about the different needs of individual students. They organise appropriate practical activities. In one lesson, intermediate GNVQ students downloaded images and multimedia materials and integrated them successfully into desktop publishing projects about Disneyland. Teachers use

questions effectively and value the contributions from all students. Activities are broken down into achievable tasks, with clear target dates for completion. Teachers develop the problem solving skills of level 3 students by setting them challenging tasks. This was particularly evident in the complex databases set up by students to solve commercial problems. For example, students set up a database for a local company and developed a library system for record and CD collections.

71. A comprehensive range of courses at all levels provides adults and students aged 16 to 18 with good progression routes from entry level through to level 3 courses. Short computer courses provided in community venues are increasingly popular and well attended. Teaching is good on these courses. In many of the lessons, older students with no experience of ICT have learnt how to use the Internet and e-mail to communicate with members of their family.

72. Students develop good evaluation and analysis skills. Virtual learning environments are used very effectively to support and enhance the learning of students. Students can access good quality learning materials and model answers, both in and out of the classroom, enabling them to work at their own pace. In some theory lessons, there was over-reliance on the use of textbooks and the completion of sets of example questions. Teachers merely read through the textbook and asked questions. Only the keenest students answered these questions and some showed little interest in the lesson.

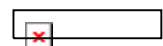
73. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced. A programme of staff development and a mentoring system provide good support for new staff. A few staff do not have up-to-date IT experience. The college has recently updated most of its hardware and software to industry standards, although a few computers still have a low specification. Resources at many of the community venues are excellent.

74. Students receive good advice about the most appropriate course to take. They are closely monitored in their first term and moved to a more appropriate course if necessary. Many students progress to HE or employment. A very good enrichment programme for students includes trips and social events. Tutorial support is good and liaison with parents is effective.

Leadership and management

75. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory. Most teams have regular meetings and teachers work well together and support each other. Most teachers have taken part in the lesson observation scheme. Self-assessment has led to improvements. For example, the roles of personal and course tutor have been combined for foundation and intermediate students and the frequency of staff meetings has increased for the AVCE course at Lewes. The views of students are taken into account. There is no overall co-ordination of ICT provision across the college, and there is not enough sharing of good practice.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for NVQ, GNVQ and GCE AS courses

- high standards of work by students on courses at levels 2 and 3

- effective use of practical facilities by sports and NVQ travel students
- wide range of additional qualifications and enrichment activities
- good learning support for hospitality and catering students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on some industry-related travel and sports certificate courses
- unsatisfactory assessment practices for some courses
- ineffective internal verification
- insufficiently thorough monitoring of courses by some managers.

Scope of provision

76. The college provides NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 in food preparation and cooking, housekeeping, craft baking and food and drink service, together with national diploma hotel and catering and GNVQ catering and hospitality courses at foundation and intermediate levels. AVCE leisure and recreation and travel and tourism and GNVQ leisure and tourism courses at foundation and intermediate levels are provided at both main campuses. At Eastbourne, students are also able to work towards NVQ level 2 travel services, the national diploma in sport and exercise science and the first diploma in sport. At Lewes, GCSE, GCE AS and A-level physical education courses are provided. Students can achieve additional qualifications including food hygiene and safety, sports coaching and travel agency certificates. The college has nine foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking.

Achievement and standards

77. Pass rates are high on most courses, being at or above the national averages. They are consistently high on most hospitality and catering courses, GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism and GCE AS and A-level physical education courses. Analysis of value added data for AVCE and GCE AS students indicates that they are achieving grades similar to those predicted on the basis of their GCSE results, but GCE A-level physical education students are achieving lower grades than predicted. Many of the courses leading to additional qualifications have high pass rates. Pass rates on the one-year travel agency primary certificate and some sports leader awards, including those in

basketball, swimming and football, are low. In 2001/02, none of the 31 students who sat the airfares and ticketing exam passed it. Retention rates on most courses are above the national averages. A high proportion of students' progress to appropriate higher level courses. Students' attendance is satisfactory and lateness is challenged effectively by teachers.

78. The standard of students' assignment work is good in travel and tourism, leisure and recreation and GCE A-level physical education at Lewes and in hospitality and catering, and travel and tourism at Eastbourne. Assignments are attractively produced and students give many relevant examples from sport, industry and current journals to support their arguments. Most students are confident and demonstrate appropriate skills. The practical work of hospitality and catering students at Eastbourne is of a high standard. NVQ level 3 students are particularly competent in restaurant supervisory skills. Bakery students, however, do not always work to industry standards in the recipes and ingredients they use.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate hospitality and catering	2	No. of starts	14	13	12
		% retention	71	85	92
		% pass rate	100	91	91
Travel agents certificate - primary	2	No. of starts	53	56	32
		% retention	92	84	100
		% pass rate	55	74	63
NVQ hospitality and catering	2	No. of starts	35	30	27
		% retention	71	90	93
		% pass rate	96	70	79
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	44	40	39
		% retention	70	83	82
		% pass rate	94	91	75
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	49	75	75
		% retention	76	76	96
		% pass rate	89	68	78
GCE AS sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	*	43	65
		% retention	*	93	85
		% pass rate	*	75	87

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

79. Most teaching is good or better. Teachers question students skilfully to ensure they have understood what is being taught. They draw upon the experiences of students to illustrate topics. For example, students spoke authoritatively about the period of recuperation that is required after various sporting activities. During an introductory lesson that was preparing students for the role of expedition leader, maps of different scales were compared and students drew on their own experience to evaluate which was the most appropriate for a particular activity. Teachers make good use of learning resources, although some poor quality handouts and overhead transparency slides

were used.

