



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Great Yarmouth College

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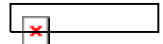
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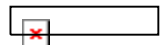
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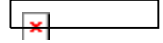


Name of college:	Great Yarmouth
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Robin Parkinson
Address of college:	Southtown Great Yarmouth NR31 0ED
Telephone number:	01493 655261
Fax number:	01493 653423
Chair of governors:	Mike Field
Unique reference number:	130765
Name of reporting inspector:	Gill Reay

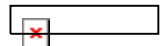
Dates of inspection:

3-7 February 2003

Part A: Summary



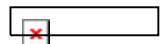
Information about the college



Great Yarmouth College is a general further education (FE) college. The main campus is in the Southtown area of Great Yarmouth and there are two other centres in Norfolk. The college's mission is to 'promote and provide educational, economic and social progression opportunities for our students and the communities we serve'. The college serves the residential and business communities of the Borough of Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and the rural hinterland of east and north Norfolk. The economy of Great Yarmouth was founded on fishing and tourism. As the local fishing industry declined, the development of North Sea gas fields laid the foundation for a significant local energy industry. The port, tourism, food processing, electronics and the energy industries remain important elements of the local economy. Great Yarmouth is a premier holiday resort in the United Kingdom and is the gateway to the Broads national park. The local economy is heavily dependent upon small or micro businesses and these usually have fewer than five employees. The local economy has declined significantly during the last 30 years bringing with it problems of long-term unemployment, low skill levels, poor wages and social dislocation, which in turn, have led to significant levels of deprivation in the area. Great Yarmouth was placed fifth in the 2000 Index of Deprivation, with several wards within the top ten most deprived nationally. The college also serves isolated rural communities that have few amenities and are not well served by public transport. Great Yarmouth has received financial assistance for economic and social regeneration from the Single Regeneration Budget, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and the European Social Fund under objective 2 and 3.

The college offers courses in all of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) areas of learning and currently has 83 foundation and 44 advanced and modern apprentices, more than 400 school-based learners attending link courses, 2,500 adult learners on 'Futures' courses, and is developing strategic partnerships with key employers in the health, construction and energy sectors. In 2001/02, there were 1,333 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 3,301 students over the age of 19 at the college. Of all students, 1.5% were from minority ethnic groups, 40.8% were male and 59.2% were female.

How effective is the college?



Overall the college is satisfactory. Inspectors judged teaching and learning and students' achievements to be good in one curriculum area and satisfactory in seven. Provision in construction and work-based learning in engineering were judged to be unsatisfactory.

Key strengths

- good personal support for individual learners

- effective links with wide range of partners
- very good provision for students aged 14 to 16
- good practical teaching
- high pass rates on many courses
- good integration of key skills with course content.

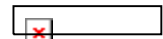
What should be improved

- extent of use of individual learning plans (ILPs)
- retention rates on many courses
- monitoring and review of students' progress at all levels
- setting of targets for students
- inadequate accommodation
- management of work-based learning
- teaching, learning and attainment on level 2 courses

- o leadership in raising the quality of teaching
- o ways of calculating added value in students' achievements.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

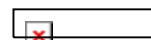


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Unsatisfactory. Key skills are taught well as an integral part of lessons. Much teaching, however, is dull. Lessons are disrupted by the late arrival of students. Pass rates are high for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 carpentry/joinery and painting/decorating, but low on basic bricklaying skills, NVQ level 2 in bricklaying and electrical installation programmes. The college has developed good partnerships with outside organisations. It provides good practical work experience for students and school pupils. In the carpentry and joinery workshops the management of health and safety is poor, housekeeping is poor and there is not enough storage space.
Engineering	Satisfactory. Pass rates are mainly high, but retention is below the national average. Practical teaching is good but much teaching of theory is poor. Good progress has been achieved in developing the teaching of key skills as an integral part of courses. Support for students is good. Resources are good. Management and assessment practices on the work-based learning programmes are unsatisfactory.
Business and information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on business administration and computing courses but most retention rates are low. Recruitment to business courses is low. There is good support for individual learners. Key skills are taught effectively as an integral part of courses. Library stock is poor. Accommodation at some outreach centres is poor. There is insufficient use of ILPs in information technology (IT). IT courses provided at venues in the community are successful in widening participation.
Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate leisure and tourism, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) travel and tourism and level 1 catering courses. Retention and pass rates are very low, however, on NVQ level 2 part-time catering courses and retention is

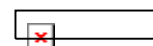
	low on the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) Certificate course. Teaching of practical skills is good but much teaching of theory is dull. Links with employers are effective. Provision for students aged 14 to 16 is very good. Catering students make slow progress with key skills. There is insufficient use of ICT in hospitality and catering.
Hair and beauty	Satisfactory. Pass rates in beauty therapy are high. The teaching of practical skills in hairdressing and beauty therapy is good, but theory teaching in hairdressing is poor. The salon has good resources and IT facilities but the reception facility is poorly managed. There is good tutorial practice. Full-time students are not provided with enough work experience. The quality assurance of courses is not systematic or thorough.
Health and social care and public services	Good. Teaching is good in most lessons. In the better ones, teachers use imaginative methods that inspire students to learn. There are useful links with employers. Students have their learning broadened through work placements, educational visits and talks by speakers from a range of professions. Individual tutorials are constructive and innovative. Retention and pass rates on most courses are high although attendance at some key skills lessons is low. Academic leadership is good. Staff meetings do not focus on teaching and learning sufficiently. There is no common format for course reviews. Some learning resources are inadequate and some accommodation is poor.
Visual and performing arts	Satisfactory. Pass rates on many courses are high and the standard of students' work is good. There are well-developed links with the community. Retention in 2001 on many courses was low, but improved in 2002. Teaching is well planned; but is often uninspiring and unimaginative. There are good learning resources in visual arts. The curriculum enrichment programme is good. There are few courses available at levels 1 and 2. Accommodation for performing arts is poor.
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. A broad range of provision meets the needs of a variety of learners, who receive very good support. There is much good teaching in languages and many students achieve very good results. However, retention rates and the standard of students' work on General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) English courses are low. Little use is made of information learning technology (ILT) in teaching and some other resources are inadequate.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Most teaching is good or better but in some lessons, teachers fail to take sufficient account of the different needs of individual students. Pass rates on some courses are high but many retention rates are low. Literacy and numeracy courses for students aged 16 to 18 are carefully planned, well taught and adequately resourced. There is little provision for adults. Additional learning support is effective. There is inadequate initial assessment of students in some vocational areas. Students' ILPs are not taken sufficiently into account in lesson planning.

How well is the college led and managed?



