



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Hastings College of Arts and Technology

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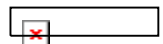
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**Basic information about the college**

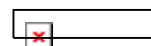


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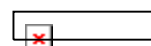
Name of college:	Hastings College of Arts and Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Julie Walker
Address of college:	Archery Road St Leonards-on-Sea East Sussex TN38 0HX
Telephone number:	01424 442222
Fax number:	01424 721763

Chair of governors:	Kenneth Melsom
Unique reference number:	130665
Name of reporting inspector:	Barrie O'Sullivan
Dates of inspection:	20-24 January 2003

## Part A: Summary



### Information about the college



Hastings College of Arts and Technology is a general further education (FE) college serving Hastings and the surrounding district of Rother in East Sussex. The college has two main sites in St Leonards-on-Sea and additional premises in Battle and Rye used mainly for adult and community education. It also offers education and training opportunities at several community venues in Hastings and Rother.

The college offers a wide range of vocational and general education courses at all levels, from basic skills to foundation degree for school leavers and adults. A new sixth form centre was established in 2001 to provide academic and vocational programmes for school leavers. The college offers the International Baccalaureate in partnership with the Pestalozzi Village Trust. Vocational courses are provided for Year 10 and 11 students from local secondary schools. The college became a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for information and communication technology (ICT) in business (in the context of regeneration) in November 2002. The college has a major international programme, which was recognised by the award of the year 2000 Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education.

In 2001/02, 89% of the college's 16,714 enrolments were adults. Of the total enrolments, 1,749 were full time and 14,965 part time. Enrolments increased by 20% in the last two years. The majority of students on full-time courses were aged 16 to 18. In the same year, 43% of full-time students and 59% of part-time students were female. The college has about 300 international students including a large number of asylum seekers. There are few students from minority ethnic groups but the proportion broadly reflects the local population.

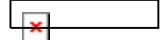
Despite its attractive south coast location, Hastings has high levels of social and economic deprivation. Educational underachievement is a serious issue. A quarter of the adult population has poor basic literacy and/or numeracy. The proportion of school leavers in Hastings achieving at least five A\*-C General Certificate for Secondary Education (GCSE) passes was 36% in 2001. This compares with 50% for East Sussex and 48% nationally. Hastings is a Neighbourhood Renewal Area and an Education Action Zone.

The college has prioritised actions to address social regeneration and it has extended the curriculum in an attempt to widen participation. It now offers more level 1 and 2 programmes, increased basic skills provision and improved systems of learner support. At the same time, the college has sought to play a part in raising expectations and fostering a culture of success. It has strengthened its links with employers and is a major partner in the creation of the new University Centre for Hastings.

The college's mission is to provide 'Learning and Skills for Life', essentially for the people of Hastings and Rother but also, where appropriate, to meet regional, national and international needs.

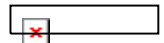
It aims to widen participation and to complement the provision of other post-16 providers.

### **How effective is the college?**



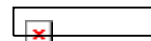
This is an effective college. Provision in five curriculum areas was judged to be good, satisfactory in five and unsatisfactory in one. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are set out below.

### ***Key strengths***



- range of curriculum opportunities at levels 1 to 3 for 16-19 year olds
  
- a socially inclusive college
  
- good tutorial system
  
- well-organised and effective system for providing advice to students
  
- excellent ICT resources
  
- good teaching resources in most classrooms
  
- successful taster courses at a variety of locations
  
- good staff development opportunities for all staff.

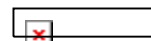
### ***What should be improved***



- o feedback on students' written work
- o basic skills support for full-time students
- o quality of teaching in a number of curriculum areas
- o quality of some accommodation
- o quality assurance in some curriculum areas.

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

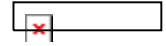


*The table below shows overall judgments about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgments are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgments on curriculum 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 judgments about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is much good teaching in science and mathematics. Retention is good on many courses and students are given good feedback on what they need to do to improve. There are poor pass rates on most courses and students' analytical skills are inadequately developed in some lessons. The more able GCSE students are not sufficiently challenged and their progress is slowed.
Construction	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Most teaching and learning and the standard of students' work in most theory and practical sessions are good. Retention is poor on most courses. The size and layout of some workshops limits students' training opportunities. There is little integration of on-the-job and off-the-job training.
Business and administration	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Business and administration courses are well managed. Teaching on administration courses is good but is often uninspiring in other areas. Students are keen to learn, they produce good work and many progress to higher level courses. There is poor attendance in

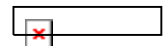
	many lessons.
Information and communication technology	<b>Good.</b> Individual teaching and pass rates are good on most courses. The wide range of courses meets local needs and widens participation. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are good but some teaching accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of short-term target setting on full-time programmes and some missed opportunities to relate theory courses to the working environment.
Hospitality, sport and travel	<b>Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good with well-managed programmes providing students with a good learning experience. Retention and achievement on most programmes is above the national average and there is good progression to employment or FE and higher education (HE). Students develop good vocational and personal skills in the college's realistic working environments. Students are provided with a good level of individual support by teachers and support staff.
Hair and beauty	<b>Good.</b> Student pass and retention rates on beauty therapy courses are good, and satisfactory in hairdressing. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. A wide range of courses is offered and students develop good skills by working with many outside groups. Salons are well designed but there are too few clients in hairdressing for students to practice.
Health and care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are good on level 2 and 3 programmes. Support for students and tutorials are good. There are good links with health and care organisations that result in work experience opportunities for students. Leadership and management are good for access to nursing but poor for childcare.
Art and design	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates and achievement are good on most full-time vocational courses, and there is much good teaching and learning at all levels. Students benefit from a caring and challenging ethos where high levels of support and a flexible course structure meet learner needs. Achievement is poor on General Certificate of Education (GCE) courses. There is some inappropriate teaching accommodation which limits student learning.
Humanities including English and modern foreign languages	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The quality of teaching is variable, written work is set infrequently and pass rates in GCSEs and GCE Advanced levels (GCE A levels) are poor. The standard of written work on most courses is poor. Teaching in modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language is good. Some teachers do not expect enough of their students.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The college is committed to widening participation and tackling the poor basic skills level of the local population. In adult and community learning most students make steady progress and achieve the course aims. Teaching and learning on adult courses are good, but some teaching of literacy and numeracy to full-time students is unsatisfactory. The pass rate for level 1 literacy and numeracy key skills is poor.
Foundation programmes and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Good.</b> Good curriculum management is complemented by much good teaching, resulting in high achievement by students. Extensive local and international opportunities benefit students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enabling them to develop high levels of personal and learning skills. Individual learning plans and target setting are inadequate for most students. There is limited progression for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities onto mainstream provision.

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



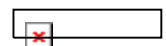
Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Governors provide effective oversight of and set a clear direction for the college. The corporation, managers and staff are supportive of the college mission and values. Communication with staff is good. The college is successful in attracting students who would not otherwise have considered entering FE. There is insufficient use of targets to measure progress against strategic objectives. Management of the college's finances is sound. Management information and data on students are reliable and used effectively. Strategies to improve student retention and pass rates have been successful at a number of academic levels. The quality of critical evaluation in curriculum self-assessment reports is uneven. There is insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity through the curriculum.

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



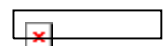
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Students speak positively about their experience as students. The college plays an active role in lifelong learning partnerships with an extensive range of organisations in Hastings and Rother. Strategies to increase participation from under-represented groups have been successful. Courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly effective. The college has not set targets for widening participation. With the publication of an Equality and Diversity Review, the college has begun to address the challenges of putting into practice recently written policies on diversity and equality, race and disability. Few staff and students are aware of the review and as yet there are no arrangements for consulting them on its effectiveness.

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



Guidance and support for students are good. The college has good arrangements for giving prospective students pre-enrolment advice and guidance. Students who require basic or key skills support are identified at enrolment or at the beginning of their course. College support systems have been recently restructured and their effectiveness, particularly in the basic skills, is not yet clear. Full-time students receive a good induction to the college and their course. The tutorial system is well organised and effectively delivered. There are appropriate arrangements for monitoring and dealing with punctuality and attendance. The college provides students with personal or welfare problems good access to counselling, and advice and guidance services. Careers guidance is satisfactory and there is good advice available on further studies.

### Students' views of the college



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

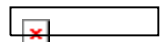
***What students like about the college***

- accessibility of teachers and their willingness to help students
  
- that they are treated in an appropriate manner and with respect
  
- quality of most of the college's accommodation
  
- wide choice of courses
  
- involvement of the college in the local community
  
- wide range of enrichment activities.

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

- car parking for students
  
- access to student communal areas
  
- choice of recreational activities
  
- opportunities to use computers in some parts of the college.

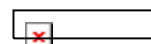
**Other information**





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

## Part B: The college as a whole



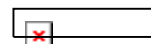
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	62	30	8
19+ and WBL*	72	19	9
Learning 16-18	53	39	8
19+ and WBL*	73	19	8

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

\*work-based learning

### Achievement and standards



1. The college's overall pass rate has increased in each of the last two years and by 9% in 2001/02 over the previous year. In the three years from 1998/99 to 2000/01, level 1 pass rates have fluctuated but were close to the national average in 2002. At levels 2 and 3, pass rates have also fluctuated each year but rose in 2002 for all but level 2 adult students. Over the same period, student retention improved at all levels. At level 1, retention improved each year between 1998/99 and 2000/01, and has been consistently above the national average for colleges of the same type. At level 2, retention rates have also improved and although there was a slight fall in 1999/2000, they are now about the national average. At level 3 they have steadily improved and are now at the national average.

2. The standard of students' work is generally good. Students in most curriculum areas are well motivated, produce good written work and develop good practical skills. In art and design, construction, and hospitality students make good progress and their work is of a high standard. In hospitality, teachers promote good team-working spirit in practical classes in preparation for

students' future careers. In foundation programmes the progress made by students is also very good. Foundation students develop good independent study skills and have good working relationships with their colleagues and teachers. In contrast, the progress made by many English and humanities students is unsatisfactory. These students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills and teacher expectations are low.

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

3. There are almost 1,500 school leavers enrolled on courses lasting for one year or longer. Student retention rates at all levels improved in each of the last four years and are now well above the national average for colleges of the same type. Pass rates have been more variable. At level 1, pass rates increased in 2000/01 but dropped to just above the national average in 2001/02. At levels 2 and 3, pass rates improved in 2001/02 to be just above the national average. The college has recently introduced a system to measure students' progress against their prior school attainment in its sixth form centre. It does not yet have sufficient historical data to evaluate its usefulness.

4. The college offered 13 GCSE courses for school leavers in 2001/02. Almost 70% of the 188 enrolments were in English and mathematics. Although retention rates in both subjects have been above 90% in the last two years, the numbers achieving a high-grade pass in 2001/02 was poor and below the previous year's figure.

