



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Kendal College

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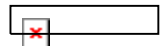
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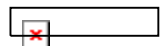
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Basic information about the college

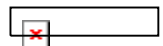


Name of college:	Kendal College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Graham Wilkinson
Address of college:	Milnthorpe Road Kendal Cumbria LA9 5AY
Telephone number:	0800 121 141
Fax number:	01539 730708
Chair of governors:	Bill Broekhuizen
Unique reference number:	130631
Name of reporting inspector:	Sheila Child
Date of inspection:	3-7 February 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

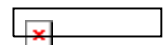


Kendal College is a small general further education college serving the post-16 education and training needs of the mainly rural communities of South Lakeland in Cumbria. It is the only general further education college within a 25-mile radius. The college mission is to 'enable students to achieve their full learning and skills potential'. South Lakeland has a population of approximately 104,000. The main employment sectors are distribution and retail, services industries, production and construction. In 2002, the unemployment rate for South Lakeland was 1%, which compares favourably with a national average of 4%. People from minority ethnic groups make up 1% of the population. Educational achievement by young people is high. In 2001, 61% of school leavers achieved five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A* to C, compared with a national average of 48%.

The college has one main campus and two specialist centres for creative arts and construction, all based in Kendal town centre. In addition, it has a small amount of community-based provision and a mobile learning centre for the teaching of information technology (IT) and basic skills courses. The college offers provision in 11 areas of learning, but it is very limited in science and mathematics, humanities and land-based programme areas. Externally-funded courses in construction are also offered. To meet the needs of its population, the college provides a little distance learning and work-based learning in addition to its work in the community.

In Cumbria, progression into post-16 education is in line with national averages. Of the 13 secondary schools in South Lakeland, 10 have sixth forms and a small number now offer vocational qualifications. The college offers a wide range of programmes, both full time and part time, from entry level to higher education (HE). There has been a notable decline in full-time and part-time enrolments in recent years. The corporation's decision that the college should focus on vocational provision has resulted in the cessation of full-time General Certificate of Education Advance-level (GCE A-level) courses from September 2001. Distance learning provision has also been reduced, although a number of health and safety, hospitality and social care courses are still offered. In the current academic year, however, full-time enrolments have shown an increase. There are 580 full-time students, most of whom are aged 16 to 18, and 1,855 part-time students, most of whom are adults. Currently, there are 73 modern apprentices; 20 are at advanced level and 53 at foundation level. Their programmes are in hairdressing and beauty therapy, business administration and accountancy and hospitality and catering.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged provision to be good in four curriculum areas and satisfactory in the remaining three. The work-based learning provision in hospitality and catering and in hairdressing is satisfactory. None of the provision is unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- good physical resources in many areas

- much good teaching and learning

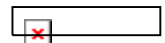
- productive links with schools and HE
- good integration of key skills into the learning programmes
- effective additional support for students.

What should be improved

- weak financial management
- under-utilisation of accommodation in hospitality
- a narrow range of provision in business and sport and leisure curriculum areas
- a lack of opportunities for enrichment activities
- declining enrolments on courses for adults.

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

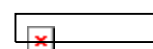


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. NB: Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on 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
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Mathematics, science, computing and information technology	Satisfactory. There is a broad range of provision in IT, with good progression routes from entry level to level 3. Pass rates are good across the range of provision. Teaching and learning are generally effective, but there is lack of differentiation within classroom activities which impedes learning. Resources to support learning are good in information and communications technology (ICT) but curriculum management and assessment processes are poor on full-time IT courses.
Business, management and accounting	Satisfactory. Pass rates on most courses are good and some are significantly above national averages. Retention rates are poor on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) accounting and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) business. Most teaching is satisfactory and features a variety of activities to meet students' individual needs and develop their understanding. The number of students on full-time courses is low and the range of provision is narrow at levels 1 and 2.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Pass rates are high on full-time courses. A large proportion of teaching is good or better. Students produce a high standard of practical and written work and, in work-based learning, portfolios contain a wide range of good quality evidence from the workplace. Accommodation and facilities are good, but under-utilised.
Sport, leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on full-time vocational courses for students aged 16 to 18, but very poor on part-time courses, particularly the fitness instructors course. The retention rate on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate leisure and tourism course is low. Teaching and learning are satisfactory or better in most lessons. There is narrow provision in part-time courses and no sport enrichment activities for full-time students.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Pass rates on full-time courses are above national averages, but retention and pass rates on work-based learning programmes are low. Teaching and learning are good and students' progress is effectively monitored. In many practical classes, there is a shortage of clients, which slows students' assessment opportunities and progress. There is slow introduction of key skills for some work-based learners.
Health, social care and early years	Good. There are high pass rates on many courses. Teaching is good and successfully conveys current industrial practices to students. In a minority of less successful lessons, learning activities were inappropriate to challenge students' abilities. Some aspects of curriculum management on health and social care courses are poor.
Visual and performing arts	Good. Pass rates are high on advanced music and drama courses. Teaching and learning are effective and develop students' creative and technical skills. Students are highly motivated and produce good standards of work. Some teaching accommodation is poor in visual and performing arts.

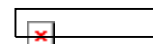
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, including significant improvements in students' achievements. Effective action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A clear vision and direction has been provided

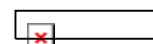
experience. There has been good support from governors for the quality improvement strategy, which has also been supported by staff development. Self-assessment is rigorous and effective and has close links to strategic planning. Management information is accessible and used effectively for student tracking and quality assurance, although some curriculum areas do not comply fully with quality assurance processes. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, not enough has been done to address high levels of staff sickness and turnover. Furthermore, the financial position of the college is weak, and value for money is unsatisfactory.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



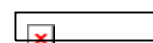
The approach of the college to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. Despite its small size, and declining enrolments on some courses, the college has maintained its provision in a wide range of vocational areas. It has collaborated well with schools in the area to ensure students have access to a broad curriculum. However, although targets for recruitment in basic skills have been exceeded, the college has recognised that it does not have a sufficiently wide provision at foundation level. There have been improvements in teaching and learning to better meet the needs of individual students, and the revised model of learning support is based on an inclusive approach. The college has made strenuous efforts to raise the profile of its equality and diversity policy and has given a high priority in the college development plan to its implementation. Staff and students have been made aware of the policy. The college is meeting its obligations with respect to the Race Relations Amendment Act and for students with disabilities as required in the Special Educational Needs Acts. Senior staff and governors regularly monitor the progress of policy implementation and of responses to students' complaints. The college has acknowledged that much remains to be done, including an audit of curriculum materials and wider monitoring of the performance and views of under-represented groups.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are good. The college provides good information about courses and students receive impartial guidance upon application to the college. Students can enrol on many part-time courses throughout the year. There are close links with schools for prospective students aged 16 to 18. All new students undertake a comprehensive initial assessment. Support for students is systematic and well managed, and success rates of those who receive additional support are high. Key skills are well taught and in many areas are integrated within the curriculum. All full-time and part-time students have a tutorial entitlement. New tutorial arrangements were implemented in 2002 and include coverage of health and social issues. Students have access to good advice on careers and guidance on personal issues, provided by the Connexions staff who are based at the college.