80. Travel students benefit from working in the college's busy travel shop, which is linked to a local independent travel agency. Students practice researching and booking holidays using industry-standard resources, including live reservation systems. National diploma sports students lead well-organised coaching sessions for a wide range of participants, including those with disabilities. They develop participants' ball passing skills through a range of interesting games. The outside sports facilities linked to both main campuses are good. Most students undertake a relevant work experience placement. Travel students take part in a variety of highly relevant visits, some of which are residential.

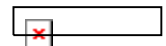
81. Not enough of GNVQ and AVCE students' work is marked. Some teachers' comments to students about their assignments are often too brief and sometimes negative or confusing. Internal verification takes place too late in the course and is sometimes poorly planned. It has failed to identify inconsistent assessment practices by teachers on the same course. For example, some teachers had not awarded indicative grades to students for physical education assignments or cross-referenced vocational work to key skills.

82. Hospitality and catering students speak highly of the support they are given by staff. A well-qualified learning support worker, with a good understanding of catering, provides effective support to students with additional learning needs. Students enjoy and benefit from the support and guidance given by teachers in lessons and in personal tutorials.

Leadership and management

83. Most courses are well managed. The regular team meetings are well planned. Self-assessment reports, development plans and annual course reviews are effective. Some managers do not monitor the work of course co-ordinators systematically. Monitoring tends to be informal and the outcomes are not adequately recorded.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- very effective teaching

- high pass rates

- good practical work

- good resources for hairdressing and beauty therapy

- o extensive range of enrichment activities.

Weaknesses

- o weak curriculum management at Eastbourne campus
- o lack of level 1 provision in hairdressing or beauty therapy.

Scope of provision

84. Full-time and part-time courses are available in hairdressing, sports therapy, beauty therapy and complementary therapies at the Eastbourne and Lewes campuses. Courses are available at NVQ levels 2 and 3 or equivalent and at level 4 in beauty therapy. Courses with a vocational slant are also available at foundation level. There are programmes for students of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and taster programmes and NVQ courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy for school pupils aged 14 to 16. Evening and weekend courses are offered at both main campuses. A full-cost course in fashion hair cutting can be taken at Lewes. Courses are scheduled throughout the academic year and many are timetabled within school hours for the convenience of parents with children attending school. There is a well-established, work-based learning programme in hairdressing.

85. There are 283 full-time and 366 part-time students in this curriculum area. Of the full-time students, 62 are studying hairdressing, 97 beauty therapy, 101 a combination of the two, 10 complementary therapy and 13 sports therapy.

Achievement and standards

86. Pass rates on most courses are at or above national averages. The pass rate on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course has been consistently above the national average for the past three years. Students on the City and Guilds wig-making course have been awarded medals of excellence in five of the last six years. On a minority of courses, pass rates are below national averages, in particular the one-year NVQ level 3 hairdressing course. Retention rates on most courses are close to or above the national averages. The retention rate on the diploma in reflexology is 17% above the national average.

87. The completion rate for work-based learners is above the national average. Some modern apprentices achieve the relevant NVQ, but do not achieve all aspects of the framework within the normal time. The overall picture is one of improvement and increasing recruitment.

88. Hairdressing, beauty therapy and complementary therapy students acquire practical skills to a commercial standard. Students develop good portfolios of work. Attendance rates are good. Reasons for absence are quickly followed up. Staff on the Lewes campus have established a 'student of the week' award to motivate students to attend regularly and punctually.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing (2	2	No. of starts	101	103	130

year)		% retention	55	67	57
		% pass rate	87	84	89
City and Guilds wig-making (2 year)	2	No. of starts	34	40	34
		% retention	76	70	82
		% pass rate	96	96	96
NVQ beauty therapy (2 year)	2	No. of starts	70	102	67
		% retention	71	75	70
		% pass rate	78	78	85
Indian head massage diploma	2	No. of starts	52	64	43
		% retention	92	94	98
		% pass rate	98	100	86
Body massage certificate (1 year)	3	No. of starts	30	52	55
		% retention	73	83	87
		% pass rate	91	95	63
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	22	36	38
		% retention	91	92	87
		% pass rate	100	88	79

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

Quality of education and training

89. The quality of teaching is very good. All the lessons observed were good or better. Lessons are very well planned. In one outstanding hairdressing lesson, students dealt with a large number of clients in a brisk, professional manner. Teachers give appropriate support and guidance to students and assess their work regularly. Students demonstrate a high level of vocational expertise. The hairdressing salons at both campuses provide students with an authentic commercial environment. At Lewes, teachers set additional tasks to stretch the more able students. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students benefit greatly from work experience placements. Students participate in an extensive range of enrichment activities. These include taking additional vocationally relevant courses and attending industrial updating sessions.

90. The monitoring of students' progress is effective. Students undertake regular reviews and assessments. Feedback is comprehensive and supportive. Salon owners give feedback about the standard of work-based learners' work. There is a good relationship between the college and salon owners. College staff are responsive to the needs of local employers.

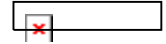
91. There is no level 1 provision in hairdressing or beauty therapy at the Eastbourne and Lewes campuses. Students with low entry qualifications are placed on level 2 programmes and given additional support. Key skills are integrated effectively with other aspects of the curriculum at the Lewes campus. Client records are well managed by students in the hairdressing and beauty therapy reception areas, using specialised IT applications.

Leadership and management

92. Curriculum management is good on the Lewes campus, but weak on the Eastbourne campus. There are appropriate staff development opportunities but some staff at Eastbourne have not been able to take advantage of them due to staff shortages. Teachers work well as a team on each campus, but there is too little sharing of good practice. Staff do not share schemes of work or learning materials. Resources are deployed efficiently and there is good support from technical staff

on both campuses.