5. Almost 130 students took one of 14 subjects at GCE Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) in 2001/02, the most popular being art and design and psychology. Pass rates on both art and design and psychology are good. Retention rates fell from 90% to 75% between 2001 2002, but pass rates improved from just over 20% to 55%. The college offered only seven GCE A levels in 2001/02 and these were taken by 47 students. Retention and pass rates for the most popular subject, English literature, were good. The college offers the International Baccalaureate and has enrolled two groups of students each year. Retention rates rose to 100% in 2001/02, and pass rates have increased in each of the last three years to reach 71% in 2002.

6. There were almost 2,500 enrolments on a wide variety of vocational courses in 2001/02. The standards of work achieved by many students who stay for the duration of the courses is good, but many students leave the course early with limited skills and work-related competencies. Almost 200 students enrolled on a small number of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and 12 Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) certificates and diplomas. This was a reduction in enrolments compared with 2000/01 when over 300 students studied for these qualifications. The most popular subject in 2001/02 was the national diploma in computer studies, which attracted 37 students. Retention and pass rates on this course were similar to the national average. More than 400 students were enrolled on a wide range of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in 2001/02, an increase of almost one-third on the previous year. The most popular NVQ programmes were beauty therapy, food preparation, hairdressing and wood occupations. The overall retention rate in 2001/02 remained similar to that in 2000/01, but the pass rates were good having risen from just under 50% to over 80%.

### **Adult learners**

7. There were over 3,500 adult students on courses lasting a year or more at the college in 2001/02. The number of adult students on level 1 courses more than doubled over the previous year but decreased by a third at level 3. Student retention fell at levels 1 and 2, the latter to well below the national average. On level 3 courses, student retention has improved to its highest level in the last four years and is now above the national average. Pass rates at levels 1 and 3 in 2001/02 exceeded the national average but remained significantly below the national average at level 2 for the second year running.

8. The college offers a good range of GCSE courses, with more adult students enrolling for English, mathematics and psychology in 2001/02 than any other GCSE subject. The number of adults on GCSE English fell significantly between 2000/01 and 2001/02. Most of the other GCSE courses had few students. Over three-quarters of the students enrolling on English and mathematics courses in

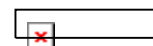
2001/02 completed their course. The pass rates for GCSE English and mathematics fell in 2001/02 compared with the previous year, and the number of students achieving a high-grade pass was well below the national averages in all three subjects.

9. Almost 150 adults enrolled on GCE AS courses in 2001/02. The most popular subjects were art and design, law and psychology. More than three-quarters of all students enrolled on a GCE AS course completed it in 2001/02 with an overall pass rate of 42%. The proportion of GCE AS students achieving a high-grade pass was just above the national average. Some 30 students enrolled for GCE A-level subjects, almost all of them for either art and design, or English literature. All the adult students who started a GCE A2 course completed their course with half achieving the qualification. There were just over 80 adults on access to HE courses in 2001/02. Retention rates improved compared with 2000/01, but pass rates fell to below the national average.

10. There were almost 4,500 adults on a variety of vocational courses in 2001/02. Courses include a small number of GNVQs and BTEC certificates and diplomas. Some 10% of the enrolments were on a wide range of NVQs. The most popular NVQ programmes were in accounting, bricklaying, and hairdressing. The number of adults completing NVQs decreased slightly compared with the previous year, but the pass rate increased and is above the national average. There were almost 4,000 enrolments on a wide range of other courses lasting one year or more including Open College Network (OCN) units. Retention and pass rates on all these courses were satisfactory.

11. More than 9,000 adults enrolled on short courses in 2001/02. Among the courses with largest enrolments were basic literacy, computer literacy, and a number of short courses in ICT. Retention rates on short courses increased slightly compared to 2000/01 and pass rates showed a big improvement. Adults who attend community based education programmes make good progress on basic literacy and numeracy courses that improve the quality of their lives.

## Quality of education and training



12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 177 sessions. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 65% of these, satisfactory in 26% and unsatisfactory in 9%. Four lessons were judged to be outstanding. At the last inspection, which was carried out by the Inspectorate of the former Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), 63% of lessons were judged to be good or outstanding, 31% satisfactory and 6% were judged to be less than satisfactory. The highest proportion of good or better teaching was in visual and performing arts and media, hospitality, travel and sports, and construction. In business and administration, and health and social care, less than half the teaching was good or better. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching was in humanities and on literacy and numeracy courses. There were no clear variations in the quality of teaching at different levels or to different age groups. Inspectors' judgments on learning and attainment were broadly in line with those on teaching.

13. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of students and encourage them to achieve high standards of work. Teachers' enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, their subjects are good. Teaching is well planned, with learning outcomes clearly identified and considerable thought given to techniques for ensuring that students learn and understand the content of the lesson. Assessment opportunities are frequent and students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Theory is linked to current work practices and good use is made of students' experiences to reinforce learning. In many curriculum areas, students make good progress in developing their practical skills. In hair and beauty, hospitality, travel and sport, construction, and science, teachers use good equipment and resources to demonstrate practical techniques. Students then practice what they have learnt in a realistic working environment. In visual and performing arts, teachers draw on their experience as practicing artists to inspire students both inside and outside the classroom. In science, some outstanding lessons are characterised by animated and enthusiastic teaching that draw a positive response from students. Information and learning technology resources

were used imaginatively to illustrate and reinforce scientific concepts. In ICT, adult students make good progress as a result of very good one-to-one teaching. Students in hair and beauty, visual and performing arts, and on foundation programmes learn much from a rich range of enrichment activities outside the classroom.

14. In the weaker lessons, learning activities are unimaginative and fail to motivate or challenge many students. In some subjects, able students work at too slow a pace and fail to make the progress expected of them. Exercises and activities are not sufficiently demanding so students do not develop higher-level critical and evaluative skills. In humanities, teachers' expectations of students are low. In unsatisfactory lessons, too many students are passive and not engaged in learning. Students who complete their work were left with nothing to do. Teachers do not use question and answer techniques well to check students' understanding. Feedback given to students is cursory and does not help them to improve the quality of their work. In a minority of lessons, time is wasted as students simply copy out notes from the board. In some literacy and numeracy lessons, learning materials failed to capture students' interest. Students made little progress because they could not see the relevance of what they were doing to their main programme of study.

15. In some curriculum areas, for example hair and beauty, and construction, students are able to improve their key skills by building portfolios of work directly related to the vocational content of their course. Where key skills are taught separately from students' main course, progress is less satisfactory. On many courses, opportunities are missed to improve students' literacy, numeracy and IT skills through a vocational context.

16. The college is located on four sites. The main campus and the college's international business and management centre are located at St Leonards-on-Sea. There is also an adult and community centre at Rye and a residential centre at Battle. The main campus is composed of numerous buildings the oldest of which is a Grade II listed terrace of large Victorian houses. Much of the college's accommodation is in poor condition and many buildings require refurbishment to make them fit for teaching and learning. The college has identified that 1% of its accommodation at St Leonards is good and that almost 30% is unsatisfactory. The planned maintenance programme is well managed in keeping the accommodation serviceable. It is updated each year so that the most needy repairs are addressed. The accommodation including the student refectories and communal areas are clean, welcoming and popular meeting places for staff and students.

17. A significant proportion of the college's teaching accommodation is in poor condition and some of it directly affects the quality of students' learning. In construction and art and design, some students work in cramped conditions. Science students are taught in laboratories that have recently been equipped with new computers, projectors and interactive teaching boards, but they are not well suited to theory teaching and discussion. The high temperature and poor lighting in some computing laboratories also affects students' learning. Many classrooms are well decorated and pleasant teaching spaces. They are well equipped with teaching aids and have good displays of students' work.

18. The main campus is located on a steeply sloping site close to the sea. The very steep access road and the numerous buildings at different levels make the college very difficult to access for students with mobility difficulties and wheelchair users. The college has little off-road car parking, and most teachers and students park as close to the college as possible and have a steep climb to or from the college. The main teaching block has two lifts, one of which is suitable for a wheelchair. There is no lift in the other college buildings.

19. Staff are well qualified. Of the 161 permanent teachers, almost two-thirds have a teaching qualification and, of the remainder, 22% are working towards the qualification. More than two-thirds of the full-time teachers are qualified vocational assessors and most of the remainder are working towards the assessor qualification. The college employs more than 300 part-time hourly paid teachers, a quarter of whom have a teaching qualification. Part-time teachers are well supported and integrated into the college.

20. The college has good ICT resources with one modern computer for every 3.2 students. All staff and students have good access to a computer whenever they need to use one. All computers are

networked and provide Internet and intranet access. The college provides some students with specific needs with a portable computer. Some classrooms have recently been equipped with new interactive electronic whiteboards, which provide teachers with a valuable new teaching resource to enhance students' learning. The college main library is well equipped with a good range of books to meet most student needs. It also has a good range of journals, magazines and audio and videotape material for teacher and student use. Most curriculum areas have their own books and other learning resources to meet most of their students' learning needs.

21. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory. Full-time students are assessed when they start their course to determine whether or not they need additional learning support. The results are also used to provide information about students' ability and as the starting point of their progress reviews. Recent changes to the tutorial system for full-time students have led to an improvement in the procedures for monitoring their progress. Full-time students have an individual progress tutorial every six weeks. Course teachers write a progress review for each student in preparation of this. Students meet with their personal tutor to discuss their progress and to agree an action plan with targets for the period until the next review. The college has started to measure some students' progress against their previous qualifications, usually previous GCSE grades. This system is not yet sufficiently developed, systematic or widespread. Monitoring part-time students' progress is not well developed or consistently implemented. Students' progress on short courses in ICT is monitored well. By contrast, the review process for part-time students in hair and beauty and of adults on basic skills courses is poor.

22. The rigour with which work is set and assessed is inconsistent. On most vocational courses, internal verification is effective in monitoring assessment practice and maintaining the quality of assessment. Teachers are knowledgeable about assessment requirements and give good advice to students on how to produce evidence. In the school of art and design, students receive well-structured, rigorous and regular assessment through the tutorial system. Students value the challenging and constructive criticism they receive. In science and mathematics, work is thoroughly marked and the teachers' comments help students to improve. However, in a significant number of curriculum areas assessment is not used effectively to improve performance. In English and humanities, insufficient written work is set and marked. In many curriculum areas, the written feedback provided by teachers on assignments is not sufficiently evaluative. As a consequence, both tutors and students find it difficult to develop plans to improve the standard of students' work.

23. The college serves the community well with a wide range of programmes. It provides a good range of academic and vocational courses at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. It also provides access to HE programmes for adults and some HE courses.

24. The college has attempted to complement the work of local school sixth forms and sixth form college and reduced the number of GCSE and GCE A-level subjects offered in 2001. The college opened a new sixth form centre in September 2001. This is located in a separate building, which has been refurbished and re-equipped to provide a good learning environment. College procedures and support systems have been adapted to meet the requirements of the students who attend the centre. A new approach to enrolment and course programming allows students, particularly those who have not previously succeeded at school, to decide their individual programme. Programmes are grouped at three levels so that support for students, such as literacy and numeracy and tutorials, are provided at the right level. Students can pick and mix from a wide range of units and modules including, OCN units, GCSEs, GCE AS and A2 levels, GNVQ, and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) qualifications. The system is flexible, allowing progression and individual subject changes. There are 188 students in the centre. The impact of these changes has led to an improvement in retention but has not yet affected GCE and GCSE results, which were poor in 2002.