Students' views of the college



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

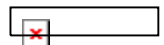
What students like about the college

- friendly, helpful and knowledgeable tutors
- excellent study and pastoral support
- good mix of theory and practical work
- challenging assignments with constructive, timely feedback
- a variety of trips and visits.

What they feel could be improved

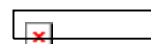
- continuity of teaching staff
- provision of a common room and lockers
- more seating and a wider range of food in the cafeteria
- better timing of breaks to avoid long queues in the cafeteria
- insufficient access to computers in the learning resource centre at peak times
- the low status of key skills in the eyes of local employers.

Other information



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



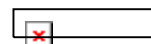
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and 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	66	30	4
19+ and WBL*	67	29	4
Learning 16-18	68	30	2
19+ and WBL*	67	29	4

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. Inspectors used data on students' achievements drawn from individualised student record (ISR) returns to the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) for the period 1998 to 2000 and returns made to the LSC for 2001. They also used college data on pass and retention rates for 2001/02, produced using kite-mark software, a sample of which had been validated. They found these to be generally reliable.

2. The college offers a wide curriculum with strong emphasis on vocational courses. Most enrolments at the college are on level 2 courses for students aged 16 to 18 and on level 3 courses for adults. The curriculum covers 11 of the 14 LSC areas of learning. The numbers of students on land-based, mathematics, science, retailing and humanities programmes are small.

3. Retention rates on most courses are good and have shown a steady increase over three years, at all ages and levels, to above national averages, with the exception of level 2 programmes for students aged 16 to 18, which are around the national average. Pass rates for students aged 16 to

18 are high and exceed national averages by as much as 15% on level 3 courses. There has been a decline in pass rates over a three-year period on level 2 courses for adults, but in 2001 they were above the national average. Pass rates on higher level programmes for adults have improved over the past two years and are high.

16 to 18 year olds

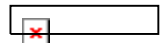
4. Pass rates at levels 1 and 2 have been consistently above national averages for the past three years and have continuously improved at level 2. For example, the 71% pass rate in 1999 rose to 82% in 2001, which compares favourably with the national average of 69%. On GNVQ intermediate courses, pass rates have been improving and were high in 2001. NVQ pass rates at level 2 have been high for the past two years. At GCSE, the number of students achieving five or more A* to C grades has risen over a three year period and is now above national averages. At level 3, overall pass rates have remained high over the past three years and in 2001 were at 92%, significantly above the national average of 76%. Outcomes are consistently good on NVQ programmes and GNVQ precursors. However, the achievement of modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes is low.

5. Retention rates have improved significantly in 2002 and are good on level 1 and level 3 courses, at 88% and 80%, respectively. At level 2, retention rates have been slowly declining and are just above the national average. GCSE retention rates have been low but improved in 2001. Retention rates on short courses are high but declined in 2001. On NVQ programmes at this level, retention rates have been at or near to national averages for the past two years. Recruitment at level 3 has declined, but numbers are now improving in some programme areas. Over the past three years, the best retention rates for the foundation modern apprentices were 36% in hairdressing and 50% in hospitality and catering. In-year retention rates for current students recruited in 2001 and 2002 are better.

Adult learners

6. There are large numbers of adults enrolled on courses across all levels of provision. The vast majority of enrolments of students aged 19 plus are on courses at levels 2 and 3 and short courses, largely on a part-time basis. Pass rates have been consistently above national averages at levels 1 to 3 for the past three years. At level 4, in 2001, pass rates were outstanding at 100%. Retention rates have declined at level 2, but are still above national averages. At level 4 they have fallen below national averages. Overall, adult students are more likely to complete their courses than students aged 16 to 18. There was a substantial drop in enrolments from 1999 to 2001. For example, at level 2, enrolments fell from 1,694 in 1999/2000 to 454 in 2001/02. However, in 2002, enrolments increased in a number of curriculum areas.

Quality of education and training



7. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 101 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 66% of these, satisfactory in 30% and less than satisfactory in 4%. The highest proportion of good or better teaching was in hospitality and catering with the lowest in business. The quality of teaching is broadly similar when comparing lessons for adult students with those for students aged 16 to 18. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, 7%, was in level 2 courses.

8. The best lessons are well planned and teachers use a variety of methods to interest and engage students. Schemes of work cater for individual learning needs and activities are appropriately structured to meet the requirements of the different abilities of students taught in the same lesson. Good use is made of group and whole class discussions to consolidate and apply learning in different contexts. Students are making good progress towards achieving their primary learning

goals. In a number of vocational areas, for example, hairdressing and beauty therapy and visual and performing arts, teachers successfully use their knowledge of the occupational area to ensure that students are able to link the skills being developed to current industrial practice. Work experience is also used productively in leisure and tourism and health and social care to provide students with an insight into the different work roles and responsibilities in these locally important employment areas.

9. The less effective teaching is characterised by lack of pace in some lessons, where students are not set sufficiently demanding timescales for the completion of tasks. Some other lessons are dominated by the teacher, with a failure to check students' understanding regularly. Occasionally, the learning activities set are insufficiently challenging for the level and ability of the students.

10. Practical classes in hospitality and catering are effectively managed and enable more experienced students to supervise those working at lower levels. Students' practical and production skills are good in visual and performing arts. In ICT, however, there is an over reliance on workshop activities without sufficient whole class teaching to review outcomes and share good practice. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, the shortage of clients sometimes constrains the range of practical opportunities for students, which slows their progress. Key skills are successfully integrated into health and social care and leisure and tourism classes. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, opportunities are sometimes missed to integrate key skills within the curriculum area. In this area, the small number of lessons for work-based learners observed were judged to be predominantly satisfactory.

11. The college employs a sufficient number of teachers to deliver the range of courses on offer. Teachers are appropriately qualified although, as a consequence of high staff turnover in 2001/02, a substantial number are very new to the college and the profession. They are being supported by a teaching and learning facilitator in order to develop and monitor their skills and expertise. All teaching staff are allocated a minimum of eight days per annum for professional updating and continuing professional development. During the past academic year, about 75% of staff fully used this entitlement. Only a small number of staff possess a basic skills qualification and in hospitality and catering there is an insufficient number of qualified assessors.

12. The main learning resource centre has a good range of books, periodicals and other learning materials. An additional centre is available in the creative arts building, but no facilities exist at the construction and craft centre. The newly created internal resource information system (IRIS) allows staff and students to locate available resources in most curriculum areas through the college intranet. Learning resource centre staff, who are well qualified, carry out a comprehensive induction programme for all full-time students; they offer a similar induction to those who attend part time, on request. The ratio of computers to students is currently 1:5 and hardware and software are of a commercial standard. There is generally good access, except at peak times, to computers within the learning resource centre. The introduction of information learning technology into some curriculum areas has been slow. To address this, two expert members of staff have been identified to develop and deliver the required staff training.