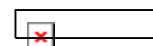
Leadership and management at the college are satisfactory. The college has been successful in raising pass rates on level 3 courses but those for courses at levels 1 and 2 remain below the national average. The strategic plan specifies annual targets but does not say how progress towards achieving them will be monitored. Much of the curriculum is managed effectively, but there is poor management of work-based learning. Staff development activities are well organised. Findings from the lesson observation scheme, however, are not taken into account sufficiently when identifying ways of improving the quality of teaching. Recent self-assessment reports for curriculum areas have included some comparison of retention and pass rates with the relevant national average. Some of the targets given in the action plans drawn up following self-assessment are not specific enough. There are clear quality assurance systems but staff do not always follow them when reviewing courses. Governors are fully involved in the strategic planning and financial management is satisfactory. Budgets are devolved to team leaders and there is good control of expenditure.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



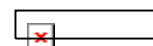
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The number of part-time students attending the college has increased significantly since the last inspection, although provision for adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties, as part of an overall inclusive learning strategy, is less well developed. The college has taken appropriate action in response to the Special Educational Needs Disability Discrimination Act. Amendments made to the Equal Opportunities Policy meet the requirements of the Act. The college has been active in promoting race equality and is currently supporting approximately 100 refugees and asylum seekers. Facilities for learners with restricted mobility are satisfactory. Most courses are accessible to all learners. The range of provision at levels 1 and 2, however, is narrow. There is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities at course team level and within work-based learning.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive a great deal of help and support from staff and they value this. Students' attendance and punctuality are monitored closely. Staff take appropriate action to deal with students who are persistently late or absent. Some retention rates have risen. Students are well informed about their courses. The tutorial system works well. There is a good induction process for students. Students undergo initial assessment to identify their needs for additional learning support. There is, however, insufficient evaluation of the impact of additional learning support on students' performance. Individual learning plans are not used effectively in the monitoring and review of students' progress. Course tutors, learning support staff, key skills tutors and learner mentors all work well together. Students receive good careers advice and guidance from well-qualified staff. Students aged 16 to 18 and parents receive comprehensive information and guidance about courses before enrolment. There is little systematic comparison of the final examination results students obtain with the level of their attainment when they joined the college, in order to calculate the extent of, or value added to, their achievements.

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

- good support from teachers

- financial support through the access fund

- flexibly arranged provision for adults

- supportive mentors for learners

- practical lessons

- being treated like an adult and valued

- fair assessment

- friendly atmosphere

- work placements

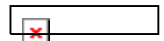
- proximity of eating houses with good cheap food (adult students).

What they feel could be improved

- availability of computers for private study

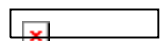
- more information about what is happening to facilities
- attending key skills lessons
- cleanliness of toilets and the fixing of bolts on the doors
- range, price and quality of food (students aged 16 to 18)
- timing of breaks to avoid queues in refectory
- some of the accommodation
- provision of quiet study space.

Other information

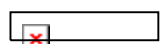


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must 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

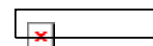


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	52	38	10
19+ and WBL*	72	25	4
Learning 16-18	49	42	10
19+ and WBL*	68	26	6

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. Pass rates compare satisfactorily with the national average for general FE colleges. Great Yarmouth College offers a wide range of courses that can be studied both full and part-time. All 14 of the LSC's programme areas of learning are covered. The number of students studying on land-based, retailing, customer service, transportation and humanities courses is small. Work-based provision is offered in the areas of construction, engineering, catering, hairdressing and health and social care. The inspection covered nine areas of learning.

2. In 2002, pass rates for level 3 courses were high and some adults performed particularly well. Pass rates on courses at levels 1 and 2, however, were below the national average. Since the last inspection, when retention rates were significantly below the national average, the college has developed a learning strategy that incorporates five projects designed to improve retention. One of these projects involved the provision of mentors for learners. This project has proved successful and mentors have been able to help learners identified as being at risk of dropping out of their course. In many curriculum areas, such as beauty, law, languages and performing arts, retention rates have risen over a two-year period. Retention rates on business administration, catering, mathematics, engineering, science and computing courses, however, remain below the national average. In 2002, the overall retention rate was above the national average for courses at level 3, but below it for courses at levels 1 and 2.

3. Attendance in lessons observed during the inspection was at the national average of 76% for general FE colleges inspected since the introduction of the Common Inspection Framework. Students of all ages are working at an appropriate level and making satisfactory progress. Their written work is often of a high standard and indicates a satisfactory understanding of the subject. Portfolios are well presented and the better quality work often reflects the students' own experiences. Students demonstrate good practical skills but their attainment in theory lessons is well below the national average for areas of learning. Health and safety regulations are not always observed on construction courses. For example, in some instances, students failed to wear appropriate safety helmets.

16 to 18 year olds

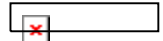
4. In 2000 and 2001, pass rates at level 1 have been above the national average but fell below the national average in 2002. Retention rates, however, have been below the national average for the last three years. Retention and pass rates at level two have been below national averages for the last two years. Pass rates on level 3 courses, however, have been above the national average for the past four years. In 2001/02, the overall retention rate on level 3 courses rose to just above the

national average. On health and social care courses, few students gain high grade passes and many do not achieve grades higher than those predicted for them on the basis of their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results. There is little use of any system for calculating the extent of, or value added to, students' achievement.

Adult learners

5. In 2001/02, the numbers of adult learners grew considerably as a result of enrolments on community based short courses validated by the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) and run under the Futures banner. In 2000/01, retention rates on courses for students over the age of 19 were below the national average, but pass rates were well above it. In 2001/02, retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 were still below the national average but retention and pass rates on level 3 courses were above it. Retention and pass rates on short courses are usually almost 100%.

Quality of education and training



6. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 158 lessons. The grade profiles show that teaching was graded significantly higher than learning and attainment. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 59.5% of lessons, satisfactory in 32.9% and less than satisfactory in 7.6% of lessons. The proportion of teaching that is satisfactory is above the national average, but the proportion that is good or better is below it. The teaching of adults is significantly better than that of students aged 16 to 18, for example, 72% of the teaching for adults was good, compared with 52% for students aged 16 to 18. Overall, the grades for teaching, learning and attainment in lessons on courses at levels 1 and 3 were significantly higher than those on courses at level 2.

7. Across the individual curriculum areas inspected, there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching. In health and social care, 71% of teaching was good or better and this proportion is well above the national average for the areas. In visual and performing arts, the proportion of teaching graded good or better is below the national average, but no teaching was unsatisfactory. In construction, 73% of teaching was graded satisfactory or lower. Across all curriculum areas, little teaching was graded very good or excellent.