25. The college offers a wide range of vocational courses in all areas except horticulture. It also has a small work-based learning programme, with most trainees working in construction, and hair and beauty therapy. A successful programme of vocational training for 400 students aged 14 to 16 from local schools has helped to maintain their interest in education. There is good progression of these students into the full-time college courses at age 16. School students attend the college one day a week on a vocational link programme. The college also has some Learndirect provision.

26. The college responds to the needs of traditionally under-represented groups through its work and partnerships with community groups. It works with voluntary sector and community organisations to deliver basic skills, educational guidance and return-to-study programmes at numerous schools and community centres in Hastings and Rother. A wide range of adult and community programmes is available, including a large English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programme for refugees and asylum seekers. Links with HE are good. The college and a local university are working together to establish a university centre in Hastings to improve the learning opportunities of local adults.

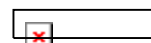
27. Information provided for prospective students in schools and the local community is of good quality. Clearly written and attractive course brochures are widely distributed to local schools and homes. Courses are also advertised on local radio and in newspapers. The college holds open days, and teachers visit local schools to inform their students about the course opportunities. Initiatives such as free, short IT courses in partnership with community projects, and return-to-study programmes increase the number of people aware of the college's provision. A well-organised student services facility provides telephone and postal enquiries and provides personal callers with good and impartial course advice.

28. Most students are guided onto an appropriate course. The range of courses offered is now more appropriate since the introduction of the sixth form centre. Specialist guidance staff provide good advice to students during enrolment about course selection and progression opportunities. Students receive satisfactory careers advice. A careers officer from Sussex Careers visits the college two days a week and a member of the local Connexions service provides detailed guidance for students who experience particular difficulties choosing the next step. Students are provided with good advice on progression routes open to them by their teachers, specialist staff and through the range of careers material in the college library.

29. Students with additional learning needs are identified during enrolment and induction. The college provides individual and in-class support for all entry and foundation level students. The college also offers a wide range of literacy and numeracy support for adults to help them achieve personal goals. Students on other courses identified as needing support are referred to the study centre. The college has almost 60 support staff who provide students with support in the study centre and the classroom. The support system for students has recently been reorganised to improve its effectiveness. There is a good tutorial system for full-time students. Teachers, who follow a prescribed tutorial schedule, are well trained for their tutor role and are supported by senior tutors. Tutorial sessions include regular and effective individual progress reviews and a variety of activities that address students' rights and responsibilities, including equality of opportunity. The college has not evaluated the effectiveness of the support it provides in enabling students to succeed on their course.

30. Students needing personal support can approach their personal tutor, the student adviser or guidance staff. Students needing specialist support are referred to an external agency. The college has close links with a range of agencies that it can call on to provide support, including those involved with youth accommodation and drugs. The college used the LSC hardship fund and money from its own resources to assist 450 students, and waive the fees of a further 5,000 students during 2001/02.

## **Leadership and management**



31. The leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Governors, college managers and staff understand and are highly supportive of the college's mission. The aims and values in the mission statement reflect the educational and training context in which the college operates, and take account of government priorities and local needs. The key priorities are to increase the

standards throughout the college. These priorities are being effectively addressed. For example, the range and structure of the curriculum now offered and the community venues used by the college are attracting students who would otherwise not have considered entering FE.

32. The college's eight annual strategic objectives for 2002/03 are developed in the strategic plan and annual operating statements across the college. The college is making progress in achieving these objectives but they do not include targets against which to monitor progress or clearly identify the contributions to be made by each area of the college. The college development plan agreed by the corporation does have measurable targets for improvement and identifies the contribution made by each curriculum development plan to the strategic objectives. The targets in the college development plan are not sufficiently strategic to be easily monitored by the corporation.

33. The effectiveness of curriculum management varies. In many areas it is good. In these, managers and teachers work well together to develop the curriculum and produce good teaching and learning materials. Senior managers have provided good quality teaching resources, including ICT and the recently introduced interactive teaching boards. Following a restructuring of the curriculum, team leaders have been given increased responsibility for its management and quality assurance. Curriculum managers are provided with good administrative support from highly valued school administrators. There are some weaknesses in curriculum management. The quality of subject management and teaching of some subjects in the sixth form centre is unsatisfactory. The college has few formal systems to ensure the development and sharing of learning materials or the sharing of good practice across curriculum areas. This is particularly evident in subjects taught in the sixth form centre and some other schools.

34. Teacher appraisal provides managers with the opportunity to identify and meet staff training and development needs. Teachers also have good access to staff development and their take up of it is good. The college has an employee development unit in which some teachers conduct research, including how to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The work of this unit is shared with teachers.

35. The college has taken well-considered action to address poor achievement in literacy and numeracy of students on some level 1 and 2 vocational programmes, and of key skills on work-based learning programmes and level 2 programmes. It is too early to judge the success of these measures.

36. Communications in the college are good. Senior managers are approachable and supportive. Teachers are well informed about current issues facing the college, including the current local review of post-16 education in Hastings, the curriculum and course matters. There are regular formal meetings of managers and all college staff. These meetings are attended by all full-time staff and part-time staff are paid to attend. The college e-mail is used extensively by managers and teachers and has significantly improved the quality and level of communication between all staff based at different college sites.

37. The quality and accuracy of the college's computerised management information have improved. The college has recently changed the management information software it uses and there is now greater confidence in the quality of the data available to support management decision making. New software tools have made the production of routine reports easier. This has improved decision making at a senior level and is used by teachers to inform them of students' progress. Improved access to data has also been of value to course teams when writing their annual self-assessment report. Further developments in the use of data are planned including better target setting at all levels in the college. The college's new student register system has experienced some teething problems that have slowed the follow-up to students' absences in some curriculum areas.

38. The college's quality assurance arrangements are leading to improved student retention and pass rates at a number of academic levels but they are not being used effectively in all curriculum areas. The quality assurance policy and framework was updated in 2002 and clearly lists the responsibilities of staff. Each course team and service department produces detailed self-assessment reports that monitor progress against the previous year's development plan, and compare attendance, retention and pass rates against course targets and national averages. Teams

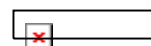
also take account of the views of students and the lesson observation grades awarded for their own areas. The college obtains the views of students, parents and employers through well-designed questionnaires and structured focus groups, but this information is not used by all course teams to inform target setting for improvement. Some curriculum self-assessment reports lack clear evaluative statements and, in some, judgements made about the quality of teaching are not sufficiently self-critical. These reports are summarised at school and college levels to provide the school and college self-assessment reports and annual development plan. The college self-assessment report was detailed and clearly identified areas for improvement. The resultant development plan addressed the identified weaknesses and these were cross-referenced against the strategic objectives. All but one weakness in the last inspection report has been successfully addressed.

39. Equality of opportunity is promoted. The college is strongly committed to widening participation in FE, HE, and training, and has effective strategies to increase participation from under-represented groups. However, it has not set targets for widening participation. The college's curriculum provision is inclusive. All applicants to the college are offered a course that leads from their previous education and training or other experiences. Students speak positively about their experiences. There was consultation involving staff and students in developing college policies on diversity and equality, and race and disability. Staff development events on these policies have been well attended. An action plan has been introduced as a result of an equality and diversity review. The college prospectus portrays images that promote equality and diversity. Student enrolments and achievements are analysed by gender and ethnicity. The tutorial curriculum includes material and exercises that deal with equality of opportunity, but in general, equality of opportunity is not well promoted through college activities. Monitoring of equal opportunities in work-based learning provision is inadequate and there are no systems to spread good practice between curriculum teams.

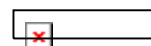
40. The corporation is knowledgeable about the performance of the college. This was a weakness in the last inspection. The quality and standards sub-committee of the corporation receives a wide range of achievement and performance data including student retention and pass rates, attendance, and the views of students, parents and employers. These are analysed in detail. Governors attend college award ceremonies, focus group meetings and other events for students, and have attended classes. The quality and standards sub-committee reports formally to the full board four times each year and, at other times, on various measures of academic performance if this proves necessary. The corporation receives and approves the annual self-assessment and development plan. The corporation also completes an evaluation of their performance. This has resulted in changes to operational practice and contributes to the governors' training plan.

41. Financial management is sound. Operational plans are costed and budget holders receive regular reports on expenditure. Teachers' workloads are carefully monitored and expenditure on part-time teachers is kept under review. The college is introducing a system to provide more information on the cost of courses to determine whether individual courses offer good value for money, but this is not yet operational.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Science and mathematics



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



### **Strengths**

- good retention rates on many courses
- very good teaching in most biology and most GCSE mathematics lessons
- good use of ICT resources in science teaching
- good feedback which helps students improve.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor pass rates on most courses
- inadequate development of students' analytical skills in theory lessons
- slow progress of more able students in GCSE lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

42. The college offers a limited range of full-time and part-time courses in science and mathematics. There are currently 85 students aged 16 to 18 and 190 adult students. The largest part of the provision is in GCSE mathematics, which is offered to full-time students and as part of the community education provision. Some 40 students are studying for GCE AS qualifications in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, and 20 for GCE A2 in biology and mathematics. The college also offers an International Baccalaureate for students aged 16 to 18 and access to HE courses for full-time adult students. A new diploma in anatomy and physiology was added to the curriculum in 2001 and now has 38 enrolments. GCSE science and GCSE human physiology are offered, although the number on these courses is small.

### **Achievement and standards**

43. Student retention in most science subjects is above national averages. Retention in GCE A-level courses had shown a significant improvement up to 2001, but a change in the subjects offered resulted in only six students continuing onto GCE A2 science and mathematics courses in 2001/02. The retention rates for GCE AS fell in 2002, although they were still at the national average. All International Baccalaureate and 92% of the access to science students were retained in 2002. Pass rates in GCE AS and A-level courses for the past three years have been significantly below national averages and few students progress to the GCE A2. Most students on the International Baccalaureate are residents at the Pestalozzi Village and speak English as a second language. The pass rate on the International Baccalaureate has increased in each of the last three years but is still

below the national average. Pass rates in GCSE science and mathematics courses are also below national averages. The poor GCE A-level pass rates led to the college introducing major changes to management, staffing and subjects offered in 2000.

44. In practical lessons, students are competent in using scientific apparatus safely and efficiently. More able students, particularly on the access course, develop good reasoning skills and are able to make relevant links between theory and practical work. Students on the International Baccalaureate can successfully link the different scientific parts of their course together. However, in many theory lessons, teachers fail to encourage students to develop their analytical skills. Progression from the access to health studies course is good and in 2002 all the students who had applied for nursing were successful.