Health and social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- effective teaching

- good support for students

- good use of work experience

- effective use of ICT.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on work-based programmes

- insufficient feedback on some students' work.

Scope of provision

93. The college provides courses in childcare and education, health and social care, care, counselling and public services. Courses at levels 1 to 3 are offered to full-time and part-time students during the day or in the evening. There are around 600 full-time and 150 part-time students. Some 26 learners are enrolled on work-based programmes.

Achievement and standards

94. Most of the full-time courses, and the part-time counselling and NVQ courses, have pass rates at or above the national averages. The retention rate on the modern apprenticeship programme is high,

but the pass rate is very low. To date, only one trainee has achieved all aspects of the apprenticeship framework, mainly as a result of the low pass rate on the key skills component of the programme.

95. The written and practical work of students on the course in early years care and education is of a high standard. In one lesson, students made reading cards to illustrate a story. They presented the story with confidence and linked colour and words to good effect. Students on NVQ courses produce well-organised portfolios. Students on many of the part-time courses are able to make links between what they learn in theory lessons and their existing knowledge. The majority of students have a clear understanding of the values and ethics that underpin the work in this curriculum area. Counselling students have a keen awareness of issues relating to confidentiality.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care and public services, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	10	14	28
		% retention	80	71	76
		% pass rate	88	50	82
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	42	51	53
		% retention	81	75	75
		% pass rate	85	86	95
Counselling skills intermediate	2	No. of starts	42	16	28
		% retention	95	88	82
		% pass rate	93	100	96
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	17	23	44
		% retention	59	74	70
		% pass rate	100	82	90
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	20	25	35
		% retention	65	64	37
		% pass rate	100	94	92
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	52	42	26
		% retention	77	83	77
		% pass rate	98	97	85

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

Quality of education and training

96. Most teachers are aware of the needs of individual students and take them into account when planning their lessons. Lessons contain a variety of appropriate learning activities. In one lesson, the teacher encouraged the students to plan their time carefully. Students devised their own action plan for the lesson and evaluated how successful they were in achieving it. Students make good use of ICT and the Internet for research. Some students write their lesson notes directly on to a computer. Portfolios and completed assignments contain evidence of good use of ICT.

97. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. They are good role models for students and display good occupational or professional skills. They are effective in relating theory to examples from their own practice. They encourage students to develop an awareness of the

medical context of their work. For example, a straightforward activity about the diagnosis of medical conditions was made much more challenging by the teacher's deliberate introduction of misleading information. Students had to question their judgements and comment on their findings.

98. In a minority of lessons, teachers did not give students enough to do, and some students become bored. Teachers allowed the more vocal students to dominate discussions.

99. Work experience is organised for all health and social care students even if it is not a mandatory part of the course. When matching students to work placements, every effort is made to meet their learning needs and interests. The work students do on placements is reviewed thoroughly. Feedback on assignment work varies in quality. Some teachers give precise and detailed guidance on how students can improve. Others provide only brief comments and fail to correct errors in spelling and grammar.

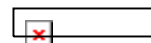
100. Full-time students gain confidence and self-esteem by achieving additional qualifications in subjects such as sports leadership and management. Students on public services courses undertake an activity-based induction programme as part of a strategy to improve retention rates. The provision of full-time courses from levels 1 to 3 provides students with opportunities for progression within the college.

101. Support for students is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of individual student's needs. Specialist equipment and additional support staff are made available to students who require extra help. Full-time and part-time students are given effective progress reviews. Personal and academic tutors help students to develop their life skills, study skills and their vocational learning.

Leadership and management

102. The management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. A team of enthusiastic staff set targets for attendance, retention and pass rates, using the past performance of their own students and information on national averages as guidelines. There are opportunities for staff development, but arrangements to provide occupational updating have lapsed. A number of active local partnerships and franchise arrangements have been developed. External partners participate in curriculum development groups and are invited to attend staff development workshops at the college.

Performing arts, music and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates and a high proportion of high grades

- high levels of attainment in music at Lewes

- effective use of the commercial experience of teachers

- extensive enrichment opportunities

- strong links with the community

- good accommodation and facilities at Lewes.

Weaknesses

- little level 2 and part-time provision at Eastbourne

- some unsatisfactory accommodation at Eastbourne.

Scope of provision

103. Performing arts, music and media courses are taken predominantly by students aged 16 to 18. The curriculum area has recently been designated as a Centre of Vocational Excellence for performing arts and entertainment industries. The range of courses includes GNVQ intermediate performing arts, intermediate certificate in music technology, national diploma performing arts, popular music and media, AVCE performing arts and media, GCE AS and A-level drama and theatre studies, dance, music, media and film studies.

Achievement and standards

104. Pass rates on most courses are consistently high and significantly above national averages. In 2002, all the students who completed the national diploma course in performing arts, and GCE A-level drama and theatre arts, dance, and film studies passed. Many students obtain high-grade passes. Retention rates are significantly above national averages on most courses. They are low, however, on the national diploma courses in performing arts and popular music and GCSE dance courses.

105. Students' on-course attainments are good on the Lewes campus. Students on level 3 courses have acquired appropriate study skills. They are highly articulate, make good use of critical analysis and are adept at taking notes. Performing arts students have a wide range of practical skills. Many of the music students are highly accomplished instrumentalists. Students at Eastbourne have fewer attainments. Few popular music students can read music. A high proportion of students goes on to gain places at leading universities and on vocational training courses. Students are punctual and their attendance rates are satisfactory.