8. Most teaching is well planned. Schemes of work and lesson plans cover the syllabus thoroughly. The teaching of practical skills is good but much teaching of theory is dull and uninspiring. In the better lessons, theory is clearly linked to practice and key skills are vocationally relevant. In the good lessons, teachers use an appropriate range of learning activities that match students' individual learning plans and targets. In lessons, there are good working relationships between staff, students and support tutors. Students' interests and experiences are used to good effect. For example, in health and social care, teachers link theory and practice by drawing effectively on students' workplace and practical experience.

9. Some teachers of English and modern foreign languages planned their lessons carefully to make sure they met the needs of students of varying abilities. For example, they did not give all the students the same task but gave individual students different learning activities that suited their ability and aptitude. In the poorer lessons, teachers did not challenge the students to use all their skills to the full and failed to question them rigorously to check their understanding.

10. Some lessons are poorly planned and the teaching is dull and unimaginative. Teachers use inappropriate teaching methods, talk for too long and fail to engage the interest of students. They fail to draw sufficiently on the knowledge students already have about the topic being taught. Some students arrive late for lessons and disrupt the rest of the group's learning.

11. Most teachers have appropriate teaching and vocational qualifications. Many have relevant

industrial and professional experience. In a small number of curriculum areas, some staff are qualified only to the level at which they teach.

12. There is a good staff development programme and this is widely available to full and part-time staff. The training needs of staff are identified through the staff appraisal process and are taken into account in the college's staff development plan. When staff request a staff development activity, they are required to show how their participation in it will help the college to meet its strategic goals. A number of training activities for staff across the college relate to specific objectives, such as the raising of retention and pass rates and meeting the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Disability Discrimination Act. Staff value such training and find it effective.

13. There are very good resources in some curriculum areas, such as engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy. In other curriculum areas, however, such as modern foreign languages, the range of specialist resources is narrow. Accommodation throughout the college varies from satisfactory to poor. Many of the courses at the outreach centres take place in inappropriate rooms, some of which are not big enough for the groups using them. At the college, lessons on performing arts and many theory courses are taught in poor accommodation. For the past two years, however, the college has been implementing a clear and detailed plan for the improvement of its buildings, and the current phase of this will be completed in the summer of 2003.

14. The college has invested significantly in improving the IT resources during the past two years and has a clearly defined ILT strategy. There are, however, still insufficient IT resources for both staff and students. The college is somewhat behind schedule in achieving its aim of providing all students with a full range of computerised learning resources. For example, students do not have their own e-mail account. They can, however, obtain access to the Internet through most of the computers. Technician support for IT is good, with 70% of faults being fixed within one day.

15. Library resources in many areas are insufficient and out of date. There is also a very narrow range of periodicals. In some areas, however, such as visual and performing arts, the stock is very good. Students benefit from good specialist resources and valuable learning activities, both within and outside the college. For example, students on leisure and tourism courses are able to use the most up-to-date on-line booking system in the industry and students on construction courses can work on real building projects.

16. All parts of the college's main building are accessible to wheelchair users. The college is making changes to the building as a part of its current building phase to make access easier. Access for wheelchair users at outreach centres is very restricted.

17. There is a wide range of assessment strategies for assignments across the college. Assignments are well presented, appropriate and give students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Assessments are fair and meet the requirements of the awarding bodies. In most curriculum areas, there is insufficient use of individual learning plans. In the IT outreach centres, learners do not have individual learning plans and are not set targets. Students on most full-time courses complete a learning plan but little use is made of it. The plan is not referred to during tutorials and is not updated or amended in the light of students' progress. Many students said they did not see much point in their learning plan and did not find it useful.

18. Students in some areas receive feedback on marked work that is very brief and does not clearly identify what the student should do to improve it. Insufficient use is made of assessment data in the planning of courses and the setting of individual targets. Reviews of students' progress are carried out more frequently and more thoroughly in some curriculum areas than in others. In some areas, the reviews are lacking in detail. Internal verification is effective in most areas of the college. There is an internal verification handbook that all staff receive. It identifies common procedures and standard forms that are used across the college.

19. The recording of students' progress towards the achievement of learning goals is satisfactory. Most teams maintain good records of students' progress. These are used during reviews and to identify students at risk. In some areas, staff do not analyse data on students' performance fully

when planning courses. For example, there is little provision of performing arts courses at level 2 and most students are on level 3 courses. There has been insufficient analysis of the performance of these students to find out whether the provision at level 3 is appropriate for them, or whether there is a need to offer more courses at level 2.

20. The college provides a broad range of courses, from entry level to level 4, to meet the needs of students, employers and the local community. In some areas, however, where there is a lack of provision of courses at levels 1 and 2, some students do not have clear progression routes within the college

21. There is a wide range of short part-time courses. These courses are called Futures and are specifically aimed at adults and based within the local community. These courses take place in venues such as public houses, soup kitchens and within supported housing for adults recovering from mental illness. The range of Futures courses includes 'IT without tears', foreign languages, art and design, Indian head massage, and 'surviving the kids'. There are, however, few courses for adults requiring help with literacy and numeracy. The college works with the local National Health Service (NHS) Trust to provide some short courses, such as first aid. Links with the local Mental Health Care Trust have been established and the college now runs a level 3 course for students working towards the Community Mental Health Certificate. Outreach courses are very effective in promoting social inclusion and widening participation in a region where unemployment is high, educational expectations are low and transport and travel problems are a major issue. Courses are mostly marketed through the college's links with local high schools, employers and community organisations.

22. The college has implemented a new policy on the teaching and learning of key skills. Communication and the application of number are now taught through vocational course content. Key skills tutors work alongside vocational tutors in the classroom. IT is taught in the IT suite. Additional sessions on key skills are provided for those students who need them. This new policy on key skills, however, is not being implemented with consistency across all courses.

23. The college has developed strong partnerships with local high schools and enables pupils aged 14 to 16 to study vocational courses as part of their core curriculum. There are many productive links with employers and external agencies. For example, the Pro-Train project is a collaborative project aimed at developing careers within engineering, which arose out of employers' concerns over potential skill shortage areas within engineering. Local employers provide students with a wide range of work placements. Students also go on educational visits and receive talks from guest speakers. The college has links with local universities, and students who are interested in progressing to higher education (HE) attend their open days. Enrichment programmes include a variety of sporting and social activities both within the college and in the community. Students go on trips to theatres and have made a visit to New York.

24. Students and parents receive good information about the college through a comprehensive programme of open days, taster days and school liaison activities. The enrolment process is effective. At their induction, students are given a key skills test to find out if they need any additional learning support. Individual tutorial sessions are good in most curriculum areas. Students with identified specific learning needs are provided with additional learner support.