13. The quality of accommodation is good in most areas. Substantial funds have been allocated to renovate the main reception area, hairdressing salon, beauty therapy facilities and training restaurant. Additional Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) funding will allow further upgrading of kitchens and other areas within hospitality. Investment in equipment for the creative arts centre has been substantial, although some classrooms are of poor quality. Access for students with restricted mobility has been improved and is good in most areas although, at the creative arts centre, disabled access is confined to the ground floor. Childcare facilities are provided in the 'Busy Bees' nursery but, more generally, there are few social or recreational areas for students. The refectory at the main site is inadequate to meet the demands of students at peak times and offers a limited service in the evenings.

14. All full-time students undergo an initial assessment that determines their key skills level, basic skills needs and preferred learning style. 'At risk' students are identified at this stage and provided with additional support. Information from initial assessment is used to agree individual learning plans. Students work towards key skills at the level most appropriate for them, rather than the whole class working at the same level. Assessment for most programmes is rigorous and appropriate.

Assignments are challenging and well timed, and feedback is rapid, helpful and detailed. Tutors use the outcomes from assignments to monitor students' progress. Some departments use peer appraisal to provide constructive feedback. A college-wide assessment strategy is being developed, but it is not yet complete. Some NVQ assessment lacks rigour, and the college internal verification processes have failed to address this problem.

15. The college offers courses in 11 areas of learning. There are some gaps in provision and enrolments on a number of courses across the curriculum are low. There is limited provision at level 1 in some areas; several courses at this level were promoted during 2001/02, but failed to recruit viable numbers. A strategic decision has been made to withdraw from GCE A-level provision. Instead, the college collaborates with local schools so that students can study vocational programmes at the college whilst taking GCE A levels at school.

16. The college is responsive to its local community. A community learning bus provides IT and basic skills provision in rural areas. A community outreach centre in the town meets the needs of students who might not otherwise attend college, offering IT courses on a flexible basis on many days and evenings throughout the week. Some distance learning provision is available in hospitality and care. There are insufficient opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular enrichment activities. For example, no team sports are organised.

17. Links with local schools support the development of vocational 'tasters' for pupils aged 14 to 16. One collaborative project has been successful in integrating post-16 college provision with the school sixth form timetable, allowing students from the school to attend college three times a week to undertake vocational options. The assistant head teacher of this school attends the college for two days each week to support and monitor this activity. Regular promotional activities to local schools are effectively delivered by the college events team, which includes student representatives. In collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire, a foundation degree in early years has been established and further degree provision is planned for hospitality and music technology. Employer links are particularly strong in hospitality and current CoVE developments actively involve 20 owner managers from local hotels and restaurants. Similar links with the travel and tourism industry have also been developed. Employer forums have only recently been established in other curriculum areas.

18. Support for students is systematic and well managed. Help with study skills is broken down into different modules, goals and specific activities. Students who need help with basic skills attend support classes alongside others who may wish to improve their grades, sometimes for entrance into HE. Students may be referred by their tutor, or may self refer. The pass rate of those receiving additional support is high; 97% achieved their main qualification in 2001/02. Key skills are provided through the study skills support arrangements, where they are not integrated into the vocational area. A project to monitor the progress of students at risk of leaving the college has been extended to all full-time students. Interviews are held with students, who are offered extra support to encourage them to complete their studies. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the initiative on improved retention rates, but students speak positively about the support they are receiving.

19. New tutorial arrangements have been developed, but not yet evaluated. There is now a structured programme of tutorial themes, which is offered throughout the college. Not all the materials for these sessions are complete, for example those for adults at level 1. Teachers who do not feel confident to deliver the programme are provided with development sessions. Students have access to advice and guidance on personal issues, through Connexions personal advisers based in the college and through a counselling service contracted through the local YMCA. All students, except modern apprentices, have access to a student support fund and free or subsidised transport. The college reports students' progress to employers and parents twice a year and achievements are celebrated at an annual award ceremony.

Leadership and management

20. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good progress has been made on key issues raised in the last inspection report. Retention and pass rates have been raised and many are high. Efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been successful. Data are used more

effectively to inform target setting and the monitoring of performance. There has been considerable investment in improving accommodation. Arrangements for managing agency teachers are more effective. However, the financial position of the college remains weak.

21. The governors, principal and senior managers provide a clear vision and direction for the college. The college mission, 'to enable students to reach their full learning and skills potential', was agreed after thorough consultation with key stakeholders. There are clear roles for managers, including a senior post for quality improvement. The senior leadership and management team has effectively focused its efforts on improving the students' experience and in developing the college culture. The meetings structure is effective in ensuring consultation on, and communication of, college values. There is rigorous monitoring of the performance of courses against targets by senior managers.

22. Governors support the quality improvement strategy strongly. The education, personnel and quality sub-committee is effective in monitoring quality issues and requiring action where there is under-performance. Governors now have a better awareness of the key issues facing the college and receive regular, detailed reports on progress against objectives and targets in the overall development plan. Discussions have taken place to establish evaluation criteria for the performance of the corporation and a self-assessment report has been completed. However, performance indicators, against which to measure effectiveness, have not so far been agreed.

23. The college self-assessment process is effective in supporting improvements in teaching, learning and students' achievements. Judgements are accurate and used to inform faculty and programme area action plans. The self-assessment process also contributes to college development and strategic plans. Teaching and learning are evaluated comprehensively. There is good access to and analysis of data to inform judgements on students' achievements. The self-assessment report undergoes a lengthy validation process, including scrutiny by a panel that includes external representation. The college has drawn significantly on specialist advice in the construction of the report. A quality manager, appointed as part of the revised quality improvement strategy, has conducted audits of key processes, policies and procedures that have led to effective actions. For example, following a review of the management of work-based learning, action has been taken which has resulted in improved retention rates. There is good analysis of students' views, but some programme areas do not have student representation at course team meetings. Systematic monitoring of actions, following external verifier reports, is not yet fully developed.

24. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Leadership and management are good in visual and performing arts; curriculum teams work well together to develop and monitor learning programmes. In other areas, staff development is effective in supporting improvements in teaching, learning and teachers' involvement in self-assessment. Where curriculum management is less effective, teachers have been inappropriately deployed or responses to address weaknesses in self-assessment have been slow. Some aspects of curriculum management are unsatisfactory in health and social care and in IT. Implementation of a college-wide enrichment programme has been slow.