A sample of retention and pass rates in performing arts, music and media, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate performing arts	2	No. of starts	12	18	15
		% retention	83	83	93

		% pass rate	70	80	92
National diploma in popular music	3	No. of starts	84	86	50
		% retention	61	66	62
		% pass rate	100	89	90
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	26	27	32
		% retention	92	74	59
		% pass rate	92	100	100
GCE AS dance	3	No. of starts	*	37	41
		% retention	*	78	76
		% pass rate	*	97	97
GCE AS film/video production	3	No. of starts	*	28	68
		% retention	*	86	90
		% pass rate	*	79	92
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	*	58	94
		% retention	*	83	86
		% pass rate	*	92	97

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

106. The majority of teaching is effective and meets the needs of students. Schemes of work and lesson plans are clear and show good planning and organisation of teaching. Teachers use a broad range of teaching methods effectively. They have high expectations of students and set demanding targets to ensure they strive to reach their full potential. Students are highly motivated, eager to learn and keen to share their ideas. Performing arts students use improvisation and experimentation very effectively to generate ideas and create performance material. In a few lessons, staff lacked confidence, and students were unclear of the objectives of the lesson and received insufficient guidance from the teachers.

107. Staff are well qualified. Many have up-to-date commercial experience that they draw on for the benefit of students. For example, many of the teachers of performing arts have extensive script writing and theatre experience. Media staff have worked in desktop publishing, radio, video production, design and journalism. The accommodation and teaching resources at the Lewes campus are good. The spacious drama and dance studios have good lighting and sound systems. The accommodation and resources at the Eastbourne campus are not up to the same high standard as those at Lewes. For example, the music-sequencing suite is cramped. The room used for GCE A-level music has poor acoustics, an inadequate sound system and an out-of-tune piano.

108. Assessment and internal verification procedures are thorough. Assignment briefs are well designed and state the assessment criteria clearly. The quality of written feedback to students varies. Some provides detailed, supportive and informative comments, but some provides too little guidance on strategies for improvement. Students receive satisfactory support and guidance. Tutorials take place regularly and students' progress is monitored and reviewed. Students receive thorough pre-entry advice and guidance. A well-designed induction programme was responsive to the interests of students and helped to create in them a sense of anticipation for the course.

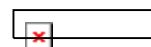
109. In line with the Centre of Vocational Excellence criteria, the college has developed excellent

links with local schools, employers, performance venues, the local music service and the education authority. These partnerships encourage many individuals in the local community to become involved in education. For example, students are involved in a community performance project, in partnership with the fire service, to raise the awareness of school children to the hazards of fire. The local music service provides special training and subsidies for musical instrument tuition for aspiring professional musicians. Employees at the local zoo receive bespoke training designed by the performing arts team. This collaborative effort by college staff has created many enrichment opportunities for students. Performing arts students perform in local commercial venues. The college arranges an annual trip to New York, where students visit theatres, television studios and art galleries.

Leadership and management

110. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Resources are used effectively. Leadership is good, particularly in performing arts. The college has achieved Centre of Vocational Excellence status for performing arts and entertainment industries based on its high pass rates at level 3, its commercially experienced staff, its strong community and partnership links and the good facilities at the Lewes campus. There is clear strategic vision underpinning the proposed expansion and development of the Centre of Vocational Excellence. The college has successfully identified a number of strategies for further improvements, including the construction of new accommodation for the performing arts. Communication and the sharing of good practice are sometimes poor between staff on the two main campuses. There are few level 2 courses or part-time provision to attract adult students, particularly at the Eastbourne campus.

Visual arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- highly creative and innovative students' work

- outstanding teaching in many lessons

- thorough and effective assessment.

Weaknesses

- insufficient progress by students in some lessons

- poor accommodation at Lewes campus.

Scope of provision

111. The college provides a wide range of full-time and part-time courses at the Eastbourne and Lewes campuses. The main full-time courses include a diploma in foundation studies art and design, national diplomas in fine art, graphics, design and design crafts and GNVQ intermediate art and design. Students are able to take GCE AS and A-level courses in art studies/fine art and photography, AVCE single and double awards in art and design and GCSE art and photography. Part-time courses include the diploma in foundation studies art and design, and certificates in creative studies, photography and art and design. At the time of the inspection, there were 648 full-time and 895 part-time enrolments on visual arts courses.

Achievement and standards

112. Pass rates are high. Many have been above national averages for the past three years. In 2002, pass rates were 100% on the AVCE art and design and the national diploma design crafts and fine art courses. Retention rates are satisfactory on most courses. Students are successful in progressing to other courses within the college. Many students who complete the GNVQ intermediate course progress to advanced level courses. A high proportion of students secure places on degree and Higher National Diploma (HND) courses.

113. Students have a professional approach to their work. Practical work is carried out to a high standard. Students continue working in their own time in studios. Students' work is highly creative and innovative. In one lesson, students who were exploring texture and form devised many imaginative and subtle experiments using paper as the main material. Students use specialist vocabulary fluently and are confident in expressing evaluative opinions and analysing complex concepts.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual arts, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	36	22	14
		% retention	92	86	86
		% pass rate	100	100	83
National diploma in general art and design	3	No. of starts	44	47	*
		% retention	68	77	*
		% pass rate	100	94	*
Diploma in foundation studies art and design	3	No. of starts	52	41	46
		% retention	88	90	80
		% pass rate	100	89	97
GNVQ/AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	20	18	14
		% retention	65	67	93
		% pass rate	85	92	100
GCE AS art studies/fine art	3	No. of starts	*	210	390
		% retention	*	74	77
		% pass rate	*	92	78

GCE A-level art studies/fine art	3	No. of starts	49	67	44
		% retention	69	75	81
		% pass rate	91	96	91

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

114. Teaching is generally good and is outstanding in many lessons. Teachers plan lessons carefully and set challenging tasks for students. They have very high expectations of their students and inspire and motivate them to achieve their best. In one outstanding lesson, the teacher showed a student who was unsure how to develop her work further a printing technique that was new to her. Excited by the possibilities of this technique, the student quickly created several designs. These were shared with the rest of the group and a highly articulate discussion took place. Students critically analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the designs and made very useful suggestions on how to improve the work.