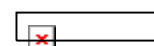
***A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2000 to 2002***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics (one year) grades A-C	2	No. of starts	117	109	130
		% retention	79	96	88
		% pass rate	30	32	33
GCSE science (one year) grades A-C	2	No. of starts	12	22	20
		% retention	58	73	79
		% pass rate	29	31	40
International baccalaureate	3	No. of starts	10	52	24
		% retention	90	85	100
		% pass rate	67	64	71
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	21	14
		% retention	*	84	77
		% pass rate	*	*	38
Diploma in anatomy and physiology	3	No. of starts	*	*	38
		% retention	*	*	82
		% pass rate	*	*	84
Access to science	3	No. of starts	10	12	15
		% retention	44	82	92
		% pass rate	75	100	75

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

\*course did not run

***Quality of education and training***



45. There is much good teaching in science and mathematics. In the best classes, teachers use a variety of appropriate methods which inspire the students. They use practical demonstrations effectively and use up-to-date technology for whole-class demonstrations. For example, in an access

students were able to see an animation of a beating heart on a newly installed interactive board. In the same lesson, the students carried out the dissection of a heart to make the theory meaningful. The teacher used an effective question and answer session, along with students' use of the interactive board, to test learning at the end of the lesson.

46. All courses have appropriate schemes of work and most lessons are well planned and structured. Homework is set regularly and returned with good feedback, either verbal or written, which helps the students to improve. Records are kept of student progress and reviews are regularly carried out. Students are able to obtain extra help out of lesson time and very much value the accessibility and availability of the teachers.

47. Biology students in a GCE A2 lesson were able to suggest answers to questions on respiration before the teacher revealed the answers on a screen. Printouts of the screen slides, with gaps for completion, provided the students with useful notes on the topic. In a GCSE mathematics lesson, the teacher taught a group of students with different levels of mathematical understanding by using differentiated tasks. Students' confidence was increased when the teacher skilfully elicited correct answers from them. With the aid of practical work (tossing coins), they were able to grasp the difficult concepts of relative frequency and probability.

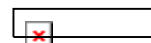
48. In several lessons, students learn less effectively and have had difficulties understanding the work. In some science lessons, students are passive. Few opportunities are taken for group or paired work and the students' prior knowledge and ideas are not used to build on their learning. In some GCSE lessons, a lack of extension materials leaves more able students with little to do when they have completed set tasks, thus slowing down their progress.

49. Most teachers are well qualified and experienced, and make helpful references to examination technique and mark schemes in their teaching. New teachers receive good support from other staff. The laboratories are well equipped but some are not conducive to theory group work. Students make use of IT outside the classroom and recommended web sites are incorporated in schemes of work. Students make good use of the study and IT centres. There are new books in the library section of the IT centre and these are particularly well used by students on the International Baccalaureate course.

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

50. Since September 2001 there have been significant developments in science and mathematics, including the appointment of several new staff. The new science course team leader and the new head of sixth form have introduced major changes to improve both the quality of teaching and pass rates. Initial diagnostic testing, changes in recruitment policies and the new programmes for students aged 16 to 18 have ensured that more students are placed on courses at an appropriate level. There are regular team meetings of the science staff and, separately, of the mathematics staff. Experienced staff informally mentor new teachers. The small size of the subject departments, particularly mathematics, means that opportunities to share good practice are limited. There is a good programme of classroom observation that is carried out by a team of trained staff.

### **Construction**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching

- wide range of resources to support learning
  
- good tutorial support
  
- good development of practical skills in the workplace.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor retention rates on most courses
  
- some poor workshop accommodation
  
- limited links between teachers and employers to support workplace training
  
- poor target setting for modern apprentices.

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

51. A wide range of full-time and part-time courses meets the needs of students, local industry and the community. There are 278 students aged 16 to 18 and 612 adult students on courses at intermediate and advanced level. Courses are provided in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, mechanical engineering services (plumbing and gas installation), and electrical installation and testing, together with a construction technician course. There are 68 work-based trainees, most of whom are modern apprentices. Few students are women. The college offers a number of short courses including electrical testing and gas safety training.

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

52. Pass rates on most courses are good. In 2002, both retention and pass rates on the intermediate plumbing course were above the national average. All those who completed the national diploma in construction in 2002 were successful. However, many students who start courses fail to complete. On many courses, only a third of the students who start a course complete it successfully. Most students who leave their course early are employed in the thriving local construction industry. Pass rates on short gas safety courses for the assessment and certification of Corgi registered gas installation and service engineers are above the national average.

53. The standard of students' work in most theory and practical lessons is good. On construction courses, students produce decorative brickwork and lead flashing to a good industrial standard,

while those on a two-year plumbing course are making such good progress with their practical work that they are taking assessments earlier than planned. Students on an intermediate carpentry and joinery course were undertaking carcassing and first fixing work to good industry standards. Students develop good practical skills in the workplace. They receive good training from well-qualified and experienced workplace supervisors. This gives them a good range of learning experiences and opportunity to develop their skills.

54. The development of students' literacy, numeracy and IT skills is built into the vocational content of their courses. Specialist teachers help them to develop their written, numerical and IT skills so that they can build their key skills portfolios. This strategy has helped students to understand the importance of key skills to their careers. The decision to integrate key skills into mainstream courses was taken recently.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	62	*	64
		% retention	37	*	42
		% pass rate	86	*	93
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	53	*	61
		% retention	45	*	43
		% pass rate	80	*	67
NVQ painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	63	*	24
		% retention	25	*	50
		% pass rate	66	*	67
NVQ mechanical engineering services	2	No. of starts	40	*	42
		% retention	45	*	81
		% pass rate	61	*	88
National diploma in construction	3	No. of starts	21	*	10
		% retention	62	*	50
		% pass rate	50	*	100

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

\*data unreliable

***Quality of education and training***

55. Most teaching and learning is good or better. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of teaching styles to maintain interest. Tasks and activities are designed to cater for students' range of abilities, and a wide range of well-designed resources is used to enable them to progress at an appropriate pace. For example, well-structured handouts, text-based workbooks, textbooks, computer-based resources, structured questionnaires, job knowledge assessments and practical demonstrations feature in many of the best lessons. The resources allow more able students to progress at a faster rate than others. In theory lessons, teachers make good use of whiteboards and overhead projectors to illustrate ideas. Presentations using computer-generated slides and other resources are available to students outside lessons. Students work well in pairs and in small groups, discussing their experiences of work and relating these to what they have learned in lessons.

56. Theory classrooms are well equipped and provide good learning environments. In some

workshops, the layout and the restricted working space limit the training opportunities. A few classes have to be divided into two for practical work because of the size of the workshop. The trowel trades workshops are particularly small and do not have appropriate facilities and equipment to recycle and dry materials. Some aspects of health and safety practice are unsatisfactory. The wood trade's workshop lacks equipment to ensure work activities on ladders and scaffolding are undertaken safely. Some students do not always wear a safety helmet.

57. Action planning and target setting for modern apprentices in the workplace is poor. Training coordinators are in frequent contact with students to discuss their progress. Reviews are carried out every four weeks and alternate between the college and the workplace, but they do not always record short-term targets that focus on achieving relevant NVQ units. Some students do not receive copies of their reviews, preventing them from monitoring their own progress. There is little integration of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Most training is to meet employers' and customers' needs and not those of the learners' training plans.

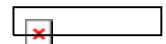
58. Tutorial support is good. During interview and induction teachers give good guidance and students have opportunities to discuss job opportunities and career progression. Computer-based diagnostic tests are used to assess literacy and numeracy needs. Access to support and monthly student progress reviews are good. Reviewers discuss and record students' progress and set them challenging targets to be achieved by the next review.

59. Teachers are well qualified in the craft and technical subjects that they teach and most are qualified to assess NVQs. However, 40% of the staff do not have teaching qualifications. Teachers attend local and national training events to gain the benefit of disseminated best practice from other colleges and improve their performance.

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

60. The management of construction is satisfactory. Lines of communication are clear and curriculum managers work well together to provide positive and committed leadership. Course team leaders meet monthly. They have introduced measures to address weaknesses identified in their self-assessment report. Strategies have been put in place in an attempt to improve retention rates. There are limited links between teachers, NVQ assessors and employers. Employers have a poor understanding of the NVQ qualifications and modern apprentice framework. As a result, too many trainees fail to achieve the modern apprenticeship.

### **Business and administration**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching on administration programmes
  
- good student progression to higher level courses
  
- good standard of students' written work

- effective use of current case studies in teaching.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor attendance
- some uninspiring lessons on professional courses
- limited in-class support for students with additional learning needs
- low pass rates on some accounting courses.

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

61. The college offers a wide range of business and administration courses including NVQ, AVCE, GCSE, and GCE AS and A levels. There are some 60 students aged 16 to 18 following full-time AVCE and business administration courses. There are almost 600 part-time adult students on accounting, management, legal, and marketing courses. Included in the professional programmes is the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) qualification at levels 2, 3 and 4. The college also offers a number of short courses in business and text processing, and a full-time short course in call centre techniques. There are good opportunities for progression, particularly on vocational courses.

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

62. Student retention and pass rates vary, but are satisfactory overall. The pass rate for the NVQ at level 3 in supervisory management is outstanding, and for the administrative and secretarial procedures certificate pass rates are well above national average. Pass rates are poor on the NVQ in accountancy at level 2, and the stage 2 qualification in audio transcription. In accountancy, pass rates of evening class students are considerably lower than for students attending full time or part time. Full-time students on GNVQ and AVCE courses achieve results in line with national averages, although too many students fail to complete the course.

63. Students produce good written work and are enthusiastic about their projects. Most written work is well structured and much of it is of a commercial standard. Most assignments and student portfolios are well presented. The work that teachers set is often challenging and involves students in demanding tasks. Adult students make appropriate gains in knowledge and understanding. Students speak knowledgeably about their studies, using accurate vocational terminology. Attendance on many courses is poor. The college has introduced strategies in an attempt to improve attendance.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Administrative and secretarial procedures certificate	X	No. of starts	*	15	8
		% retention	*	80	75
		% pass rate	*	25	67
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	28	31	31
		% retention	75	90	94
		% pass rate	57	68	59
Audio transcription stage 2	2	No. of starts	26	36	24
		% retention	92	92	92
		% pass rate	75	55	64
GNVQ advanced business studies	3	No. of starts	15	29	15
		% retention	80	50	85
		% pass rate	33	100	75
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	27	28	49
		% retention	78	81	78
		% pass rate	57	55	58
NVQ supervisory management	3	No. of starts	17	10	15
		% retention	76	100	73
		% pass rate	62	70	100

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

\*course did not run

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

64. Teaching on administration courses is good. Teachers have good commercial experience that they use to good effect in lessons. Lessons are lively with a range of activities that interest and engage students. In one lesson, students designed advertising leaflets to a good standard and then reproduced them using a computer package. Students clearly enjoyed the session and there was good learning. In an enrichment course in law, the course design and content are excellent and students are working towards good commercial standards. Teachers regularly check students' progress and understanding during lessons.