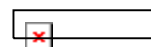
25. The college has made strenuous efforts to raise the profile of its equality and diversity policy. Staff are aware of the policy and have received training on its implementation and the implications of legislation with respect to race relations and students with disabilities. A high priority has been given in the college development plan to implementing the policy. Within the development plan there is a comprehensive equality and diversity section, including actions to address the requirements of legislation. Senior staff and governors regularly monitor progress on actions identified in the development plan. The equality and diversity theme week within the tutorial system was successful in its impact on students. The system to deal with student complaints is clear and effective. More remains to be done, however, including an audit of curriculum materials and gathering the views of under-represented groups.

26. The staff development plan places appropriate emphasis on teaching and learning and equality and diversity. The plan is based on needs identified through the performance management system, and through self-assessment. The recently-introduced performance management system is well structured. However, it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Not enough has been done to address high levels of staff absence and turnover. Teaching staff are inappropriately deployed in some

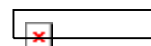
programme areas. The ratio of support staff to teaching staff is overly high.

27. Financial management has been ineffective. Governors, the principal and senior managers have given insufficient priority in the strategic planning process to improving the financial position of the college. Governors have been slow to address the sizeable budget deficit. The initial recovery plan to reduce the large deficit has not been successful. Although there are clear financial objectives in the strategic plan, it is not clear how these will be achieved. The college has undertaken a review to compare its levels of expenditure with that of similar colleges. The review showed that operational costs were high in some key areas. A new recovery plan is under development, but progress towards providing satisfactory value for money has been too slow, despite major improvements in students' achievements.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Mathematics, science, computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- a broad range of courses in IT for adults

- high achievements on many courses across the area

- good resources in IT

- wide variety of learning activities in the best lessons.

Weaknesses

- poor assessment practice on diploma courses in IT

- unsatisfactory management and co-ordination of diploma courses in IT

- inappropriate teaching activities in some IT lessons.

Scope of provision

28. The college offers a broad range of IT courses from entry level to level 3. Full-time courses include the diploma and advanced diploma in IT, which mainly recruit students aged 16 to 18. Modules from each diploma can be studied part time. Other part-time courses, recruiting mainly adults, range from beginners' computing at entry level to a choice of specialist courses including desktop publishing, PC construction, web page design and network installation. Provision is also available at an outreach centre. A mobile learning centre offers entry level IT training in the community. Enrolments on both full-time and part-time courses increased in 2002. GCSE mathematics courses are available in the day and evening. Students on sport and health care courses can study for a diploma in anatomy and physiology or an Open College Network (OCN) course in human physiology. This is the only science provision available at the college.

Achievement and standards

29. Pass rates on most courses are good. On GCSE mathematics, the diploma in anatomy and physiology and European computer driving licence (ECDL) courses, pass rates have improved over the past three years and were above national averages in 2002. Pass and retention rates were excellent on the advanced diploma in IT in 2002. On other level 1 and 2 courses, pass rates have been consistently good. Pass rates have declined on the diploma in IT and desktop publishing but still remain above the national averages. Retention rates are poor on level 2 courses and are below national averages.

30. The standard of students' work is generally good. In most lessons, students are working at or above the standard expected for the level of programme. In GCSE mathematics, students produce work of a high standard, with well-presented written answers. In IT, students are competent at using specific software packages. IT assignments produced by full-time students are highly detailed, with clear evidence and recording of processes. Portfolios of evidence produced for the ECDL course are well presented, with good documented evidence covering a range of skills. Some IT portfolios, however, lack sufficient evidence of competence.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Award in technology, computing and IT	1	No. of starts	40	47	31
		% retention	100	91	100
		% pass rate	100	100	97
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	34	27	17
		% retention	76	68	75
		% pass rate	36	41	50
ECDL	2	No. of starts	87	37	48
		% retention	99	100	81
		% pass rate	35	77	84
Diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	7	14	31
		% retention	100	100	85

		% pass rate	100	100	79
OCN desktop publishing	2	No. of starts	47	43	54
		% retention	81	90	87
		% pass rate	97	84	83
Diploma in anatomy and physiology	3	No. of starts	49	50	58
		% retention	100	98	93
		% pass rate	69	80	89

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

Quality of education and training

31. Teaching is satisfactory or better. The best lessons are well structured and use a range of activities and materials to motivate students. Lesson plans are detailed and supported by structured schemes of work. In IT, learning materials are related to IT practices and effectively develop students' skills and knowledge. In a mathematics lesson on averages, the teacher used effective questioning that encouraged discussion, and students were able to correct each other's misconceptions. Students in a digital imaging class quickly learned the processes for pasting images into sections through supportive questioning and dialogue from the teacher as they practiced the procedures. Poorer lessons lacked variety and made little attempt to accommodate differences in students' abilities. An over-reliance on workshop activities reduced the opportunity to review general procedures and share good practice as a group. In these lessons, students are not set targets for completion of tasks within the class time and their progress is not checked.

32. All full-time students take a diagnostic assessment at induction to determine their key skills level and any additional learning support requirements. However, these results are not consistently used to inform and update of learning plans. The portfolios of ECDL students showed evidence of clear assessment guidance but some assignment briefs do not set clear targets and students are unclear about grading criteria. Moreover, the timing of assignments is not mapped across the different modules, resulting in an overload of work for students at specific times in the year. Monitoring of students' progress is good. On part-time IT courses, evidence of students' progress is collected into portfolios. All students have tutorials built into the course programme and teachers provide additional informal support outside their teaching timetable. Students speak highly of the support given by staff.

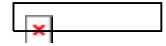
33. Accommodation for IT is good and equipped to a high specification. It provides advanced programming and database development using leading industry hardware and software. Many other industry-standard application packages are available for use by advanced students.

34. Mathematics and science rooms lack a subject identity. In science, there is no accommodation for practical work and the classroom for human physiology is small for the number of students using it. Staff are suitably qualified, with degrees or equivalent qualifications. Many have specialist industrial experience. Most teaching staff hold, or are working towards, teaching or assessor qualifications.

Leadership and management

35. There has been considerable staff turnover within the IT department in the last year, compounded by much sickness. Management of the IT courses is unsatisfactory. Recent actions to address the lack of cohesion and subject development have been put in place. Programme area teams now meet regularly to discuss the progress of courses and students. Action plans are regularly monitored.

Business, management and accounting



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- good achievement of high grades on text and word processing courses
- well-planned lessons.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on AVCE business and accounting courses
- insufficient checks on student progress
- a narrow range of provision.

Scope of provision

36. The college provides courses in business, administration, accounting, marketing and personnel practice. Most of the courses are part time: of the 207 part-time students currently enrolled, 89% are aged over 19 years. There are declining enrolments on word processing, text processing, administration and some accounting courses. Accounting technician awards are offered at all 3 levels with OCN courses in computerised book-keeping and payroll. There is a narrow range of full-time provision that recruits small numbers of students. Work-based learning is offered in administration and currently has six students working towards the foundation modern apprentice framework.