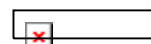
25. There is satisfactory provision for students with specific disabilities. Access to all college facilities has been greatly enhanced by the installation of lifts giving access to the main library and second and third-floor teaching rooms. Access roads and pathways now have ramps and some pathways have special surfaces to assist visually-impaired students.

26. The college has developed an effective system for monitoring students' attendance and punctuality and for dealing with students who are persistently absent or late. Since September 2001, learner mentors support class tutors by checking on attendance and chasing up absentees. They help students with personal and educational problems, referring them to appropriate external sources of advice when necessary. Retention rates have risen since this mentor scheme has been introduced. Most students appreciate and respect the support they receive from the learner mentors. Learner mentors undertake appropriate training in advice and guidance and work towards

qualifications at level 2. Some mentors are now working towards qualifications at level 3. The mentors have identified the need to provide specific support for students with eating disorders and also for those students who act as primary carers.

27. Careers advice and guidance are available to all students. Within the college, students have access to experienced and qualified staff and an excellent careers resource centre. A careers adviser from the local Connexions service has a room within the careers centre and visits the college at scheduled times to provide additional impartial advice for students.

Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the college has improved the processes for monitoring and reporting on retention and pass rates. The college has installed a new management information system that now provides more accurate data on retention and pass rates. The management team receives regular updates on achievement of funding units, students' retention and pass rates and the pattern of applications from feeder schools. Some subject teams closely monitor and report on students' performance at monthly team meetings and identify students who may be at risk of failing. There is effective monitoring of students' attendance through the learner mentor system. The college has recently introduced targets for curriculum teams. Team leaders have met with senior managers to agree recruitment, retention and achievement targets for each course, for the first time this year. Staff have given management strong support over the realignment of roles and responsibilities across all areas of the college.

29. Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring the success of the college. Since the last inspection, the corporation has appointed an independent part-time clerk to the corporation. Governors have a clear view of the college's mission. Closer links are being made between individual governors and curriculum areas. Governors are aware of the key issues facing the college and they conduct regular assessments of some aspects of college performance. However, much of the information they receive to enable them to monitor and review its effective implementation is insufficiently detailed. They have been fully involved in setting strategic objectives.

30. The college has good links with schools, a wide range of community groups and external businesses and agencies. In several curriculum areas, such as construction and catering, pupils attend the college on a regular basis to study on courses linked to their schools. The college currently provides courses for over 400 school pupils and aims to increase this number in the current year. The college also has strong links with major employers and is fully involved in many community projects. The Futures programme for adults in the community is flexibly arranged and aims to help those who wish to return to education and training.

31. The college has developed a comprehensive policy on equal opportunities, which has recently been reviewed and updated. Its implementation is reviewed annually and a report is produced for governors. There is an equal opportunities steering group with a wide representation which meets regularly. The college has been active in promoting race equality. There are currently approximately 100 refugees and asylum seekers on courses and the college has close relations with the local church, which provides them with support. The equal opportunities steering group has ensured that staff have received training on relevant current legislation. There is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities at course team level and on work-based learning programmes. The steering group has identified the need for better promotion of equal opportunities in the college's publicity material and for clearer and more specific targets in its action plan. A revised equal opportunities policy and action plan has been recently approved by governors.

32. The college's management structure is effective. Emphasis is placed on the importance of teamwork. All staff have clear lines of accountability. Communications are good across the college. The principal holds weekly briefing sessions and there is a weekly newsletter. Staff are well informed

about college developments and management actions through a series of briefing meetings and curriculum team meetings. Since the last inspection, the college has made good progress in introducing a mentor system to help new staff take up their roles and responsibilities. All team leaders have completed a management-training programme.

33. Insufficient priority is given to the setting of clear targets relating to all aspects of the college's work. The strategic plan identifies annual targets for retention and achievement rates but it fails to specify what action is required to achieve these. There are few clear targets relating to the improvement of the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning. The development plan lacks sufficient targets across areas of learning for raising levels of retention and achievement. The targets in the plan are too general and insufficiently specific to enable progress towards their achievement to be measured clearly. Governors have asked for explanations of why progress in making improvements has been slow. In overseeing the setting of objectives for the college, however, they have not ensured that these are clear and specific. Governors receive reports on students' performance. They agree action to raise retention and pass rates but do not always check whether this has been carried out. The strategic planning team meets regularly but its discussions are narrowly focused in immediate operational matters and seldom extend to broad issues of policy. An action plan is completed after each meeting but the recording of discussion is rudimentary. There are no formal minutes and members do not receive copies of the action plan. Many areas of learning do not have clear action plans. For example, in health and social care, action plans contain few quantitative targets. In hospitality and travel, teams have only recently been involved in target setting and performance data is not systematically analysed to help course teams identify ways of improving provision. In business, the development plan does not identify action to increase recruitment to courses. Management of work-based learning is weak. Procedures for setting targets and monitoring learners' progress are not carried out fully. Assessment practices are unsatisfactory and many learners have to wait a long time before they are assessed in the workplace. Some work-based learners have extensive experience but this is not taken into account or accredited and they have to repeat work for assessment purposes.

34. The college has comprehensive quality assurance arrangements for both teaching teams and support services but they are not consistently effective across the college. Self-assessment by course teams is a key feature of the quality assurance system. Few courses produce thorough self-assessment reports and useful action plans. Many reports lack detail and do not pay enough attention to the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of learning and students' achievements. In some learning areas, staff do not carry out the quality assurance procedures and are unsure what they are. Following course reviews, targets are not set. Insufficient checks are made on whether action to improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning are carried out properly.

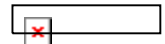
35. The lesson observation scheme is not managed well. Findings from lesson observations are not used to identify ways of improving the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning. Furthermore, the scheme is not implemented consistently across the college. For example, some teachers have not been observed for over eighteen months. Feedback to teachers on their lessons is insufficiently evaluative. They are not told how they can improve their teaching and help their students to learn more effectively. The lesson observation scheme is not monitored or evaluated. Lesson observations are not regarded as part of the self-assessment process and findings from them are not taken into account when identifying the training needs of staff. There are no systematic arrangements whereby staff can share good practice. The lesson observations have not led to the identification of key strengths and weaknesses in teaching and the way students learn. Only 59% of lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better, compared with 62% at the last inspection by the Further Education Funding Council. The proportion of teaching on many level 2 courses that is graded good or better is below the national average.

36. The staff appraisal system focuses on the identification of staff development needs and there is a strong staff development programme to meet these. Few targets are agreed, however, for improving teaching and the effectiveness of learning. All full-time staff have received an appraisal within the past two years. This year the senior management team has agreed personal performance targets but these are general and are not linked directly to aspects of the strategic plan. Senior managers are aware of the need for the staff appraisal to be made more rigorous and for all staff to be set specific performance targets. Governors are due to review recommendations for improving

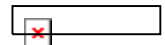
the appraisal system.