65. Teaching on professional courses is satisfactory but uninspiring. In many lessons, teachers fail to engage students' interest. In other lessons, teachers spend too much time reading from textbooks. Students' lack of involvement impedes their learning. Some teachers cover material too quickly for all students to understand. A number of handouts are poorly presented and projector slides are difficult to read. As a result valuable time is wasted when the teacher dictates the notes. In the better lessons, teachers hold students' attention with good teaching that includes anecdotes and examples, which bring the subject to life. Students' progress is carefully monitored. Students are helped to improve the standard of their work through good written feedback, regular testing and reviews of progress in tutorials. Assessment and internal verification are effective for NVQ programmes.

66. Initial assessment and guidance are effective in ensuring that students are on the appropriate course. Members of the course team interview all applicants for management courses. The literacy and numeracy needs of full-time students are assessed but there is not sufficient help for students who have been identified as needing additional learning support. Strategies for ensuring that students receive appropriate support outside lessons are insufficiently rigorous.

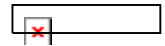


67. There are good ICT resources. Students can access computers in most classrooms. Good use is made of specialist software packages for law, accounts and call centre courses. All teachers have good vocational or professional experience and most have a teaching qualification. Teachers update their occupational experience regularly. Good use is made of practising professionals as visiting speakers on some courses. There is an excellent call centre suite that simulates good commercial practice.

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

68. Business and administration courses are well managed. There are regular team meetings and communication between all teachers and managers is good. Part-time teachers are well supported and encouraged to participate in course development, meetings and training. Teachers attend regular updating and training events. However, there has been insufficient staff training on equality of opportunity. As a result, equal opportunities are not effectively promoted in the classroom.

### **Information and communication technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good pass and retention rates
  
- good individual teaching
  
- successful initiatives to widen participation
  
- good student progression onto higher level courses
  
- very good IT systems aid learning.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- ineffective target setting for full-time students
  
- unsatisfactory accommodation for some courses

- o insufficient use of practical examples in theory lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

69. The college offers a wide range of ICT and computing courses for full-time and part-time students. There are more than 200 full-time students aged 16 to 18 on computing studies or ICT courses, including GCE AS, AVCE and BTEC national diplomas and certificates. In the past academic year there were over 2,000 enrolments on part-time and short courses. Most of these students are adults. There are many opportunities for part-time students to acquire computing skills from beginners to advanced level. Last year over 500 students enrolled for the basic course in computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), and around 200 for the European computer driving license (ECDL) course. Courses on using the Internet, desktop publishing, web design and digital imagery are also popular. The college was awarded a COVE in ICT for business in November 2002, but work on this had not begun at the time of the inspection.

70. There are a number of successful initiatives aimed at widening participation for community groups and employers. The college has a flexible learning computer suite with teacher support open five days and two evenings a week. Many courses are offered in community centres and are aimed at many different groups, such as the over 60s and those with special learning needs. There are free introductory courses that attract a large number of adults to experience using a computer. A bus is provided to bring disadvantaged students from outlying areas into the flexible learning computer centre once a week. Free childcare is offered as part of this provision.

### **Achievement and standards**

71. Pass rates are good on most courses. Over the last three years, most students taking City and Guilds qualifications in computing studies have been successful. Pass rates on most short courses have improved significantly over the last three years. Retention rates are consistently good, with the exception of the national diploma in computer studies, where they are below the national average.

72. Most students are well motivated and are able to work independently and at their own pace. They develop good practical skills, which prepare them well for using computers at work. Many students who were unable to turn on a computer when they first started their course are now able to word process documents, manipulate formulae on a spreadsheet and use a database. Many progress from basic vocational courses to ordinary or higher diploma programmes. There is also good progression of students into teaching and technical posts. Two thirds of the teachers and all the technical staff were formerly computing students at the college.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	570	777	575
		% retention	83	90	87
		% pass rate	73	77	79
CLAIT (one year)	1	No. of starts	116	122	126
		% retention	84	98	86
		% pass rate	57	56	73
City and Guilds 7261 certificate in computing	1	No. of starts	130	116	81
		% retention	74	91	88

		% pass rate	69	92	94
City and Guilds 7261 diploma in computing studies	2	No. of starts	43	92	147
		% retention	84	96	84
		% pass rate	92	63	92
ECDL	2	No. of starts	*	22	81
		% retention	*	100	86
		% pass rate	*	55	80
National diploma in computing studies	3	No. of starts	*	72	46
		% retention	*	65	72
		% pass rate	*	91	88

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

\*course did not run

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

73. Many learning sessions take place in a computer laboratory where students are able to come and go at any time throughout the day and evening. Students work through coursework at their own pace and seek help from a teacher when they require it. The quality of individual teaching is good. Teachers check students' progress each time they attend the laboratory and question what they have learnt before they leave. Adult students have widely different levels of technical skill and knowledge, but teachers offer good support and challenge at all levels. Most students are highly motivated and many adult students take work home with them.

74. In whole-class lessons, teachers have produced good learning materials which are clearly explained. Most teachers use good question and answer techniques to ensure that most students understand the topic being covered, but in some lessons the quieter students were not challenged. In practical sessions, teachers provide work that takes into account students' individual levels of practical computer skills. Despite this, some of the more able students who complete their work quickly are left with nothing to do. In theory lessons, the practical application of some abstract concepts is not always explained adequately and students are unable to see the relevance of their learning to the world of work. Some classrooms are not well designed and students cannot easily see the whiteboard or other visual aids. Some of these students become easily distracted and bored.

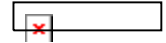
75. Assessment and internal verification procedures are satisfactory. Students receive regular feedback on their work to help them to improve. The progress of students on short courses is tracked carefully to ensure successful completion. However, progress reviews for full-time students are weak. Teachers set targets that are vague and difficult to evaluate.

76. The college has good computing resources. Most equipment is of the most recent specification and is connected to the college network. The main computer centre is spacious and provides a good learning environment. However, some smaller computer rooms get too hot, making them uncomfortable to work in for long periods, and some rooms used by full-time students are cramped. Students have good access to computer resources at a variety of locations whenever they require to use them. All machines provide fast Internet access and many students use this facility regularly to help them with their studies and coursework. All students have access to scanners and digital cameras. The sixth form centre has the most modern facilities including wireless machines and computerised teaching boards. Students with computers at home can access some elements of their course on the college intranet. The quality of technical support is good.

### **Leadership and management**

77. Computing courses are managed separately in the sixth form centre, the school of technology, and the computer centre. Courses in each area are well managed, but communication between the three groups is poor and there is little sharing of good practice between them. Insufficient attention has been paid to improving the quality of teaching and learning to the level of the best in the provision as a whole. Managers and teachers are committed to using ICT courses as a means of attracting new groups of learners to the college.

## **Hospitality, sport and travel**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good attendance
  
- well-equipped practical teaching areas
  
- good retention and pass rates on most programmes
  
- good teaching
  
- good leadership and management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient detail in some lesson plans
  
- poor retention on level 1 food preparation
  
- poor achievement on advanced travel agents' certificate and diploma in health and fitness.

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

78. The college provides a wide range of programmes in hospitality, sport, and travel for both full-time and part-time students. In hospitality and catering, NVQ courses at different levels are offered in food preparation, food service and hospitality supervision. There is also a course in food hygiene, and the National Licensee's Certificate. For the travel industry, a full-time travel studies programmes and an air cabin crew programme are offered to full-time students. Part-time programmes include the resort representatives' certificate and the travel agents' certificate. In sport and leisure, both the foundation certificate and diploma in health, fitness and sports therapy are provided. At the time of inspection, there were 113 students aged 16 to 18 and 27 adults on full-time programmes. On part-time and short programmes, there were 27 students aged 16 to 18 and 99 adults. There were 11 work-based learners studying on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes, work-based learning for adults, and other work-based training.

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

79. Student retention and pass rates on most programmes are good. In 2002, both pass and retention rates were above the national average for food preparation and cooking at advanced level, with pass rates improving on the previous year. At intermediate level, pass rates on both the food service and food preparation programmes were above the national average. In both cases, the proportion of students who completed the course was very good in 2002. However, retention rates are poor on the basic course in food preparation. Results are more mixed on the travel agents' certificate. Most students who begin the courses complete successfully. However, pass rates on the advanced certificate fell sharply in 2002. A student on the airfares and ticketing primary programme gained third place in the 2002 examinations nationally. In sport and leisure, completion rates are good, although the pass rate on the diploma in health and fitness was below national averages. Attendance at classes during inspection was good, at 88%.

80. The level of attainment in most classes was good. Students learn good practical and social skills. They are enthusiastic about the way they are taught and the support provided by their teachers. Teachers promote team working in practical activities to further strengthen their preparation for industry, and they work well on their own and as members of a team. There is good progression to higher level courses or work. When students complete their programmes at college, most find employment that is relevant to their course. Almost half the students who completed the diploma in health and fitness progressed to HE in 2002.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
NVQ catering and hospitality: food and drink service	2	No. of starts	27	17	16
		% retention	78	94	100
		% pass rate	90	73	80
NVQ catering and hospitality: food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	11	34	20
		% retention	36	68	95
		% pass rate	100	81	94
Health and fitness foundation certificate	2	No. of starts	*	19	16
		% retention	*	83	81
		% pass rate	*	93	77
Travel agents' certificate	3	No. of starts	*	11	9
		% retention	*	91	100
		% pass rate	*	100	56
NVQ catering and	3	No. of starts	14	8	7

preparation and cooking		% pass rate	92	75	83
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Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\*course did not run

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

81. The standard of teaching is good. Most lessons are well planned, well managed and fully involve students in learning. Teachers use a range of strategies in the classroom to promote understanding and the interest of students. They use a good range of learning materials that are well produced and clear. Programmes of work are well planned and organised to provide a good coverage of each topic. Key skills are effectively taught using vocationally relevant material. In a minority of lessons, learning outcomes are not clearly defined or fully explained. As a result, students are not always clear about what they should have learned. The pace of teaching was too slow for some students in some lessons.

82. Hospitality students gain good skills and experience in food preparation and service working in the two college restaurants. They also achieve good skills in the practice kitchens. Different styles of food preparation and service are used to broaden the students' skills and knowledge.

83. The college has its own travel shop on campus in which students work as part of their course. Students are able to research holidays and seek answers to customers' travel enquiries and then complete the process of reservations. Working in the travel shop increases their confidence and knowledge, and the demand for this service has increased during the time it has been in operation. The college has a simulated aircraft cabin for students on the cabin crew programme.

84. Teachers are experienced and have good knowledge of their occupational area. This knowledge is used well in teaching to illustrate what the industry expects. Good use is made of teachers' links with industry. There is a good range of equipment and other learning resources. Equipment is well maintained and reflects industry standards. Sports students have a well-equipped multi-gym in which to develop their practical skills. This gym is open to staff, students and the public.

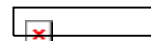
85. Sports students have good relationships with local primary schools and assist with outdoor activities. They also provide exercise sessions for cardiac rehabilitation patients from the local hospital. Links with primary schools have been extended to include hospitality students, who participate in the 'working well' project to encourage healthy eating. Travel students make frequent visits to commercial practices and a major travel company guarantees an interview for all applicants from the college.