Achievement and standards

37. Pass rates are good on most courses. For example, rates for text and word processing and NVQ accounting courses, at all three levels, are above the national averages. In 2002, 70% of text and word processing students achieved a distinction: significantly above the national average. Retention rates are good on levels 1 and 2 word processing and the certificate in marketing courses and have been at 100% for two of the past three years. Retention rates on Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) accounting courses are poor and those on foundation and technician accounting

courses are 10% below national averages. However, there is evidence of improvements in retention rates on these courses this year. Retention rates on AVCE courses are unsatisfactory. In the first year of AVCE business, 44% of students have dropped out of the course in the autumn term.

38. Attendance rates on most courses are satisfactory. The quality of students' work is generally good. NVQ administration portfolios are well organised, and in computerised payroll and book-keeping courses, students develop good IT skills and are progressing well. Students' progress is closely monitored. However, the standard of work in AVCE business is unsatisfactory. Students have not met deadlines for assignment work and the quality of their work is not yet at a pass standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Word processing	1	No. of starts	25	11	13
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	96	55	83
Word processing	2	No. of starts	27	13	10
		% retention	100	92	100
		% pass rate	78	92	88
Introductory certificate management	3	No. of starts	10	11	19
		% retention	100	100	74
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	12	20	15
		% retention	92	100	87
		% pass rate	100	95	100
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	39	27	28
		% retention	67	78	79
		% pass rate	90	86	86
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	20	21	18
		% retention	75	67	61
		% pass rate	67	86	100

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

Quality of education and training

39. Most of the teaching is satisfactory. The majority of lessons are well planned and cater for the range of abilities and learning styles. Schemes of work are detailed and include a variety of activities to meet students' needs. In practical lessons, teachers provide good individual support to students. In a word processing lesson, students worked at different levels on a range of relevant tasks to improve their practical skills. A case study on cash flow was based on relevant life decisions and developed students' understanding of the concepts in constructing a cash flow before they were applied to a business situation. In good lessons, the teacher's expectations of students are high. In an accounts lesson on depreciation, all students were effectively engaged in a role play using sweets and model cars to demonstrate the principle of disposing of fixed assets. Teaching on professional courses effectively links students' experiences in the workplace with theory. Students have high levels of analytical ability.

40. In less effective lessons, teachers play too prominent a role. In a number of accounting lessons, the teacher provided answers to calculations but failed to check students' understanding of the principles involved. In other lessons, the objectives of the lesson were not shared with students and the pace of work was slow. Some activities are insufficiently challenging. In an AVCE lesson, students were not working to advanced level standard; responses to questions were superficial and left undeveloped by the teacher. In some lessons, handouts were poorly presented and out of date. For example, in a marketing lesson the sample press release was 10 years old.

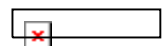
41. Assessment practice is effective on most courses. Teachers give detailed feedback to students on their written work. All full-time students have individual learning plans. Student progress is regularly monitored, but some targets set are unrealistic in enabling success. Attendance is closely monitored. All full-time students complete a diagnostic assessment for key skills and follow a programme suitable to their abilities. Students value the individual support from staff. There is no work-based assessment on NVQ accounting courses.

42. Staff are appropriately qualified and the majority have recent, relevant industrial experience. The learning resource centre is well equipped and contains a good range of business textbooks and periodicals. Well-produced study booklets support learning on many part-time courses. Specialist accounting courses in computerised payroll and book-keeping use industry-standard software. A lack of IT facilities in business teaching rooms restricts the integration of IT in course delivery. Access to computers outside lessons is difficult at peak times.

Leadership and management

43. The programme area manager is newly appointed. New systems have been implemented but are not yet having a full impact on the quality of provision. A number of staffing changes in accounting have adversely affected the learning of some students. The sharing of good practice is not consistent across the team. Course teams meet regularly but many part-time staff do not attend meetings and are not involved in the decision-making process. The college sets the agenda of meetings, but the minutes do not clearly identify action points and responsibilities for completion. All full-time and some part-time staff are involved in self-assessment, which is effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Targets to improve retention and pass rates are realistic.

Hospitality and catering



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

Contributory work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high levels of achievement on full-time programmes

- much good teaching

- high standards of written and practical work

- well-equipped facilities.

Weaknesses

- inconsistent NVQ assessment practice
- under-utilisation of resources.

Scope of provision

44. The college offers a range of courses in hospitality and catering for full-time and part-time students. There are currently 30 full-time students, most of whom are aged 16 to 18. Full-time courses include NVQs at levels 2 and 3 and the national diploma in hospitality and catering. NVQs in food preparation and cooking and in food service are provided for part-time day-release students. Part-time courses are also offered in cake decoration, basic food hygiene, health and safety and the national licensees' certificate. Through a partnership with a local employer, 56 employees are currently enrolled on a range of NVQs including quick service, housekeeping and table service. The college also provides training for 31 modern apprenticeships in a range of hospitality and catering establishments across a large geographical area in Cumbria. The college has recently been awarded funding to develop a CoVE in hospitality and catering. Full-time student numbers are low, but show a small increase in the current academic year.

Achievement and standards

45. Retention and pass rates on most full-time courses are significantly above national averages. Pass rates have been at 100% on the NVQ food preparation and cooking courses at levels 2 and 3 for two years. However, in the past three years the proportion of modern apprentices who have achieved their framework is low. Most full-time students working towards NVQ level 2 are making slow progress.

46. The standard of students' practical and written work is high. NVQ student portfolios contain relevant evidence collected from college and from their part-time jobs and work experience. Examples include food safety monitoring documents, menus, photographs and recipe lesson notes. The food produced in practical classes and the level of food and drink service are of a high standard and reflect industry practices. Students develop good kitchen and restaurant skills that prepare them well for employment. Work-based learners demonstrate good understanding of theory, which they are able to apply effectively in their jobs.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ food preparation and cooking 1 year	2	No. of starts	10	15	13
		% retention	100	100	91
		% pass rate	100	82	78
NVQ food preparation and cooking 2 year	2	No. of starts	12	16	4
		% retention	92	69	75

		% pass rate	50	100	100
NVQ food and drink service	2	No. of starts	16	6	8
		% retention	88	100	88
		% pass rate	71	100	85
Pastry cooks basic	2	No. of starts	23	*	16
		% retention	91	*	81
		% pass rate	52	*	100
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	No. of starts	10	8	*
		% retention	70	86	*
		% pass rate	86	80	*

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

47. Most lessons are well planned, interesting and lively. Teachers are supportive yet demanding of their students and work hard to raise standards. Practical classes are effectively managed and meet the needs of individual students. Teachers regularly use direct questioning techniques to check individual students' learning. Practical demonstrations develop practical competency and provide students with good knowledge and understanding. In a practical lesson, involving students working at different levels, level 3 students had the opportunity to work in a supervisory role and more experienced students prepared more complex dishes. In theory classes, teachers regularly refer to practical situations to help students put theory into context. In a minority of theory lessons, however, the pace was slow and lacked appropriate activities to motivate students.