37. Financial management is satisfactory. Although the college fell significantly short of achieving the student numbers required for its funding allocation from the LSC, it was able to declare an operating surplus for 2001/02. Team leaders maintained a tight control on costs. In two of the last three years, the college has had operating income and expenditure deficits. Modest operating surpluses are forecast for the next three years in the latest three-year financial plan. Financial forecasting and reporting rely heavily on assumptions and expectations, which are not spelt out clearly enough in papers presented to governors to enable them to have informed and meaningful discussions. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection, but some performing arts, English and modern foreign languages, hair and beauty classrooms, and parts of health and social care and community learning centres are unsatisfactory. Budgets are appropriately delegated to team leaders and they receive sufficient information about the costs of individual courses. The college runs many courses with low numbers. Team leaders for these courses receive good support from finance and curriculum managers. They have developed innovative and effective teaching strategies for courses with low numbers and aim to ensure this provision is cost effective and of good quality. Team leaders meet with senior managers regularly to review their budgets.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Strengths

- high attainment and pass rates in NVQ 2 carpentry/joinery and painting/decorating

- good practical work experience for learners

- good introductory craft programme for school pupils

- good personal support for individual learners

- effective integration of key skills with course content.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on bricklaying and electrical installation courses

- much uninspiring teaching

- disruptive effect of students' lack of punctuality on learning

- poor housekeeping and inadequate storage in carpentry and joinery workshops

- poor management of health and safety.

Scope of provision

38. Construction provision is located a short distance from the main college. Courses are offered in brickwork/laying, carpentry/joinery, painting/decorating and electrical installation. Most courses are arranged flexibly to meet the needs of learners and employers. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18. Considerable efforts have been made to attract adult women to painting/decorating courses.

Achievement and standards

39. Pass rates are high on NVQ level 2 carpentry/joinery and painting/decorating courses and retention rates are above or just below the national average. Pass rates on basic bricklaying skills and NVQ 2 in bricklaying and electrical installation courses are very low, and retention rates are below the national average.

40. The standard of students' work in painting/decorating and carpentry/joinery is good. Full-time learners develop good practical skills. Some of the courses in bricklaying are unsatisfactory and students do not achieve their learning goals. Some learners have unsuccessfully repeated a one-year course three times. Workshops lack adequate storage facilities and students' work left there has been damaged.

41. Students have good work-experience placements and these are funded through a variety of grant-aid initiatives. Students also take part in commercial projects involving building work and refurbishing a wide range of properties.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ in bricklaying	2	No. of starts	23	24	14
		% retention	50	54	50
		% pass rate	17	40	33

City and Guilds 6081 basic bricklaying skills	1	No. of starts	34	16	30
		% retention	30	56	70
		% pass rate	0	22	33
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	20	24	21
		% retention	53	71	71
		% pass rate	60	71	100
NVQ in painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	20	18	23
		% retention	38	55	64
		% pass rate	100	100	74
City and Guilds electrical installation course C	3	No. of starts	9	6	3
		% retention	33	100	33
		% pass rate	n/a	33	33
City and Guilds 2360- 02 electrical installation part 2 competencies	2	No. of starts	5	6	20
		% retention	100	100	80
		% pass rate	20	33	31

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

Quality of education and training

42. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. There is, however, no outstanding or very good teaching and much is dull and uninspiring. In the better lessons, there was good team teaching. Individual students were given good additional support but teachers seldom questioned them thoroughly to make sure they understood the lesson. There is insufficient use of learning resources. In better lessons, students were provided with a 'craft work booklet' which helped them to further their understanding of theory. In painting/decorating, there is good teaching of craft skills. In theory lessons, the teacher seldom gave the students demanding tasks and did not challenge them with searching questions, but merely required them to do no more than sit and listen. Many lessons were disrupted by the late arrival of some students. Many learners on evening courses in bricklaying complained that practical work they had left in the workshop had either been damaged or removed. Some of the learners had been on the same one-year programme with a number of different tutors for a three-year period

43. Teaching takes place in an un-insulated portal frame building, the offices of which are used as classrooms. Some bricklaying is taking place in a temporary thermal clad building. In general, staff and students are not fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of health and safety. For example, some staff have a poor understanding of the use and storage of personal protective equipment and the need for control of substances hazardous to health, data sheets and risk assessments. Students used an independent scaffold without a secure means of access and portable power tools had out-of-date test labels. Staff are well qualified, have recent industrial experience and hold, or are working towards, assessor and teaching qualifications.

44. There is a good introductory craft programme for school pupils aged 14 to 16 and good partnerships with local schools. Painting/decorating course timetables have been modified to meet the needs of women and single parents and some learners make use of the college's childcare facilities. In one instance, the college has used the access fund to pay for the services of a child minder to enable a student who is a parent to attend college.

45. Programme reviews varied considerably in terms of thoroughness. Most provided insufficient evaluation of the performance of different groups of learners, categorised by age and mode of attendance. The findings from lesson observations are not systematically taken into account in

course reviews, or used to identify ways of improving teaching and the effectiveness of learning.

46. Overall support for students is good. Learners undertake basic skills and vocational aptitude testing during induction to identify their needs for additional learning support. Students' progress is monitored effectively through the tutorial and review processes. Students value their academic and pastoral support highly. There is no systematic comparison of the final results students obtain with their level of attainment on entry, in order to calculate the extent of, or value added to, their achievements. Key skills teaching is effective and has been made an integral part of the vocational curriculum.

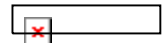
Leadership and management

47. A recently appointed, temporary curriculum co-ordinator is providing positive leadership. The self-assessment report is insufficiently thorough and failed to identify some weaknesses. Formal staff meetings have been introduced with the aim of improving communications. The recent introduction of weekly, formal team meetings is improving communication. Most staff are now aware of the importance of monitoring retention rates and students progress and achievements, but do not have easy access to data, or a clear understanding of how to use it. The management of health and safety was unsatisfactory. A governor with specialist expertise in construction maintains links between this area of learning and the corporation.

48. Staff know and understand the college's policy on equal opportunities and aim to ensure that it is fully implemented. They recognise the importance of promoting equality of opportunity through all aspects of their work. The posters in some workshops, however, are inappropriate.

49. Staff are deployed effectively. The accommodation is generally used efficiently. The management of the assessment and verification process is good. Suitable documentation, including the college verification booklet, is available to help staff.