86. Assessments are well planned and involve the student in deciding when they should take place. Teachers review students' performance well and make good comments on the quality of both practical and written work. Students are set targets for achievement which teachers monitor and review with them.

### **Leadership and management**

87. Leadership and management of the provision are good. Staff appraisals are effective in identifying staff development requirements. Course teams contribute to the self-assessment report through course reviews. Reviews are detailed and identify actions for improvement. Progress in achieving these actions is regularly reviewed. Targets for recruitment, retention and achievement are set by course teams and are closely monitored by the college.

### **Hair and beauty**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good practical teaching
  
- very good retention and pass rates on beauty therapy courses
  
- well-designed salons with very good training resources
  
- outstanding enrichment activities.

### ***Weaknesses***

- weak reviews of part-time students' progress
  
- insufficient numbers of hairdressing clients.

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

88. The college offers courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy, complementary therapies and sports therapy. NVQs are offered in hairdressing at levels 1, 2 and 3 and in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. Beauty qualifications are offered in cosmetic and theatrical make-up, depilation, aromatherapy, reflexology, massage, Indian head massage, mehndi henna, ear-piercing, manicure and nail extensions. There is a sports therapy diploma course, a foundation certificate in health and fitness studies, and a beauty specialist course. A combined two-year hairdressing and beauty therapy programme is also offered which leads to a level 2 qualification in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Students may choose to pursue either hairdressing or beauty therapy to level 3 during their third year. All full-time courses include work placements for students with local employers during the second year of the programme. The college also provides work-based learning for 27 foundation and advanced modern apprentices. Courses are available by day and during the evening. There are currently 96 students aged 16 to 18 and 29 adults on full-time college courses. Of the 240 part-time students, almost 90% are adults.

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

89. The pass rates in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3 are very good, with 95% and 88% respectively. Retention on these courses is also very good. Over the last two years, retention rates in beauty therapy have been good. Pass rates for Indian head massage, sports massage, aromatherapy and reflexology courses are very good. Hairdressing pass rates at level 2 and level 3 are mostly satisfactory, although the level 2 pass rates have declined over the last three years.

Retention rates on the two-year hairdressing course at level 2 are considerably higher than the national average.

90. The standard of students' work ranges from satisfactory to very good. Most students complete assignments, case studies and projects to a good standard in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. They make good use of sketches and photographs to illustrate projects on, for example, designing styles for long hair, make-up and aromatherapy massage. Students' achievements are carefully monitored and progress is recorded regularly.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in hair and beauty, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	2	No. of starts	44	39	45
		% retention	67	74	91
		% pass rate	59	100	95
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	13	48	32
		% retention	67	81	87
		% pass rate	100	86	55
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	13	13	18
		% retention	100	100	94
		% pass rate	100	100	88
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	3	No. of starts	6	11	6
		% retention	50	64	67
		% pass rate	67	40	100
Diploma in reflexology	3	No. of starts	31	29	32
		% retention	83	79	77
		% pass rate	100	91	100
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	18	30	14
		% retention	78	70	86
		% pass rate	93	100	100

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

***Quality of education and training***

91. There is good practical teaching. It is well planned with detailed schemes of work and lesson plans, which all staff follow. Teachers demonstrate the correct methods and techniques to individuals and groups of students. Processes are demonstrated by teachers and then performed by students in clear, progressive steps. As a result, students make good progress in developing practical skills techniques in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject, support students well and engage them in relevant discussions about the next course of action to be followed.

92. Most students have a good awareness and understanding of health, safety, hygiene, client care and professional working methods. A minority of hairdressing students do not have a professional appearance when working in the salon. There are insufficient numbers of hairdressing clients and students frequently have to work on each other or on practice blocks. Some full-time students are slow to develop their practical skills and there are insufficient opportunities for assessment, because of the shortage of clients. Assessment is carried out well, and internal verification is carefully



planned and thorough. Most teachers provide useful written feedback when marking assignments and case studies. However, reviews of part-time students' progress are insufficiently detailed.

93. The hairdressing and beauty salons are well designed and have very good training facilities. Accommodation has a modern and stylish appearance. Rooms are well fitted and reflect good commercial standards. The practical areas include general hairdressing and beauty salons, a barbering area, a spa and a large reception area. The salons have a good stock of videos and computers. Students use these enthusiastically when revising techniques such as plaiting or colouring hair, and when completing assignments. Students use a good range of products produced by top manufacturers when working on clients.

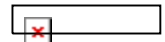
94. There are outstanding enrichment activities for students in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Students study for additional qualifications, for example in barbering, Indian head massage and mendhi henna. Students also extend their skills well by taking part in many external activities. These include regional and national hairdressing competitions, hair shows, fashion shows, and creating theatrical make-up for pantomimes. Students work well with museums, community groups, theatrical groups and commercial organisations. Several times each year, students work on clients at large hotels and holiday centres throughout southeast England. These activities develop students' hairdressing and beauty therapy skills in a range of different settings and build their self-confidence. Artistic and creative skills are imaginatively developed and students have a better understanding of the range of opportunities available to them for employment. All full-time programmes include periods of work experience and students have frequent contact with employers.

95. There is good support for students with additional numeracy or literacy learning needs. Specialist teachers support students in their normal hairdressing classes. Students who need extra support with their practical or theory work in hairdressing or beauty therapy are given a flexible timetable and additional help from teachers.

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

96. Strategies have been introduced to improve the attendance, retention and pass rates of students. Experienced teachers teach the more demanding groups of students. Timetables have been altered so that courses more effectively meet students' parenting responsibilities. Adult students' learning programmes have been arranged so that they have complete days out of college in order to do part-time work. Communication between staff is good. Monthly meetings are held to address curriculum and student issues. There is insufficient focus in the self-assessment report on the small number of hairdressing clients for students to develop skills and for assessment.

### **Health and care**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on the OCN and access to nursing courses
  
- good use of work practice examples in lessons

- community partnerships provide good learning and career opportunities
- good tutorial and individual support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor retention on level 3 childcare courses
- some uninspiring teaching
- poor course management and organisation of childcare courses.

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

97. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in child, health and social care. Students are able to achieve NVQ, Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE), AVCE qualifications and OCN health care units. Part-time courses are offered during the day and in the evenings, and students can enrol on NVQ and distance learning courses at any time during the year. New courses are developed in response to requests from local employers and some are taught in residential homes and community locations such as local schools. There are good progression opportunities from foundation to level 4, to employment or HE in each area. Two-thirds of the 159 full-time students, and 95% of the 227 part-time students are adults. There are also almost 450 students taking level 1 units.

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

98. Student retention on health and childcare courses is variable. On NVQ level 2 and level 3 programmes, pass rates are good and above the national average. Retention on the AVCE is poor with only two of the ten students who started in 2001 still on the programme. Achievements for adults on the access to nursing and health professions course are good, although they fell in 2002. Retention and achievement on the one-year certificate in counselling course are good. Pass rates on some courses, including level 3 childcare courses, the CACHE diploma and the NVQ in early years care and education, were below national averages in 2002. In 2001/02, 120 of the 122 students who started the access to level 2 distance learning programme in care successfully completed the course.

99. Most students demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding in lessons and in their written work. For example, first-year students in a level 3 child health lesson were able to plan appropriate activities to promote dental hygiene in young children. Students on the NVQ level 4 in care were able to debate the problems faced when trying to manage devolved budgets. Childcare students demonstrated very good interpersonal and vocational skills in the workplace. One care-home manager spoke highly of the skills his staff had developed on the NVQ level 2 programme and how that was now influencing work practices in the home.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Certificate in counselling (short)	2	No. of starts	67	110	95
		% retention	78	77	86
		% pass rate	27	84	92
NVQ direct care (two year)	2	No. of starts	**	*	14
		% retention	**	*	100
		% pass rate	**	*	93
NVQ continuing care (two year)	3	No. of starts	*	*	10
		% retention	*	*	90
		% pass rate	*	*	89
Diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	11	*	10
		% retention	45	*	70
		% pass rate	60	*	67
Access to nursing and health professions	3	No. of starts	15	30	38
		% retention	100	57	87
		% pass rate	80	88	73
Certificate in counselling	3	No. of starts	25	26	21
		% retention	92	81	90
		% pass rate	48	90	79

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

\*data unreliable

\*\*course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

100. Most lessons are satisfactory or better. In the most effective lessons, teachers link theory to current work practice and make good use of students' life and work experiences to reinforce learning. In an access to nursing health professions lesson the teacher used a data projector and electronic whiteboard to illustrate how the heart worked. This helped the students to visualise the actions of the heart and so made the lesson more meaningful.

101. Too many lessons are dull and uninspiring, and failed to motivate and challenge all students. The tasks on some worksheets provided by teachers are not sufficiently demanding for more able students. Teachers do not always give students constructive feedback on their written work or presentations to help them to improve their performance and grades. Most learning resources, such as work books and handouts given to students, are well produced and of a good standard.

102. Assessments set for students are fair. Teachers make good use of assignments set by the awarding bodies as well as devising others from their own and students' work experience. Although teachers mark students' work accurately, they do not provide them with sufficiently detailed written feedback and advice on how to improve their work and achieve higher grades. Internal verification of courses is not well planned or systematic. The management of workplace assessments is good.

103. Support for students is generally good. Tutorials are good and valued by students. Students' individual learning plans are well written, with targets that are regularly reviewed and revised. Progress reviews and target setting are used to good effect and help motivate students. All full-time students are screened to assess their learning support needs, but there is no overall evaluation of the impact of learning support in the curriculum area.

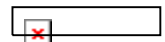
104. All teachers are professionally well qualified and have practical experience of working in child or health care. A number of teachers who have recently been appointed have not yet completed their teacher training course. Practical learning and training resources and equipment are satisfactory for the range of courses offered. Teaching aids such as audio visual equipment, which is available in most classrooms, is rarely used by teachers. Students have access to a wide range of textbooks and journals in the college library.

105. Links with health and care organisations are good and result in a wide range of work experience and career opportunities for students. Teachers are responsive to the needs of local employers and provide a wide range of courses, including those for the police cadets, care assistants and classroom assistants. The college does not include care and childcare managers in course planning or teaching specialist aspects of their course. Partnerships in the community organisations have resulted in the college being able to target groups of students who do not usually enrol on FE courses.

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

106. Leadership and management of childcare courses are poor. Although course teams meet regularly, they do not review the quality of their work. Quality assurance procedures do not focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and student achievements. Most problems that are overcome and good practice that is shared are done so in an informal way. The timetabling arrangement of some courses is poor and adversely affects students' learning. Some first and second-year students are taught together and some groups have the same teacher all day. Leadership and management of access to nursing and distance learning courses are good. Student feedback about their perceptions of the college and the quality of their course are obtained regularly. Issues raised by students are acted on but there are no arrangements to monitor improvement and progress made.