48. The assessment strategy for full-time NVQ programmes is not effective. Some students make slow progress and there are many missed opportunities for assessment. Students are often not aware of how much progress they have made towards their qualification. Many full-time staff do not have assessor qualifications. Some assessors are unclear of the requirements for NVQ assessments and the slow progress of some students in completing NVQ units.

49. There is good specialist accommodation and equipment. Large kitchens are fully equipped to industry standards, one being a specialist pastry kitchen. The recently-refurbished restaurant and bar are open to the public and offer modern menus which reflect current industry trends. They provide a realistic working environment for students, where they can develop good craft skills and an awareness of the industry. However, these resources are under utilised. The restaurant and bar are only open for 2 sessions a week. There are many plans to develop the facilities further. The college has recently been awarded funding to develop a CoVE in hospitality and catering. The current provision fulfils many of the CoVE criteria.

50. There is a good range of textbooks and journals to support learning. Students make good use of the learning resources, but complain of limited access to IT. Teaching staff all have current industry experience. An active employer forum meets regularly to share local training and employment issues. Links with employers are used to good effect in finding good work placements for full-time students and employment opportunities for both work-based learners and students looking for part-time employment.

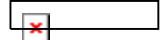
Leadership and management

51. Curriculum management is generally satisfactory. There have been recent changes in the staffing structure of work-based learning and new arrangements are beginning to improve retention

rates. Communications within the programme area are effective and staff meet regularly.

52. Internal verification is insufficiently rigorous. For example, the inconsistent assessment practices in NVQ programmes have not been identified. The last external verification report referred to issues relating to assessment and internal verification but there has been no resulting action to rectify them. There is little support for new assessors.

Sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in the full-time vocational programmes for students aged 16 to 18

- mostly satisfactory or better teaching and learning

- effective integration of key skills

- good links with industry.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rate on the fitness instructor course

- low retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course

- narrow range of part-time provision.

Scope of provision

53. The curriculum area has a small number of full-time students, most of whom are aged 16 to 18. Full-time provision consists of the GNVQ leisure and tourism, AVCE travel and tourism and AVCE leisure and recreation courses. A full-time fitness instructor course is offered to adult students. Additional courses for full-time students include the community sports leader award, advanced

certificate in overseas resort representatives and the higher sports leader award. There is only a small number of part-time courses and no level 1 provision is offered.

Achievement and standards

54. Pass and retention rates are very good on the AVCE travel and tourism course. On the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course, pass rates are good but retention rates have been consistently below national averages. Pass rates on the fitness instructor course are very poor. Retention rates are declining on the AVCE travel and tourism and leisure and recreation courses. Enrolments are low and declining on a number of courses.

55. Students' work is of a good standard and they take pride in its presentation. Written work demonstrates that students have a good understanding of the issues relating to the tourism industry.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	12	8	18
		% retention	67	63	71
		% pass rate	88	80	100
Community sports leader's award (short course)	2	No. of starts	16	17	27
		% retention	94	100	100
		% pass rate	60	100	**
Fitness instructor certificate	2	No. of starts	11	21	12
		% retention	73	86	67
		% pass rate	100	11	13
AVCE travel and tourism (double award) *GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	18*	14*	13
		% retention	61	77	92
		% pass rate	82	100	100

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

* AVCE course changed to GNVQ in 2001/02

** data not available

Quality of education and training

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory or better in most lessons. In the best lessons, planning is thorough and learning activities are used effectively to motivate the students. For example, video clips of the local area were used to demonstrate the economic objectives of tourism development. This stimulated lively student discussion that promoted learning and increased students' understanding. Checks were made on learning throughout the lesson. Teachers emphasise and relate aspects of the local leisure and tourism markets. In less successful lessons, the pace is slow and there is an insufficient variety of learning activities to involve and motivate the students. Students with additional learning needs are well supported in lessons and through workshop activities. Workshops give students an opportunity to receive support in portfolio building and exam revision. Key skills are integrated into the curriculum and students appreciate their importance within the leisure and tourism industry. Students benefit from a good programme of visiting external speakers. Full-time students attend a work experience programme at the end of the year.

57. All staff are appropriately qualified and have relevant industry experience. Recent staff training has updated teaching skills. Some staff are active in local tourist initiatives. One staff member, for example, is actively involved with a local tourism action group, which enables students to participate in local tourism events. Students said that this had improved their confidence in dealing with the public. Attractive wall displays give classrooms a good subject identity. The fitness gym provides a range of modern equipment. Students also have access to a public leisure centre a short distance away that offers a much greater variety of equipment. However, there are no sporting activities available to other college students.

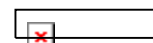
58. There is good monitoring of students' progress. Teachers' feedback on written work is helpful and indicates areas for improvement. In practical sports lessons, students are given constructive oral and written feedback and have the opportunity to evaluate their own and their peers' performance. Assessment procedures comply with awarding body requirements and are easily understood by the students. External verifiers' reports are positive. Internal verification processes follow college procedures and are carefully applied.

59. Relationships between staff and students are productive. Students are clear about progression routes and possible career opportunities. However, progression into HE is very poor. Tutorials are well attended and provide students with clear action plans and targets. Teachers provide good individual support and show a keen interest in students' welfare and progress. Absences are followed up rigorously.

Leadership and management

60. The programme area has recently recruited a number of new staff who work well as a team. Recent initiatives to improve weaknesses in curriculum management are now beginning to have a positive impact on learning. However, managers have been slow to respond to persistently low retention rates in the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course and to poor achievement on the fitness instructor certificate course. The narrow provision for both full-time and part-time students has not yet been addressed. There are no additional sporting activities offered to other college students as part of the Curriculum 2000 initiative.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Contributory work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on full-time programmes

- high expectations of students in the best lessons

- good hairdressing accommodation

- good monitoring of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates in work-based learning
- poor progression from level 2 to level 3 in beauty therapy
- a shortage of clients in practical sessions.

Scope of provision

61. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty, fitness and holistic therapies at the main college site. There are 331 students, just over half of whom are aged 16 to 18. The majority of part-time students are adults. Full-time courses range from level 1 to level 3. Part-time courses include the make-up artist and theatrical and media make-up diplomas and a range of holistic therapies. Work-based learning is provided in hairdressing. There are 27 foundation and advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing and the appropriate key skill qualifications.

Achievement and standards

62. Pass rates have been outstanding at NVQ level 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in theatrical and media make-up over a three-year period. Pass rates on full-time hairdressing and beauty therapy courses are above national averages. Retention rates are good, with the exception of the Indian head massage course, where they have been below national averages for three years. Retention and pass rates are poor on work-based learning programmes. Modern apprenticeship framework pass rates are unsatisfactory. In beauty therapy at NVQ level 3, enrolments have declined over the past three years. In 2000, 15 students enrolled on a two-year beauty therapy NVQ levels 2 and 3 course, but only four progressed to level 3.