Engineering



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 5)**

Strengths

- very high retention and pass rates on AVCE in engineering course

- good development of students' practical skills

- good development of students' key skills on college-based courses

- many good laboratory and workshop resources

- good personal support for students
- good placements for work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- low overall retention rates
- poor teaching of theory
- insufficient technician support
- inconsistent tutorial provision
- very poorly managed work-based learning
- poor assessment practices in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

50. Courses are offered in electrical/electronics and mechanical engineering, fabrication, welding, motor vehicle servicing, and body repair. Full-time provision consists of the AVCE course in engineering, single or double award, engineering pre-apprenticeship course, a two year City and Guilds 3992 and 4100 motor vehicle course and a one-year full-time City and Guilds 6984 welding course. A national certificate course in both mechanical and electrical engineering is offered on a part-time basis. There is also a part-time course in computer-aided design.

51. Work-based learning provision is relatively small and consists of foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes in engineering and motor vehicle servicing.

Achievement and standards

52. Retention and pass rates for the AVCE course in engineering are substantially above national averages as they were for the GNVQ advanced course in engineering in preceding years. On four courses, retention is below the national average. Pass rates are low on work-based learning programmes. Work-based learners make slow progress towards achieving qualifications. Students

on welding, vehicle body repair and mechanical engineering courses demonstrate good practical skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance	1	No. of starts	*	21	24
		% retention	*	86	73
		% pass rate	*	100	75
City and Guilds 3271 basic welding skills	1	No. of starts	13	7	12
		% retention	23	100	67
		% pass rate	100	71	72
NVQ engineering man. (foundation)	2	No. of starts	30	15	22
		% retention	63	73	68
		% pass rate	89	82	57
City and Guilds 2280 mechanical engineering competencies	2	No. of starts	7	7	5
		% retention	100	100	40
		% pass rate	50	67	100
City and Guilds 4351-01 computer-aided design 2D	2	No. of starts	14	14	17
		% retention	64	64	53
		% pass rate	89	89	100
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	8	5	5
		% retention	50	60	60
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Advanced AVCE in engineering single award	3	No. of starts	*	11	16
		% retention	*	91	94
		% pass rate	*	80	100

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

*Course not running

Quality of education and training

53. In most practical lessons, the teaching is good and students learn effectively. Students' practical work is of a high standard. Priority is given to helping students develop safe working practices. Students on level 1 welding courses demonstrated exceptionally good skills in both gas and manual metal arc welding processes, which were above those normally found at this stage of training. By insisting that faulty welds were ground out and re-welded, the teacher was following good workplace practice and helping the learners to become self-critical. In computer-aided design (CAD) teachers demonstrated excellent knowledge of the CAD software package and were successful in helping all students to make good progress.

54. Many theory lessons are dull, lack momentum and are monotonous. In these lessons, teachers talk a great deal but do not question the students to keep them alert or to check their understanding. In one lesson, the teacher allowed inappropriate use of good equipment and failed to develop students' understanding of theory. Students were simply left to work through the exercises set by the

manufacturer, with little direction from the teacher and no specification of objectives.

55. There is good teaching of key skills in lessons. For example, a motor vehicle teacher was supported by key skills and learning support tutors. The teachers and tutors had prepared the lesson well. Together they taught it effectively and the students learnt the key skill of application of number effectively. Vocational and key skills staff jointly prepare relevant integrated assignments.

56. Some resources are good. There is a good engineering CAD suite with 30 workstations. The resources for welding have recently been upgraded to provide stations fitted with state-of-the-art, programmable welding units. Protective equipment is available all times. The motor vehicle repair workshop is small and has a narrow range of equipment. There is little technician support in welding, motor vehicle and mechanical engineering. Staff are unclear how the available technicians should be deployed.

57. Assessment processes and feedback on written work are good. Practical work is carefully assessed, records are well maintained and students are promptly informed of their results.

58. Students expressed satisfaction with the provision and confirmed that it met their needs. Some classes are very small but their timetabling is arranged flexibly to ensure all students' needs are met and that the courses remain viable. Students on the AVCE course can work towards additional qualifications to strengthen their eligibility for HE or employment. There are good links with schools. Engineering options for the Education Action Zone are provided. Practical manufacturing facilities and learning materials are provided for schools offering vocational GCSE subjects. Seven full-time students in engineering are supported as student apprentices through an innovative schools, colleges and industry partnership.

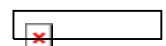
59. Students are well supported. Learner mentors are employed to work with students and staff to give academic and pastoral support. They are also used to follow up absence and support students identified as being at risk of failing or dropping out. Some full-time groups do not have tutorial classes and receive little regular tutorial support. There is no tutorial support for part-time learners.

60. Some 34 work-based learners have good industrial placements. Overall, however, work-based learning is poorly managed and assessment practices are poor. In 2001/02, the work-based learners have been on their programme since 1999 but only three had met all the requirements of their apprenticeship framework. Work-based learners did not gather evidence of their acquisition of requisite NVQ competences in the workplace. Work-based learners who had been on their programme for a year did not know how to gather such evidence.

Leadership and management

61. Managers have been successful in ensuring that courses are run flexibly. Staff manage courses well, take pride in them and do all they can to help learners succeed. The current division of responsibilities between the electronics engineering area and the other engineering areas, does not facilitate good staff communications or the sharing of good practice. The management of work-based provision is inadequate.

Business and information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- good support for learners

- effective integration of key skills with vocational business course content

- high pass rates in business administration

- good use of IT courses to widen participation.

Weaknesses

- low retention and recruitment rates on business courses

- insufficient breadth and depth of business library stock

- insufficient use of individual learning plans

- poor accommodation in IT outreach centres.

Scope of provision

62. The college provides an appropriate range of courses to meet the requirements of a broad range of students. Business courses include AVCE and GCE AS and A-level business studies and accounting. IT courses include AVCE, GNVQ and GCE AS and A-level ICT. IT is also taught as a key skill in the general studies course. NVQ courses are offered both in the day and in the evening.