### **Art and design**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good retention and achievement on most full-time vocational courses
  
- good teaching and learning
  
- flexible programmes meet individual students' needs

- good support for students.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor pass rates on GCE courses
- some inappropriate teaching accommodation.

### **Scope of provision**

107. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time visual arts and media courses from foundation to advanced level. These include courses in general art and design, fine art, design in graphics, fashion, and three-dimensional art. The level 1 and level 2 courses include OCN accredited courses in pottery, photography, metalwork and jewellery, painting, and life drawing. At level 2 the college also offers GCSEs in media and photography, first diploma in design, and the City and Guilds course in interior design studies. The courses offered at level 3 are the national diploma, the diploma in foundation studies in art and design, and the GCE AS and A2 levels. Of the current 200 full-time students almost three-quarters are aged 16 to 18. Almost all the 885 part-time day and evening students are adults.

### **Achievement and standards**

108. Students' work is of a high standard. Pass rates are good on the national diploma courses in graphic design and three-dimensional design, and on the diploma in foundation studies in art and design, and GCSE media studies. On the diploma in foundation studies the pass rates of part-time adult students are well above the national average. There are also good retention and pass rates on the first diploma in design. On other accredited courses, pass rates have been more variable. Achievement is significantly below the national average in GCE courses, excluding fashion and textiles. The retention pattern has been good on most vocational and other accredited courses, but was unsatisfactory on GCE A-level courses. A strategy to improve GCE A-level retention and pass rates has been implemented this year and there has been a marked improvement in retention across all courses. Attendance is good on most full-time courses although it is more variable on part-time day and evening classes.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
First diploma in art and design	2	No. of starts	*	21	16
		% retention	*	90	94
		% pass rate	*	100	93
NOCN courses in art and craft studies	2	No. of starts	60	122	210
		% retention	72	93	89
		% pass rate	22	86	46
Diploma in foundation	3	No. of starts	67	65	48

design		% pass rate	92	93	98
GCE AS art studies fine art	3	No. of starts	**	112	56
		% retention	**	83	66
		% pass rate	**	38	68
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	43	*	45
		% retention	67	*	82
		% pass rate	93	*	92

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

\*data is unreliable

\*\*course did not run

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

109. Good teaching and high teacher expectations motivate students at all levels. The well-planned, wide range of courses provides diverse learning opportunities, which broaden students' experience beyond normal course expectations. Good relationships are established which help and enable students to develop creatively. Study visits to museums and galleries in Brighton, London and Amsterdam provide students with visual stimuli. Teachers encourage students to use a wide range of media, materials and processes. For example, fine art students have used observational drawing as a basis for exploring monoprinting using specialist facilities. A photography student was provided with digital imaging facilities and tuition where a medical condition prevented her from using traditional wet techniques. Students are enthusiastic about the encouragement they receive from their teachers.

110. The school of art and design provides a supportive framework in which the rigorous assessment process is a positive experience for students. Course teams devised well-structured assessment schedules which meet examination, course and student needs. Students on the foundation diploma in art and design have weekly tutorial days that provide an opportunity for individual assessment of progress and are models of good practice. Students welcome the constructive criticism from their teachers. Internal verification is planned, takes place on a regular basis and informs assessment decisions. There is good progression of students from the national diploma into HE.

111. Art and design courses are taught at various community centres in Hastings and Rother. Students are able to attend one or more courses at the same or different level to their main course, both formally and informally to help them develop their skills and to aid individual development. However, there are few full-time level 1 courses. The college has been successful in attracting a large number of adult students onto the part-time foundation diploma course. Part-time courses such as 'drawing for the terrified' provide people with little previous experience with the chance to learn and develop a new skill. Students' views on their needs are sought when they start and courses are adapted to suit their requirements. For example, a specific three-dimensional programme was devised for students on the national diploma graphics course. Projects, which examine the design of tableware, have been specially written for these students.

112. Students are enrolled on appropriate courses and helped by accurate and detailed course information prior to entry. This support continues throughout their studies and they are well prepared for application to HE. Employment guidance is less well developed. Formal and informal tutorials follow accurate identification of additional requirements and support students with their individual learning needs.

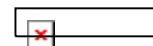
113. Most teachers use their experience as practicing artists to bring relevance to student learning.

The head of school was the creative director of a design partnership working with major national companies. One teacher is a practicing ceramic artist who regularly exhibits and whose work is in recognised collections, and a teacher of illustration has contributed to many exhibitions in central London galleries. All studios are managed to a professional standard, which maximises student experience. The metalwork and jewellery, fashion and printmaking studios are models of efficiency. Very well-equipped specialist studios give opportunities for high quality learning and new high specification computers have been installed. There is a good printmaking studio, which includes etching, photo silk screen and offset facilities. Poor access for disabled students and some cramped accommodation limits the learning experience. Some community education accommodation is poor in comparison to the main site, though there is a pleasant working atmosphere.

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

114. Leadership and management of art and design courses are good. Supportive and responsive managers have developed a strong team ethos in the school. Students' experiences are regularly reviewed and improved through a comprehensive cycle of course and staff meetings. There is some poor communication and co-ordination between the various sections of the college which recruit to GCE art and design programmes. Finances are well managed to allow for the provision of teaching in small groups. Maximum use is made of the school's specialist facilities.

### **Humanities including English and modern foreign languages**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good individual support for full-time students
  
- effective initiative to attract new students
  
- good teaching of English as a foreign language and modern foreign languages.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rates on GCSE and GCE A levels
  
- insufficient opportunities for written work on full-time courses
  
- poor standard of work in humanities

- poor quality assurance of courses in the sixth form centre.

### **Scope of provision**

115. The college offers a range of humanities, English, and modern foreign languages courses leading mainly to GCSE and GCE AS and A2 examinations at its new sixth form centre. The range of courses includes English, sociology, psychology, law, French and Spanish. It also offers an access to HE course, OCN accredited courses in communication at level 1 and 2, and foreign language courses at levels 1 to 4. Courses are offered for full-time and part-time study, and the college has recently started to offer some GCSE and GCE A levels by distance learning. A large number of language students attend one of the many community centres in Hastings and Rother, and work towards an OCN accredited qualification. There are some 800 students enrolled on various English, humanities and language courses, most of whom are adults.

### **Achievement and standards**

116. Student retention on most English, humanities, and modern foreign languages courses is satisfactory or good, while pass rates are below the national average and many are poor. Retention on the humanities access to HE course has fluctuated widely in each of the last three years but the pass rate has improved to reach 80% in 2002. Pass rates on English and humanities courses are unsatisfactory. The pass rates for GCSE English and GCE AS English literature have both been well below the national average for the last two years. In GCE A-level and GCSE psychology, GCE A-level law and sociology, pass rates have been consistently well below the national average.

117. Standards of written and practical work on most GCSE and GCE A-level courses are poor. Students are not given enough opportunities to write and acquire the skills necessary for their course. The best work uses critical analysis and argument. However, weaker students often lack the basic knowledge and understanding required for the subject. Few are able to independently research. In GCE AS law, students are not required to build on prior knowledge and lacked enthusiasm and curiosity. Standards in English are variable. International Baccalaureate students, for most of whom English is a second language, gave perceptive presentations on *The Tempest*. In GCSE English, teachers' expectations of students' achievement, particularly in written work, are low.

118. Many adults take OCN foreign language courses for recreational purposes and have little intention of taking the qualification. Pass rates have been poor on these courses and was 38% in 2002. To increase the number taking the qualification the courses have been arranged into new shorter one-year modules.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
OCN modern foreign languages	1, 2, 3	No. of starts	*	*	367
		% retention	*	*	56
		% pass rate	*	*	38
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	35	32	28
		% retention	89	53	64
		% pass rate	32	41	44
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	92	154	102



		% retention	78	95	88
		% pass rate	42	28	27
Access certificate humanities	3	No. of starts	16	13	7
		% retention	63	100	71
		% pass rate	60	77	80
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	*	34	25
		% retention	*	97	92
		% pass rate	*	9	48
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	58	47
		% retention	*	98	77
		% pass rate	*	5	50

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

\*course did not run

### Quality of education and training

119. The teaching of English as a foreign language and modern foreign languages is good. Modern language teachers make good use of the target language and many lessons are lively, enjoyable and have a good pace. Students are given good opportunities to develop their spoken language skills. Teachers use a variety of activities such as group and paired work, audio tapes and grammar exercises. The teacher of an OCN French course in a community centre motivated students by her enthusiasm and use of mime. In level 1 and 2 OCN key skills communications lessons for students aged 16 to 19, supportive, individualised teaching develops students' self-confidence. However, much teaching in the English and humanities is dull. Humanities teachers understand their subjects well, but do not convey enthusiasm for their subjects. Many lessons consist of the teacher explaining a topic, followed by a brief question and answer session. Over-lengthy explanations mean that students lose concentration. In both English and humanities lessons, students are often uninvolved in learning and teachers ask undirected questions. Teachers' expectations of students are often low.

120. English and humanities students are not given enough opportunities to develop writing skills. The GCE A2 English assessment plan was not shared with students so they had little idea of what written work was required. The scheme of work for GCSE English includes only three pieces of written work during the autumn term, which does not enable students to reach the standard of written skills required by the qualification. Teachers do not provide sufficient feedback on how to improve performance in written work. In modern foreign languages there is variable practice in recording students' progress towards learning goals. Some teachers plan lessons well but the planning of most humanities lessons is poor. Schemes of work are variable but are good in psychology and modern foreign languages.

121. New support systems for full-time students are aimed at improving their performance in GCSE and GCE AS and A-level examinations. These include attendance monitoring and frequent progress reviews, comprising weekly individual tutorials, six-weekly reviews of progress, and monthly subject reports. Variations in the recording of student reviews affect their effectiveness. Support for part-time students is not yet fully developed and is rarely taken up.

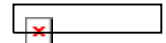
122. The standard of accommodation in the sixth form centre is generally good. Classrooms are well equipped for general teaching but lack good audio-visual equipment for language teaching. Students have good access to high quality ICT equipment in the learning resource centre but the library has few books suitable for students who find reading difficult. Teachers are well qualified. Most have a teaching qualification and many language teachers are native speakers. High teacher turnover has affected the continuity of teaching and the development of some courses. Good staff development

opportunities clearly focus on improving teaching and learning.

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

123. Leadership and management of humanities, English and languages provision are variable and some is unsatisfactory. The programmes are managed in different schools of the college. Quality assurance arrangements, including lesson observations, are not sufficiently self-critical or focused on improving performance in most areas. There are variations across areas in the frequency of team meetings, monitoring and reviewing performance of students, and maintaining teaching team files.

### **Literacy and numeracy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- many life-changing learning gains made by adult and community learning (ACL) students
  
- good opportunities for one-to-one tuition
  
- imaginative initiatives to increase participation in learning
  
- effective collaboration with other agencies to improve learning opportunities.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rates in key skills communication and application of number at level 1
  
- some poor teaching
  
- no standardised assessment practices in ACL.