115. Students are given the opportunity to sustain and develop core themes over time. Attention is paid to the development of observational drawing skills. A minority of lessons are poorly structured and fail to stretch the students, who make little progress in their learning.

116. Support for students is good. There is an optional pre-enrolment summer school. The progress of individual students is well monitored. Assessment is regular and rigorous. Assignment briefs contain detailed assessment criteria and students find them easy to understand. Very good written feedback on coursework provides students with a clear idea of their progress and how they can improve. Students are given regular reviews of their work, which they find motivating. On some courses, thorough self-evaluation and self-assessment by students is used as part of the monitoring and planning process.

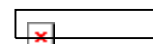
117. Preparation for progression to further courses, HE or employment is effective. A visual arts enhancement programme provides a valuable practical insight into specialist progression opportunities. Educational visits, including those abroad, are well planned. Key skills are integrated well with other aspects of the curriculum, including assignments.

118. Staff are well qualified and many of them are active practitioners in the visual arts. The Eastbourne campus has a permanent exhibition space that provides students with the opportunity to show their work in a professional setting. The studios are well equipped. The Lewes campus has specialist, industry-standard computers, which students can use. However, much of the accommodation for visual arts at Lewes is not well maintained and does not provide students with an appropriate working environment.

Leadership and management

119. Course management is effective. Good use is made of performance indicators such as attendance rates and students' views. The self-assessment process is rigorous. Equality of opportunity is promoted during lessons and diversity is celebrated. Links between staff at the two main campuses are not well developed and good practice is not shared sufficiently.

Social sciences



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses

- good teaching

- thorough assessment of students' written work

- effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GCSE psychology and sociology courses

- inadequate monitoring of students' progress.

Scope of provision

120. The college provides GCSE, GCE AS and A-level courses in psychology and sociology. These subjects are also included in the access to HE courses. Most students on the GCE AS and A-level courses are aged 16 to 18. At the Lewes campus, there are around 300 students of psychology and 150 students of sociology, the two most popular subjects among an extensive range of humanities courses. At the Eastbourne campus, there are just over 200 students, one third of them on GCSE courses.

Achievement and standards

121. Pass rates are high on GCE AS and A-level psychology and sociology courses. The proportion of high-grade passes is significantly above the national average. In 2002, over two thirds of GCE AS and A-level sociology students achieved grade A or B. Pass rates in GCSE psychology and sociology have deteriorated over the past three years. In 2002, they were very low, particularly for psychology. Very few students of psychology or sociology achieve key skills qualifications.

122. Retention rates are high on GCE A-level sociology, and satisfactory on GCE AS psychology and sociology courses. In 2000 and 2001, the retention rate for students aged 16 to 18 at the Eastbourne campus on the two-year GCE A-level sociology course was low, but it has since increased. In several lessons at the Eastbourne campus, there were low rates of attendance. Attendance and punctuality at Lewes were mostly good.

123. Students' attainment in lessons is often very good. Many students enjoy and respond confidently to discussions. GCE AS and A-level psychology students are able to make well-structured presentations, combining good content with effective delivery. They are proficient in their essay writing. One essay required students to discuss gender roles, using research evidence derived from the study of different cultures. The best work showed students developing a critical approach as they assessed the limitations of different research studies. GCE AS and A-level sociology students show good awareness of relevant research methods. They are able to discuss alternative sociological theories, using statistical data to illustrate and explain them. The research work of GCSE psychology students is of a good standard and covers a varied range of topics.

A sample of retention and pass rates in social sciences, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE psychology (grades A* to C)	2	No. of starts	42	48	45
		% retention	83	52	51
		% pass rate	63	64	4
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	144	226
		% retention	*	85	78
		% pass rate	*	89	80
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	70	114
		% retention	*	77	84
		% pass rate	*	96	93
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	31	50	52
		% retention	74	82	87
		% pass rate	95	93	89
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	77	69	102
		% retention	69	61	90
		% pass rate	100	93	89

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

124. Teaching is consistently satisfactory or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In most lessons, teachers combine good planning with personal enthusiasm to sustain students' interest in what they are learning. Teachers know their students well and provide a varied range of appropriate activities for them. Students are given opportunities to apply what they have learnt through group discussions, presentations and other activities.

125. Psychology students take part in simple experiments based on research studies. As a result, students make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the social sciences. They use well-devised handouts to make their own summaries of research studies. Teachers help students to consolidate their learning. Teachers of sociology make frequent references to sociological theories to show the way new material is related to existing knowledge. They are skilled at drawing together students' responses in clearly presented summaries on the whiteboard. During one lesson, students came to appreciate the pitfalls of poorly structured questionnaires as research tools. Students gain early experience in designing their own research.

126. In a minority of lessons, teachers rely too much on exposition as a teaching method. Students listen, but without any other activity to reinforce what they are told, they do not learn effectively. Teachers do not integrate the development of key skills into their lessons. Social science students are not systematically developing key skills.

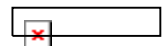
127. Staff are appropriately qualified and undertake relevant professional development. Resources for teaching and learning are good. Base rooms are equipped with audio-visual aids and computers. Assessment of students' work is thorough and appropriate. Written work is set regularly and returned promptly after marking. Teachers mark students' work carefully and give helpful advice on how they can improve their performance. Samples of students' work are cross-marked by different teachers to verify standards.

128. Teachers give students clear advice and guidance about course requirements and opportunities for progression. For students with specific learning difficulties, there is effective diagnosis and appropriate learning support. Target grades are not agreed early enough with students and the arrangements for monitoring students' progress against them are inadequate. Some staff do not refer to the target grades in the documents used for reviewing students' progress. Personal tutors work with students to compile action plans; some of which lack detail. Subject teachers are insufficiently involved in this process and they are not always kept informed of them.