Achievement and standards

63. The retention rate on the business administration course is above the national average. Retention rates on many other business courses are below the national average. For example, the retention rate on the GCE AS accounting course was below the national average at 62%. The pass rates for business and ICT courses are above the national averages. Pass rates on the business administration course are consistently high and those on the NVQ business administration (first diploma) course have been 100%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ advanced	3	No. of starts	22	21	*

business		% retention	68	62	*
		% pass rate	93	92	*
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	24	42	*
		% retention	54	57	*
		% pass rate	82	95	*
GCE AS accounting	3	No. of starts	*	12	13
		% retention	*	67	62
		% pass rate	*	25	75
NVQ business administration	2	No. of starts	31	23	*
		% retention	74	83	*
		% pass rate	96	100	*
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	*	13	25
		% retention	*	85	80
		% pass rate	*	100	100
AVCE ICT (GNVQ IT advanced)	3	No. of starts	19	32	39
		% retention	74	63	95
		% pass rate	100	100	97
GNVQ IT intermediate	2	No. of starts	19	17	15
		% retention	53	41	67
		% pass rate	100	100	100
NVQ using IT	2	No. of starts	32	21	12
		% retention	84	76	92
		% pass rate	100	100	91

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

*Course not running

Quality of education and training

64. There is a good working atmosphere in most lessons. On business and ICT courses, many teachers reinforce students' understanding by making links with past lessons. Teachers on business administration planned their lessons carefully and matched them to the interests of learners. A group of ICT students used software in web site design to promote the vocational course in schools. On GCE A-level courses, teachers questioned the students skilfully.

65. A small proportion of teachers have no clear learning objectives for their lessons and their range of teaching methods is narrow. They require students to carry out unimaginative learning activities, such as the mechanical copying down of notes, and they make insufficient reference to modern practice. In contrast, students on business administration courses engage in demanding learning activities and have work experience placements, which help them to understand how theory can be effectively linked to practice.

66. In many lessons, teachers do not sufficiently take into account students' previous knowledge. This was particularly the case when students had progressed to GCE A level from a GNVQ or GCSE intermediate course. Key skills are integrated effectively with the content of business courses. Assignment briefs relate to business practice.

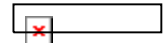
67. Teachers give regular feedback to students about their progress and marked work is returned promptly. The internal verification procedures are thorough. Students have weekly tutorials and receive good pastoral support. Individual learning plans are used effectively on business courses but not on IT courses. Students receive good additional support and they appreciate the learner mentor system. Teachers are particularly sensitive to the needs of adults.

68. Teachers are well qualified. Part-time staff make a significant contribution to the courses. Learning materials for business courses are narrow in range. The library stock lacks breadth and depth. Good use is made of IT courses to widen participation. For example, courses are run in village public houses and soup kitchens. At the IT outreach centres, the classrooms are not large enough for many of the groups using them and they contain unsuitable furniture. The average class size at the time of inspection was 8.1 students, which is significantly below the national average. The attendance rate of 81% during the inspection is above the national average.

Leadership and management

69. The team leader and course leaders maintain good communications. Course teams meet regularly. Course reviews give a comprehensive analysis of enrolments, retention and pass rates during the year. Students who are at risk of dropping out are identified and receive help from learning mentors. There has been a significant improvement in retention rates during the current academic year.

Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- good teaching of practical skills

- effective links with employers

- very good hospitality and catering courses for 14 to 16 year olds.

Weaknesses

- very low retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 food preparation and part-time cooking courses

- much dull and unimaginative teaching of theory
- slow progress of hospitality and catering students in developing key skills
- little use of ICT in hospitality and catering lessons

Scope of provision

70. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from levels 1 to 3. Courses meet the needs of adults returning to learning and provide full-time students aged 16 to 18 with good progression routes to employment or higher levels of study. In 2001/02, approximately 370 learners were enrolled on hospitality, leisure and travel courses, most of which were at level 2. Around 63% of all students were aged 16 to 18.

71. Courses include those leading to NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 in food preparation and cooking, and NVQs at levels 1 and 2 in food and drink service. Recently introduced Futures 10-week cookery courses are popular with part-time adults. A GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism is offered and students can progress from this to the AVCE course. Full-time and part-time courses leading to the qualifications of ABTA are offered.

Achievement and standards

72. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, AVCE travel and tourism and NVQ level 1 food preparation and food and drink service courses are high. Retention rates, however, on many courses are low. In 2001/02, the retention rate on the ABTA Certificate (primary) course was 83%, below the national average of 93%. On NVQ level 2 courses in food preparation and cooking, the retention and pass rates for part-time students are low. In 2000/01, the pass rates on the NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service courses rose, and at 100% and 93%, respectively, were considerably above the national average.

73. The majority of full-time students gain awards in addition to their main qualification. For example, leisure and recreation students are able to work towards community sports leader qualifications.

74. Most students' written work is satisfactory and portfolios and coursework are appropriately presented.

75. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 have lessons on key skills. These lessons are poorly attended, however, and the pass rates for certification in key skills are low. Staff have taken action to raise these pass rates and improve students' attendance at key skills lessons. Learner mentors now follow up students' absence and priority has been given to helping students develop key skills through their vocational work. On hospitality and catering courses, however, progress in improving the way key skills are taught and learnt is slow.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ food preparation	1	No. of starts	32	25	28*

and cooking		% retention	66	76	73*
		% pass rate	78	89	100*
NVQ serving food and drink	1	No. of starts	*	17	27*
		% retention	*	88	68*
		% pass rate	*	64	93*
NVQ food preparation and cooking (2 year)	2	No. of starts	54	11	+
		% retention	55	55	+
		% pass rate	71	50	+
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	21	22	23
		% retention	67	76	78
		% pass rate	79	94	83
ABTA Certificate (Primary)	2	No. of starts	*	32	43
		% retention	*	94	83
		% pass rate	*	20	69
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	35	32
		% retention	*	60	72
		% pass rate	*	71	91

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

*data not available

Quality of education and training

76. There is much good teaching of practical skills. Inappropriate teaching methods are used, however, in some theory lessons. There is insufficient use of IT in lessons on hospitality and catering courses and students do not have access to computers in their main teaching areas. Few understand how IT is used in the hospitality and catering industry. In the best lessons, theory is effectively linked to industry practice. In the best practical sessions, activities are well planned and students work to industry standards. On occasions, however, when there are only a few customers in the training restaurant, the students are not given the experience of working under pressure. Hospitality and catering provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16 is very good and many of these young people make excellent progress

77. Students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In hospitality and catering, internal verification has highlighted significant weaknesses in some assessment practice. Appropriate action has been taken. However, there is a need for greater consistency in assessment procedures.

78. There are good links with employers in the UK and abroad. The specialist teaching areas are adequately equipped but some equipment is in need of replacement and some older teaching accommodation is in need of refurbishment.

79. Computers in the IT learning centre are not always easily available to students for private study. The college library stock is adequate, but includes few relevant computer-based learning materials. Teaching staff have appropriate professional qualifications and make good use of opportunities to update their technical skills.

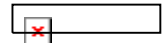
80. All full-time students receive appropriate advice and guidance before starting their courses.

During their induction, students undergo an initial assessment of their key skills in order to find out whether they need any additional learning support. The results of this assessment, however, are not taken into account effectively when planning the students' learning programmes. All full-time students have tutorials. In some instances, however, students' progress is not monitored effectively during tutorials and tutors do not set the students clear and demanding targets. Students speak positively about the informal support offered by their tutors. Staff have not developed effective systems for comparing the final results students obtain with their level of attainment on entry, in order to calculate the extent of, or value added to, students' achievement.