63. The quality of students' practical work is satisfactory and meets the awarding body standards. On the holistic therapy course, students applied knowledge of massage techniques in sport, lymphatic drainage and aromatherapy to perform massages to a good standard. The shortage of clients in practical lessons limits students' assessment opportunities and slows their progress. Portfolios are well constructed and contain a good variety of evidence. Written tests and assignments are satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Indian head massage short	2	No. of starts	32	26	34
		% retention	81	88	85
		% pass rate	92	87	90

NVQ in hairdressing 2 year	2	No. of starts	26	29	36
		% retention	69	75	67
		% pass rate	94	95	96
NVQ in beauty therapy 1 year	2	No. of starts	28	15	17
		% retention	75	60	82
		% pass rate	95	89	100
NVQ in hairdressing and beauty therapy 1 year	3	No. of starts	14	8	12
		% retention	93	91	81
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Theatrical and media make-up 1 year	3	No. of starts	10	13	11
		% retention	80	62	91
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

64. There is much good teaching and, in all lessons observed, it was satisfactory or better. Teaching is well planned and meets the individual needs of students, whose individual learning styles and requirements are identified on the class records. In the best lessons, this information is used to improve the learning experience for students. Most teachers set clear, challenging learning objectives that are shared with students. In a theory lesson, the teacher used group work to good effect. Most teachers use their industrial experience to reinforce industry requirements and relate them to practical lessons. In a practical lesson, the teacher set industry timings to the tasks allocated to students, which raised the pace of the students' performance. In a work-based training session, students displayed a high level of skill in cutting and colouring techniques in a salon environment, with paying clients. However, the opportunity to gain evidence for key skills was missed in some lessons.

65. The college sub-contracts part of its work-based learning contract in hairdressing to a partner in Kendal town centre. There are eight foundation modern apprentices on this contract and the salon facilities and resources are of a very high standard. All work placements visited were good and all showed a good level of support for their students. Assessment of work-based learners is carried out at the college and in their workplace. Assessment visits are planned to take place, on average, once a month. However, due to staff sickness, this target has not been met and this has had an adverse effect on the progress of some work-based students. The college has identified the problem and has recently appointed a new work-based assessor.

66. There are good facilities in hairdressing. The hairdressing section has recently been refurbished and is up to the industry standard of most modern salons. The reception area is well sited and has good access for those with limited mobility. In beauty therapy, one salon has been refurbished and the college has plans to refit the remaining salon and reception area. Hairdressing and beauty therapy staff have appropriate vocational qualifications and up-to-date industrial experience. All full-time staff participate in professional development. Students have the opportunity to participate in a good range of vocationally relevant enrichment activities.

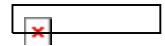
67. The tutorial programme for full-time students is good. It develops students' understanding of equality and diversity issues and raises awareness of health and social issues. Individual tutorials are effective in reviewing and monitoring students' performance. Monitoring of students' progress is good. A progression document records their progress on a daily basis. Students record their learning in lessons along with activities undertaken in the workplace. This document is used to inform workplace trainers and college staff of all activities completed by the student. A monthly action plan

to set targets is agreed by staff and students. At induction, students undertake a diagnostic assessment in basic and key skills. The college does not take account of students' prior experience in hairdressing or beauty therapy and all students are required to start at the beginning of the programme, irrespective of their level of skill upon entry.

Leadership and management

68. The curriculum is well managed. Communication is good across the programme team. Staff meet weekly; all meetings are recorded and minutes contain action points that are monitored. Internal verification is consistently applied across all programmes. Course teams are involved in the self-assessment process and in the monitoring of progress towards achieving targets for improving retention and pass rates. However, monitoring of health and safety in the workplace lacks rigour and a number of work placement salons do not display or have a copy of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Health, social care and early years



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- much good teaching successfully conveying current industrial practice

- a particularly effective work experience programme

- well-integrated key skills delivery on full-time courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on the NVQ level 2 course in care and the GNVQ intermediate course in health and social care

- inappropriate learning activity in some lessons

- unsatisfactory deployment of staff.

Scope of provision

69. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in health and social care and in childcare and education. Full-time courses are offered in GNVQ at foundation and intermediate levels, AVCE, and the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate and diploma in childcare and education. Part-time provision includes NVQ in care at levels 2 and 3 and early years at levels 2, 3 and 4. Counselling courses, from introductory to advanced levels, are available part time.

Achievement and standards

70. Retention and pass rates are well above national averages on many programmes. The introduction to counselling, and the CACHE certificate and diploma in childcare and education courses have had consistently high pass and retention rates for the past three years. However, the pass rates in on the NVQ level 2 course in care are unsatisfactory and have led the college to review the programme's organisation. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course in health and social care, at 43% in 2000 and 60% in 2001, were unsatisfactory and significantly below the national averages.

71. Most students' written work is of a good standard. They use IT effectively in their assignment work. Most students display good application of previously learned topics. In health and care, many students are able to apply their knowledge and discuss concepts in an articulate and sophisticated way.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and early years, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Introduction to counselling	1	No. of starts	36	39	37
		% retention	89	90	92
		% pass rate	97	86	100
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	13	15	11
		% retention	69	73	100
		% pass rate	89	82	91
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	21	30	15
		% retention	76	87	93
		% pass rate	100	100	93
GNVQ/AVCE in health and social care	3	No. of starts	15	13	9
		% retention	40	77	100
		% pass rate	80	90	89
NVQs in health, care and early years	3	No. of starts	61	79	93
		% retention	87	82	87
		% pass rate	82	90	86

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

Quality of education and training

72. There is much good teaching that effectively links theory with current practices in industry. In one lesson, for example, CACHE diploma students discussed family stresses related to child protection issues with the support of well-designed case study materials. The teacher skilfully used students' contributions to explore effectively the subject area and maximise the value of the discussion. In less successful lessons, the pace is slow and activities do not sufficiently challenge students. Key skills delivery is integrated well into full-time courses. Teachers have mapped key skills to the programme content, and students are aware of how they can use class and assignment work as evidence towards their key skills qualification. Students are given good support in compiling their portfolios of evidence and with assessment and assignment work.

73. Most teachers have appropriate technical qualifications and relevant vocational experience. All staff have, as a minimum, three days industrial updating each year. A number of part-time staff also work within the health and care professions. Classrooms are in good decorative order and appropriately equipped with displays of students' work. The learning resource centre has a satisfactory range of books and periodicals. However, some students complain that there are insufficient multiple copies of certain popular titles needed to support their coursework and that access to computers is restricted at peak times.