Leadership and management

129. Leadership and management of the social sciences are good. A senior manager provides effective co-ordination of the curriculum teams, which are led by experienced teachers. Communication is effective. Teachers working at the same campus share teaching materials. Teachers and managers are responsive to students' views. The courses benefit from careful monitoring and thoughtful evaluation and standards of students' performance have improved on GCE AS and A-level courses. Managers have acted promptly to address low GCSE pass rates in 2002. Their actions led to changes of teachers, closer monitoring of students' performance and the introduction of new assignments for students. The development of students' key skills, however, remains ineffective.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- good teaching

- high pass rates on many courses

- effective support for students

- extensive range of courses.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some modern language courses.

Scope of provision

130. The college provides an extensive range of courses in English and modern foreign languages at the Eastbourne, Lewes and Newhaven campuses. Students can take GCE AS and A-level courses in English language, English literature, English language and literature combined and communication studies. There are also GCSE courses in English language and English literature. Students of modern languages can follow courses leading towards GCSE and GCE AS and A-level qualifications in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian. Courses leading to OCN qualifications in the main European languages and modern Greek are taken mainly by adult students. Courses in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Dutch are also offered at community venues. Overall, there are 1,433 full-time and 1,156 part-time enrolments.

Achievement and standards

131. Pass rates are high on most courses. The proportion of high-grade passes obtained by students is also high on many courses, including GCE A-level communications, English literature and French. In 2002, all students taking the GCE AS German and Italian courses secured high-grade passes. Analysis of value added data shows that students' achievements at GCE A level are broadly in line with predictions based on their prior attainment at GCSE. In the case of German, however, students' performance is consistently better than predictions based on their earlier achievements. Adults taking language units at the college fare particularly well and pass rates on these courses have been improving steadily.

132. The proportion of students who complete their courses is also generally high. On some modern language courses, however, retention rates have been unsatisfactory.

133. Students on English and modern language courses produce work of a high standard. Their written work confirms that they have the required knowledge, understanding and skills. Many students are confident and highly articulate in the way they express their views. For example, in one GCE A-level lesson, students aged 16 to 18 discussed the literary text *Boule de Suif* in French. They explored the nature of realism and how this applied to the text, without resorting to their mother tongue. In a GCE A-level English literature lesson, students displayed highly developed analytical skills, drawing out links between the *Bell Jar* and *Selected Poems* by Sylvia Plath.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and modern foreign languages, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English (grades A* to C)	2	No. of starts	186	187	268
		% retention	58	69	71
		% pass rate	76	43	57
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	37	43	40
		% retention	62	70	67
		% pass rate	83	77	70
GCE AS literature	3	No. of starts	*	75	107
		% retention	*	84	79

		% pass rate	*	89	90
GCE AS language and literature	3	No. of starts	*	54	102
		% retention	*	87	90
		% pass rate	*	91	90
GCE A-level English language and literature (1 year)	3	No. of starts	20	14	55
		% retention	95	86	96
		% pass rate	58	75	94
GCE A-level French (1 year)	3	No. of starts	21	11	20
		% retention	57	91	80
		% pass rate	100	70	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

134. Most teaching is good and a high proportion is very good. Teachers develop students' skills of expression and analysis effectively. In one GCSE English literature lesson, measured and consistent praise from the teacher fostered an atmosphere of high self-esteem and expectations among students. Teachers produce very good learning materials. Careful planning leads to effective learning in many lessons. During a GCE AS English language lesson, an apparently simple quiz on the etymology of political words was developed skilfully into an analysis of famous rhetorical statements, such as 'the lady's not for turning'. This culminated in a demanding written task, where students identified linguistic features and their effect.

135. Both teachers and students of foreign languages make very good use of the language being studied. In a GCE A-level French lesson, the teacher encouraged students to consolidate their recently learned vocabulary in a discussion about transport issues in France. Most students are keen to contribute to such discussions. Indeed, in one lesson, a student wrote down her comments because she had lost her voice. However, in some lessons, teachers did not draw all students into discussions and some students said little. In a minority of language lessons, the teachers did not adapt their teaching methods to take account of the small group size. The teaching of grammar in modern languages was not always effective.

136. Resources are generally good and particularly so in modern languages. A popular language centre helps to support a carefully structured programme of independent learning. The college has recently invested in a new multimedia suite to complement its existing language laboratories. The learning resource centres on both main campuses carry a wide range of learning materials for modern languages and English, although they are sparse for GCE A-level English on the Eastbourne campus.

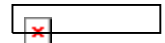
137. Assessment is thorough. Teachers monitor their students' progress closely and homework is an integral part of all courses. Teachers annotate students' work with helpful comments. Students are well supported by their teachers. Small groups of modern language students attend conversation sessions with foreign language assistants. Students' attendance and punctuality are good. They are monitored closely and teachers take prompt action when necessary.

138. English students have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge through conferences and theatre trips. Recently, students have seen *The Duchess of Malfi*, *King Lear* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Modern language students also have conferences, visits and exchanges abroad to improve their examination technique and spoken language.

Leadership and management

139. Curriculum management is effective. Courses are generally well planned. Staff contribute to the production of the self-assessment report, consulting students on their views as part of the process. Managers have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of their curriculum area. Teachers and managers draw up and implement plans to address weaknesses and consolidate strengths. Staff responsibilities are clear on each of the main campuses. Teachers work closely as teams, sharing resources on their respective campuses. However, there is insufficient communication and exchange of ideas and teaching materials between campuses.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or difficulties



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- effective development of students' practical skills

- good support for individual students

- effective work experience placements.