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

124. The college offers a wide range of learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy for adults. These include groups where students work to achieve agreed personal learning goals, and short courses where the development of literacy and numeracy skills is the means to achieving a specific goal. For example, there are courses where the primary aim is to help children with their homework or to use a computer. Many activities take place in community centres. This year 629 students have made 899 enrolments; a significant increase on the previous year.

125. Basic skills support is provided on all level 1 vocational courses in the college. In most cases, a learning support teacher assists the vocational teacher. In others a learning support teacher teaches basic and key skills to small groups of students on the same course. One-to-one tuition is also available in the college's study centre. All full-time and substantial part-time students on vocational courses and those on access to HE courses take a commercially produced assessment to determine whether they need basic or key skills support. This year, 269 students have been identified as needing key skills support at various levels. Most students receiving support are aged 16 to 18.

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

126. In adult and community learning, most students make steady progress. On short courses, most successfully achieve the course aims, but at different levels. In some cases, students' ambitions are dramatic. One learner had come to classes to 'to completely change my life'. In many instances, students have taken significant steps towards achieving the transformation they seek. In one example, a mother who was unable to help her daughter with homework, now works alongside her on Key Stage 3 mathematics. Students present their work well and many have developed basic word processing skills to help them improve its appearance. Many can point clearly to the gains they have made, although few achieve a nationally accredited qualification.

127. The pass rates for key skills communications and application of number level 1 in 2001/02 were poor, at 30% and 36% respectively. Of those students who started a communication programme, only a third were entered for the award and two thirds entered for application of number. Some students have little to show for their time on the course. The college does not yet have a means of identifying the impact of basic skills support on students' achievement of their primary learning goal.

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

128. Teaching on ACL programmes is satisfactory or better and some is very good. Lessons are prepared well and linked either to a scheme of work or to the needs of individual students. Student groups have a friendly ethos and students feel comfortable about working at their own pace and the level of interest is high. Teachers are patient, good humoured and provide clear explanations of the tasks in hand. They deal sensitively with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, in one lesson, the teacher structured an exercise on adjectives so that all students could contribute to the group discussion. Students were invited to write their work on the board but the session was skilfully handled so that those who did not want to go to the front of the class were not made to feel uneasy.

129. On vocational programmes, there is some skilful teaching of basic skills by both vocational staff and learning support staff. In one lesson, the learning support teacher gave a clear explanation of working with fractions. Students understood the principles and were able to work on examples themselves. However, some lessons are poor. In these lessons, students became bored and did not use their time well. In one lesson, only 8 out of 20 students were present and part of the lesson was spent repeating an exercise that had been completed a few weeks earlier. Teachers survey students about their preferred learning styles at the start of their college course, but do not use the information to inform the way lessons are taught.

130. Many teachers rely too much on the use of commercially produced teaching materials that are not directly relevant to students' needs. In ACL, materials lack challenging content and on vocational programmes, insufficient use is made of basic or key skills materials linked to the students' occupational context. Most accommodation is of a good or satisfactory standard, but some basic and key skills lessons in the college are taught in areas where the noise level is high and the conditions

are cramped.

131. In adult and community education, students agree an individual learning plan with their teacher. In many cases, this is linked to the detail of the national curriculum, and does not give a clear idea of students' learning needs. Teachers regularly discuss students' work with them, but summative assessment practices are not well developed. In some cases, they are not used at all and those that are used are not standardised. As a result it is difficult to gauge students' rate of progress and how well they are achieving. The many benefits in terms of quality of life which students achieve as a result of developing their literacy and numeracy skills are not included in their learning plans.

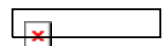
132. There are good opportunities for students to receive individual tuition in the college study centre. The centre is open every day except Sunday and for four evenings a week. Students agree a timetable with a teacher that allows them to attend for as many sessions as they wish. The college has had considerable success in attracting new students with few or no qualifications. It has run imaginative events, which raise the profile of the college and give people a taste of learning. It has also devised courses that offer a practical outcome.

133. The college is developing family learning activities, undertakes work in a drop-in centre for people with drug-related problems, and runs a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) project in a deprived area of the town. It is also involved in workplace learning, specifically targeting employees in low-paid jobs. The college is also involved in the East Sussex Learning Partnership where it is represented on the basic skills task force. The efforts of the partnership have led to a successful bid for a Pathfinder project for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The college also collaborates with other colleges to meet basic skills needs in the health service and the production of a guide to all basic skills provision in the east of the county. Much of its work with disadvantaged groups is carried out in partnership with agencies in the voluntary sector, with local government and with schools.

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

134. Senior managers are committed to widening participation and to tackling the poor basic skills levels of the local population. The basic skills section has been restructured so that staff are able to work more effectively in the community. The number of students is increasing. College managers are aware of the weaknesses in its basic and key skills support for vocational students. It has developed a new strategy and has begun to implement it. For example, an experienced member of staff has been designated to act as a basic skills staff trainer and a training course for college staff has already been run. However, some weaknesses have gone unnoticed. These include the prolonged absence of some students from key skills lessons and the lack of liaison between teachers and the study centre over students' progress. Recent action has not yet had time to have an impact on pass rates.

### **Foundation programmes and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching on most programmes
  
- good management

- good retention and achievement
  
- exciting international partnerships help develop students' confidence and ability
  
- development of good personal and independent learning skills
  
- good use of ICT to improve learning.

***Weaknesses***

- poor short-term target setting
  
- individual learning plans do not meet students' needs
  
- few students with learning difficulties progress onto main stream programmes.

***Scope of provision***

135. The college offers a broad range of foundation courses from pre-entry and entry levels 1, 2 and 3, to level 1 in the schools of health and social studies and the sixth form centre. Courses include discrete programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and access routes to entry level and at level 1. Students are able to mix and match from a range of the vocational and academic choices available. The programme based in the sixth form centre was introduced to widen participation and better meet the needs of students who had not previously been successful at school. The range of courses for students with learning difficulties has many exciting dimensions, including international links and the opportunity for students to train as trainers. Students work towards individual personal and learning goals in addition to nationally recognised qualifications. There are approximately 60 students aged 16 to 18 and 200 adults enrolled on these courses in 2002/03.

***Achievement and standards***

136. Most students on both full-time and part-time courses achieve a recognised qualification. Achievement of these qualifications is good. In 2001/02 the pass rate on 'towards independence' was well above the national average. All the students who completed the independent living and communication skills courses in the last three years have been successful.

137. Students enjoy attending college and their attendance and punctuality are good. Almost all

students have a good attitude to learning and the development of adult working relationships and independent study skills are evident in most groups. The curriculum has been developed to provide students with good opportunities to develop teamwork and this has contributed to them winning success in the college's young enterprise team.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Towards independence	E/1	No. of starts	143	151	188
		% retention	95	93	96
		% pass rate	3	99	93
Independent living and communication skills	E	No. of starts	40	48	10
		% retention	100	85	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

***Quality of education and training***

138. More than 70% of the lessons observed were good or better. These lessons were characterised by good and detailed planning of what each student would do and their expected outcomes. Students are encouraged to become fully engaged in their activity and most demonstrate good levels of concentration and participation. Teachers' classroom management is very good, requiring all students to make mature responses and demonstrate high levels of personal and learning skills.

139. The assessment and reviews of foundation students' progress are good but are unsatisfactory for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Systems for setting, monitoring and tracking individual learning targets and incremental goals are not well developed. As a result, it is difficult to measure the achievement of personal and independent living skills.

140. In a very good lesson, individual targets were used to plan the learning activity. In a session where students were developing their IT skills, students worked on clearly identified differentiated tasks, ranging from accessing Internet web sites to manipulating images within documents, whilst demonstrating high levels of independent study skills. They could clearly articulate what was needed to achieve success and had an excellent understanding of the assessment criteria. Their portfolios contained clear tracking and assessed work contained good feedback.

141. In the unsatisfactory lessons the teaching was either poor or non-existent and the students learned very little. Sometimes students were passive and the teachers had little expectation of what students could and should achieve. In one session the accommodation was so cramped that some students had nowhere to work. The choice of a whole-group activity led to most students being inactive for long periods while the teacher gave individual attention to each student in turn. The learning support assistant was not used effectively to support the other students. In another session the tutor left the students for long periods leaving the learning support assistant to manage the class.

142. The college has developed partnerships with numerous organisations that benefit the learning of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers have developed an international focus to some aspects of their work which has led to some students going on a cultural exchange to Sweden. Students have e-mail pen pals and international students from Japan, Spain and Finland visit the college as volunteers to work with the students. The students have also published a book containing illustrations by a student, which has been translated into Swedish and Japanese.

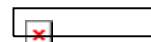
143. Good use is made of computers to improve students' learning. The young enterprise team has

created and operates an on-line shopping web site, and students create digital music which is recorded onto CD. Students also use computers to create presentations and to view art exhibitions. Other activities involve the students giving input into teacher training programmes, advising staff from the Disability Employment Service, and training to become trainers of staff from other organisations about living with a disability.

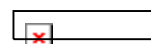
### **Leadership and management**

144. The leadership and management of the foundation provision including discrete provision for students with learning difficulties are good. The learning programmes are well managed, leading to provision that is responsive to students' needs. Knowledgeable and proactive management has created good opportunities for students both locally and internationally, but few students with learning difficulties progress on to mainstream programmes.

### **Part D: College data**



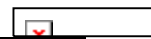
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18	19+
1	44	31
2	35	31
3	20	27
4/5	0	1
Other	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Provided by the college in January 2003*

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03**



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	402	220	7
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	265	323	7
Engineering, technology and manufacture	98	248	4
Business administration,	136	466	7

management and professional			
Information and communication technology	338	660	11
Retailing, customer service and transportation	13	15	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	248	265	6
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	911	363	14
Health, social care and public services	137	701	9
Visual and performing arts and media	204	176	4
Humanities	96	122	2
English, languages and communication	307	286	7
Foundation programmes	587	1,413	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,742</b>	<b>5,258</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in January 2003

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	332	343	411	588	505	575
	Retention rate	75	86	89	85	86	92
	National average	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate	74	52	84	67	40	74
	National average	59	65	68	60	66	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	694	737	733	941	1,088	1,397
	Retention rate	74	70	85	73	70	79
	National average	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate	78	66	64	76	64	59
	National average	65	66	69	62	65	69
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	593	590	912	1,098	935	1,266
	Retention rate	68	73	78	63	69	78
	National average	75	76	77	78	78	78



	Pass rate	71	77	61	69	69	55
	National average	72	74	76	66	66	69
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	0	3	0	32	29	17
	Retention rate	*	*	*	**	**	**
	National average	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate	*	*	*	**	**	**
	National average	64	66	55	56	56	53

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

*\*numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

*\*\*not applicable*

*Sources of information:*

*1. National averages: Benchmarking data 1998/99 to 2000/01: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Learning and Skills Council.*

*2. College rates for 1998/99 to 2000/01: College ISR (Individual Student Record).*

**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)	62	32	6	60
Level 2 (intermediate)	64	26	10	62
Level 1 (foundation)	70	21	9	33
Other sessions	68	18	14	22
<b>Totals</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>177</b>