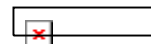
74. Students on all full and part-time courses are provided with detailed course handbooks and other materials to ensure they are well informed about assignments and assessments. They receive constructive written feedback on assignments and coursework. Internal verification and moderation processes are rigorous, with clear evidence of responses to external verifiers' comments and of recommendations being implemented. The monitoring of students' progress is effective. The tutorial programme provides students with good pastoral and academic support and group tutorials give them useful information on health and social issues. Students comment positively on the support they receive from tutors. Staff involve parents and students at all stages in the learning process and presentations help to support and celebrate students' achievement.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management in the early years area are good. However, some aspects of management in health and social care are unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in timetabling and poor deployment of staff have led to insufficient utilisation of expertise across curriculum areas. Students on one course have only been taught by one teacher for a whole term.

76. Curriculum managers use management information data effectively. Monitoring of retention data by course teams is well developed, with a range of strategies in place to identify students at risk of leaving their course. Clear and documented action is taken to support these students. Regular team meetings are used effectively to support developments in this curriculum area and the college as a whole.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates and standards on advanced courses in music and drama

- effective teaching and learning

- o good assessment and monitoring of students' progress
- o good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- o low retention on the national diploma in popular music
- o poor teaching accommodation.

Scope of provision

77. The college has a wide range of full-time and part-time programmes in art and design, drama, dance and music technology at levels 2 and 3. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Recruitment is increasing on full-time courses. The programmes offered are mainly at advanced level, for example, foundation studies in art and design and national diplomas in music and drama. Level 2 provision in performing arts and music practice was introduced in 2002. New provision at level 1 is planned to begin in September 2003.

Achievement and standards

78. Pass rates are high on advanced courses in music and drama. They were at 100% in 2002 and above national averages in the preceding two years. Many students achieve high grades in their studies. In 2002, 85% of students who passed the national diploma in drama achieved merit or distinction grades; for the national diploma in popular music, this figure was 74%. Pass rates are good for adults on OCN unit accreditation in art and design at level 2. Retention on the national diploma in popular music has been significantly below the national average during the past three years. There are early indications of improvement in the current year although the rate is still below that of most other courses in this curriculum area.

79. Students' work is often of a high standard. For example, in art and design, visual ideas are competently developed through exploration of the use of different artefacts and media. Sketchbooks are used effectively as workbooks to record images and thoughts. Students can confidently discuss the different artists who have influenced their own work. There is good progression into HE in art and design, performing arts and music. Music and drama students demonstrate a good understanding of music principles, popular culture, improvisation and characterisation. Students perform well; their work is lively and confident and they adopt a sensitive and mature approach to their improvisation. Attendance and punctuality are generally good and students arrive well prepared for lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
OCN unit accreditation in art and design	2	No. of starts	155	142	90
		% retention	88	87	83

		% pass rate	91	89	91
Diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	*	11	10
		% retention	*	82	100
		% pass rate	*	100	90
National diploma in drama	3	No. of starts	12	14	14
		% retention	67	71	79
		% pass rate	88	90	100
National diploma in popular music	3	No. of starts	18	18	16
		% retention	50	61	62
		% pass rate	100	91	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

80. Teaching and learning are effective in most lessons. Lessons plans are detailed, with clear references to intended outcomes and activities which meet the needs of individual students. Key skills are well integrated in many lessons. Teachers make good use of written, visual and aural stimuli as starting points for practical work. Support assistants work closely alongside students with identified additional needs. However, in one unsatisfactory lesson, planning was poor, there was a lack of differentiation; and students' additional support needs were not met. Opportunities for integrating the different disciplines are exploited effectively. For example, a production of *Vampyre* included students from music, drama, dance and visual arts. It provided an effective focus for collaborative work across the curriculum area and generated considerable opportunities for a wide range of student-led activity. The sequential development of skills and use of a range of techniques and media are good across all subject areas. Theory is skilfully taught. Appropriate reference is made to contemporary artists and performers. Music tutors successfully illustrate theoretical concepts, using relevant examples of live and recorded music. Practical work and performance skills are good.

81. Teaching accommodation for visual and performing arts at the Allen Centre is poor. Some rooms are cramped for the number of students and the type of activity. There is inadequate space for larger scale activities. Facilities for three-dimensional work are also restricted. There is little evidence of students' work on display. One of the rooms used for performance has poor soundproofing and adjoining classrooms suffer from noise disturbance. One room used for art classes does not have a sink or water. Good use is made of external venues for performance to enhance students' experiences. For example, the Brewery Arts Centre is used for college productions, some teaching, and for students' work experience. There is good equipment for music, including new recording booths.

82. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Assignments are well designed and imaginative. They include clear assessment criteria and completion deadlines. Assignments are promptly marked and constructive feedback is provided. All visual and performing arts students are involved in regular self and peer assessment. Individual tutorials ensure that students' progress is thoroughly reviewed. Foundation students are given additional support with applications for HE.

Leadership and management

83. The curriculum area is well managed. The teaching department has only recently been created and most staff are new to the college. They have very quickly become an effective team with a shared vision and strong direction. The team has been active in new developments to extend

provision. Regular team meetings are well attended, with outcomes clearly recorded. An annual calendar of meetings ensures that items are discussed and reported at appropriate times to inform wider management activities. Quality assurance arrangements are effective. Action plans resulting from self-assessment are regularly reviewed.

Part D: College data

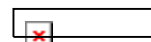
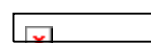


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	30	8
2	36	17
3	13	18
4/5	0	1
Other	21	56
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	193	72	5
Land-based provision	16	15	1
Construction	26	66	2
Business administration, management and professional	50	703	13
Information and communications technology	346	661	18
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	152	455	11
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	156	225	7
Health, social care and public services	73	620	12
Visual and performing arts and media	189	245	7

Humanities	26	154	3
English, languages and communication	240	188	7
Foundation programmes	516	280	14
Total	1,983	3,684	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	107	112	155	420	231	188
	Retention rate (%)	71	72	88	83	76	85
	National average (%)	80	79	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	91	61	75	75	76	88
	National average (%)	65	68	68	66	68	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	318	238	274	1,694	566	463
	Retention rate (%)	78	76	77	95	87	81
	National average (%)	76	76	76	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	71	74	80	77	74	73
	National average (%)	66	69	69	65	69	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	297	228	130	735	832	577
	Retention rate (%)	76	74	80	78	87	87
	National average (%)	76	77	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	85	85	91	80	73	75
	National average (%)	74	76	76	66	69	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	90	105	34
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	89	84	84
	National average	79	82	82	81	84	84

	(%)						
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	24	77	100
	National average (%)	66	55	55	56	53	53

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1999 to 2002: College ISR.

** too few students to provide a valid calculation*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	60	38	2	40
Level 2 (intermediate)	62	31	7	45
Level 1 (foundation)	67	33	0	3
Other sessions	100	0	0	13
Totals	66	30	4	101

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