Weaknesses

- inadequate individual learning plans

- insufficiently detailed lesson plans

- ineffective management of challenging behaviour

- insufficient use of ICT in lessons.

Scope of provision

140. The college provides a wide range of courses for adults and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the Eastbourne and Lewes campuses. The provision includes full-time pre-vocational and vocational courses and part-time courses for adults. A full-time general foundation course for young people is provided at Eastbourne. This course is designed to provide key skills, a choice of vocational options and work experience. Many of the students on the foundation course have behavioural difficulties, have been excluded from school or have left school without achieving any qualifications. A full-time entry-level vocational skills programme at Lewes provides key skills, skills for working life, vocational options and work experience. Overall, there are 65 students aged 16 to 19 and 249 adult students, 225 of whom are studying part-time on programmes in this curriculum area.

Achievement and standards

141. Pass rates are high and improving on courses that offer accredited qualifications. In 2001/02, the pass rates on the 'towards independence' and 'workright' courses were 100%. Retention rates are satisfactory on most courses. Attendance rates are high. Many students progress from entry level courses to FE or to employment.

142. The portfolios of students working towards level 1 vocational qualifications are well maintained and contain evidence of a broad range of learning activities. The standard of work produced by these students is high. The work set for some students on the general foundation course is too easy. These students have not made as much progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills as they might have done.

A sample of retention and pass rates in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Introduction to vocational multi-skills	entry	No. of starts	26	14	6
		% retention	96	100	83
		% pass rate	83	93	100
Further education award	entry	No. of starts	16	21	31
		% retention	80	76	97
		% pass rate	100	75	77
'Towards independence'	entry	No. of starts	88	153	261
		% retention	94	96	97
		% pass rate	87	85	100
'Workright'	entry	No. of starts	6	8	7
		% retention	67	88	86
		% pass rate	50	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

143. Most teaching is satisfactory or good. In the most effective lessons, teachers create opportunities for students to make choices and develop their independence. Learning is enjoyable and challenging. Students develop new skills and knowledge of the subject being studied and at the

same time make progress in the development of personal and communication skills.

144. In one lesson, the teacher used an imaginative variety of song and percussion to enable students with multiple learning difficulties to experience differences in rhythm and tempo. All the students were encouraged to participate in, and respond to, the activities. In another, students worked as a team to make plant pot holders. The teacher promoted collaborative working in the design and production of the holders and encouraged students to make choices and decisions. Students completed the project successfully, evaluating the process and the outcome.

145. In some lessons, teachers do not manage the behaviour of students effectively. There is an over-reliance on worksheet-based activities. Students have little to do and become bored and inattentive. This leads to disruptive behaviour. Students are sometimes given inappropriate tasks, such as undemanding cut-and-paste activities, from which they learn little.

146. Most lesson plans do not specify the learning needs of individual students. Teachers do not plan tasks to meet such individual needs. The development of students' literacy skills is inadequate. Insufficient use is made of activities to extend and provide a challenge for more able students.

147. Students have good access to vocational facilities on both college campuses. They successfully acquire vocational skills through practical activities. Students use computers in the college's learning resource centres, but there are few computers and other learning resources in many of the teaching rooms. There is little use of recorded speech or still or moving images to enhance learning. Most staff are experienced and well qualified, although some do not have a teaching qualification.

148. Individual learning plans do not contain enough information about the students' prior achievements, preferred learning styles or possible barriers to learning. Targets in individual learning plans are not specific enough and do not include deadlines for achievement. They are not useful to students as a means of promoting independent learning or reviewing progress. Individual learning plans are not seen by all the teachers and support staff who work with the student.

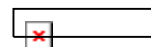
149. Young people and adults develop a good range of employability skills. They are able to apply these skills effectively during well-organised work experience placements. Placements are carefully matched to the students' needs, aspirations and level of maturity. They are effective in preparing students for employment and further vocational training. Practical activities and work placements are successful in developing confidence and self-esteem.

150. Students speak highly of the support they receive from staff. Deaf students receive excellent support from experienced communicators who devise teaching strategies to enable them to participate fully in classroom activities. Some vocational teachers are not aware of the exact nature of students' learning difficulties or of their care requirements. They do not have sufficient information about the impact of students' difficulties on their learning. Students on full-time vocational courses receive good tutorial support. Teachers have good relationships with students. They provide effective pastoral support for students, many of whom have personal problems that are barriers to learning. Staff ensure parents and carers are kept informed of the progress of students. Effective links with local charities and agencies such as the Connexions service and social services, support student development and progression.

Leadership and management

151. Leadership and management of courses are satisfactory. Staff are encouraged to update their knowledge and skills. Progression routes to other courses are being developed for adult students with the introduction of a new full-time course and a wider range of vocational options. There are well-established procedures for course review and evaluation. However, the good practice that has been developed within teams is not always shared with other teams. Students' behaviour problems are detracting from learning and attainment. Existing behaviour management plans and strategies are not effective.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good development of understanding and skills for level 1 students

- imaginative teaching in literacy lessons

- good learning resources

- effective projects attracting new students.

Weaknesses

- ineffective teaching in some entry level lessons

- insufficient use of ICT in lessons

- weak assessment and monitoring of students' progress.

Scope of provision

152. Approximately 300 adult students were enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses at entry levels 1, 2 and 3, and levels 1 and 2 at the time of the inspection. Students attend the return-to-learn literacy and numeracy course at the main college campuses and at a number of community centres based in school premises and community venues in a number of towns in the East Sussex area.

Achievement and standards

153. Achievement on literacy and numeracy programmes is satisfactory. Students on level 1 courses develop their skills and understanding effectively. Those on literacy courses produce interesting and imaginative written and oral work. Recently, some students wrote, edited and sold a recipe book in aid of a national charity. Students on level 1 and level 2 numeracy programmes make good

progress. All students show growth in their self-confidence and most develop effective learning skills. The goals of some students at entry levels 1 and 2 are set unrealistically high, leading to an impression that they are making slow progress.

Quality of education and training

154. Teaching is mainly satisfactory or good. Teachers provide good support to individuals. Lessons are lively and include a range of appropriate activities, including group and individual work. Teachers are skilled at maintaining the students' interest and getting them to work well together. There are very good relationships between teachers and students. Students enjoy their lessons. They have contributed articles to a college magazine and written, edited and produced a play on the subject of dyslexia.

155. Some less effective lessons, particularly for entry level students, contain too many different activities. Students are not given sufficient time to think about their work and complete it and find it difficult to focus on improving specific skills. Students are set tasks that are too difficult for them. Some teachers supply the answers to calculations too quickly, rather than helping students to understand the method by which answers can be worked out.

156. The majority of staff have an initial teaching certificate in basic skills and some have general teaching qualifications or are in the process of acquiring them. Most classroom volunteers also have an initial teaching certificate. However, too few have had specialist training in the teaching of literacy and numeracy and there are too few experienced teachers to support the large number of relatively inexperienced staff. Information about progression opportunities is not readily available to students. Few students progress to other courses in the college.

157. Accommodation for literacy and numeracy courses at the Lewes and Newhaven campuses is adequate. Some classrooms at Eastbourne lack displays of students' work. Community venues offer IT courses during the daytime, but rarely in the evening. Some teaching rooms in these venues are too small and have inadequate facilities. Insufficient use is made of ICT for developing students' literacy or numeracy skills. Most teaching rooms where literacy and numeracy lessons take place lack computers.

158. Teachers use well-designed paper-based learning resources. These are prepared for specific lessons or individual students and meet the learning needs of students very well. They enable all students to work on the same topic while ensuring that each individual works at his or her own pace and level of skill. Few resources are available for teaching the practical numeracy skills relating to shape, and space and measurement. Insufficient reading material is available for entry level students who are learning to read.

159. Arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of students' progress are unsatisfactory. The prior experience of some students is not recorded and hence there is no benchmark against which to measure their subsequent progress. Students consult with teachers and agree an individual learning plan that includes specific targets. However, no moderation takes place of the teachers' assessment of the students' progress towards these targets. No internal verification system exists for the new entry level qualifications that the college intends to offer.

160. The structure of literacy and numeracy courses is flexible and meets the needs of students. New courses have been introduced that are designed to attract adults needing to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Courses based on the main college campuses have grown by over 20% since 2001. Successful projects have been run in partnership with community organisations such as childcare providers, mental health organisations and local schools. Many of these projects attract small numbers of students, but are gradually raising the profile of local learning opportunities.

Leadership and management

161. Leadership and management of the literacy and numeracy provision are satisfactory. Senior college staff and teachers have a strong commitment to develop the learning of individuals who have

skill shortages. Effective use is made of external funding to expedite this, including the appointment of staff and improvements to premises. Staff have the opportunity to undergo training for teaching qualifications and to attend college-run events to raise awareness of conditions such as deafness and dyslexia. Teaching observations are infrequent and lack the necessary rigour to help teachers develop their skills. The mentoring scheme for new staff is insufficiently thorough. Steady progress is being made towards more effective co-ordination and sharing of good practice between staff across the college.

Part D: College data

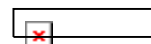
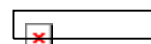


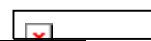
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18%	19+%
1	17	18
2	32	23
3	32	14
4/5	0	1
Other	19	44
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	2,667	1,953	9
Land-based provision	19	153	0
Construction	314	316	1
Engineering, technology and manufacture	448	430	2
Business administration, management and professional	987	4,851	12
Information and communications technology	2,063	3,780	12
Retailing, customer service and transportation	16	100	0

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	1,300	1,155	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	517	456	2
Health, social care and public services	1,218	3,434	9
Visual and performing arts and media	1,914	2,667	9
Humanities	4,483	3,975	17
English, languages and communication	2,995	1,786	10
Foundation programmes	2,461	3,309	12
Other	3	49	0
Total	21,405	28,414	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
		1	Starters excluding transfers	1,086	1,011	1,010	1,556
	Retention rate (%)	80	86	82	80	85	83
	National average (%)	80	79	**	78	78	**
	Pass rate (%)	68	59	72	63	60	82
	National average (%)	65	68	**	66	68	**
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,211	2,111	2,121	2,060	1,753	1,888
	Retention rate (%)	77	79	74	82	82	80
	National average (%)	76	76	**	79	78	**
	Pass rate (%)	66	74	71	76	69	77
	National average (%)	66	69	**	65	69	**
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,136	3,639	4,517	1,873	1,878	2,241
	Retention rate (%)	74	80	83	76	78	80
	National average (%)	76	77	**	78	78	**

	Pass rate (%)	86	88	86	72	75	73
	National average (%)	74	76	**	66	69	**
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	3	5	2	169	145	230
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	85	95	82
	National average (%)	79	82	**	81	84	**
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	44	46	60
	National average (%)	55	55	**	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 and tertiary colleges).

Sources of information

1. National averages: Benchmarking data 1998/99 to 2000/2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Learning and Skills Council.

2. College rates for 1998/99 to 2000/2001: College ISR (Individual Student Record).

* too few students to provide a valid calculation

** data not available.

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)	76	19	5	145
Level 2 (intermediate)	74	23	3	68
Level 1 (foundation)	47	46	7	28
Other sessions	56	35	9	43
Totals	70	25	5	284