Leadership and management

81. Curriculum management is shared between three different curriculum team leaders. Course teams meet regularly. Action agreed at these meetings, however, is not always followed up systematically. The self-assessment process is insufficiently thorough. Some teams have only recently been involved in the setting of targets for retention and achievement rates. Data are not effectively analysed to find out what improvements are needed at course team level. Findings from lesson observations do not relate to key strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning. There are no systematic arrangements for enabling staff to share good practice. Development plans outline strategies for improvement and there is recent evidence of improved retention rates and higher pass rates in some areas. There is little monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities at course team level.

Hair and beauty



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

Strengths

- good salon resources

- good teaching of practical skills

- good tutorial system

- effective use of IT in the salon

- good teaching of theory in beauty therapy

- flexibly arranged provision for adult learners.

Weaknesses

- little teaching of key skills as an integral part of salon activities

- poor teaching of hairdressing theory to full-time students

- poor accommodation for theory classes

- poor management of the reception facility

- insufficient work experience for full-time students

- insufficient quality assurance of courses.

Scope of provision

82. Full-time and part-time courses are available in hairdressing and beauty therapy leading to NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3. The Futures introductory 10-week courses lead to NCFE awards. There are well-established work-based learning courses in hairdressing. Courses for young people aged 14 to 16 provide good progression opportunities. There are 81 full-time students and 68 part-time students, excluding work-based learners and students on Futures courses.

Achievement and standards

83. Pass rates on NVQ courses in beauty therapy at levels 1 and 2 are high and those on most hairdressing courses are in line with the national average. The pass rates on one complementary therapy course in anatomy /physiology and body massage are poor. Retention rates on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses are around the national average.

84. Many work-based learners do not meet all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework within the agreed timescale. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students attain good practical skills in the salon. Students' work is well organised and portfolio building is good. Hairdressing students do not have work placements and do not have the opportunity to develop their skills in a commercial workplace. Beauty therapy students go on work placements as part of their course. They benefit from the college's links with industry and the employment opportunities these bring. The attendance rate is just below the national average of 74.6% for the area of learning. Learning mentors monitor students' attendance and contact students who are persistently absent.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	45	79	82
		% retention	56	56	63
		% pass rate	86	74	76
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	32	25	36
		% retention	76	76	67
		% pass rate	88	84	92
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	21	20	17
		% retention	95	80	88
		% pass rate	90	94	80
Cosmetic make-up	2	No. of starts	15	**	**
		% retention	73	**	**
		% pass rate	100	**	**
Anatomy/ physiology and body massage diploma	3	No. of starts	30	28	14
		% retention	40	79	71
		% pass rate	42	41	*
Reflexology diploma	3	No. of starts	15	**	**
		% retention	67	**	**
		% pass rate	90	**	**

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

*indicates that the exam results are incomplete and the institution is waiting for results from the awarding body

**course withdrawn

Quality of education and training

85. There is much satisfactory or better teaching, but teaching of theory, including key skills, to full-time hairdressing students is unsatisfactory. The teaching of practical skills is effective and in the best lessons, theory and practice are linked. For example, in a practical lesson on colouring, students had to justify their choice of colour and show that it was what the client wanted and that it would produce the required effect. In the most effective lessons, teachers used the whiteboard well to focus students' attention on important points and remind them of their task and the timescale in which it had to be completed. In the least effective lessons in the salon, little use was made of visual representation. The teaching of theory on beauty therapy courses is good. In lessons, teachers made theory interesting and they engaged and held the students' interest. They used a variety of appropriate teaching methods and linked theory and practice effectively. The teaching of theory and key skills to full-time hairdressing students is unsatisfactory. Initial assessment of students is not carried out well. The results of initial assessment are not taken into account when planning lessons or teaching strategies.

86. The tutorial process is effective. Action planning and target setting are routinely updated in tutorials. Students receive good one-to-one support.

87. The salon has good resources and is up to commercial standard. There is good technician support. Staff are well qualified and suitably experienced, but the industrial experience of some is not recent. IT resources are available in the salon. There is little teaching of key skills in the salon

through vocational activities.

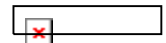
88. The reception facility is not managed well and students do not develop good reception skills. There are not enough clients in the salon to give students adequate experience of dealing with customers and members of the public.

Leadership and management

89. The management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. Teachers work well as a team. The lesson observation scheme is ineffective. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching at 14.3% is significantly above the national average of 8.4% for the area of learning. Course reviews do not focus on ways of improving the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning.

90. Timetables are sensitively designed to meet the needs of adult learners with domestic commitments in the day. NVQ courses are run in the evening for adult learners. Students unable to attend college during the day can obtain a full NVQ by attending on two evenings a week for two years. There is effective use made of the learner mentor to manage student attendance and there are indications that attendance is improving. Quality assurance at team level is ineffective. Targets for retention and pass rates on courses are insufficiently demanding. Staff have not developed effective systems for comparing the final results students obtain with the level of their attainment on entry, in order to calculate the extent of, or value added to, students' achievements. There is ineffective use at team level of Management Information data when evaluating courses and provision. The management and development of an extensive number of work-based assessors is effectively supporting work-based trainees and providing good assessment opportunities. However, trainees do not complete the full national framework in the pre-arranged time scale. The internal verification process ensures consistency of standards and the work placement advisor effectively manages this process.

Health and social care and public services



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates on all health and social care and early years courses

- high retention rates on most courses

- much good teaching

- productive links with local employers and external agencies

- good individual tutorials.

Weaknesses

- poorly attended key skills lessons on early years and public services courses
- inadequate accommodation and learning resources
- poor aspects of course management.

Scope of provision

91. In health and social care, the college offers full-time foundation and intermediate level courses and an AVCE course leading to single and double awards. The college provides courses leading to NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in care and an NVQ at level 3 in promoting independence. There is also a course leading to an NVQ at level 4 in care and students on this can also work towards a qualification for registered managers. The certificate in community mental health care course at level 3 began in January 2003. The college offers courses leading to the national diploma and national certificate in early years. A new NVQ level 2 course in early years care and education began during the week of inspection. There are also first and national diploma courses in public services and course for students who want to join the police force. Other provision includes part-time or short courses in counselling, sign language, first aid, health and safety, and manual handling.

Achievement and standards

92. Pass rates are very high on all health and social care and early years courses. Pass rates on the advanced GNVQ, the recently introduced AVCE course and the national diploma and certificate courses in early years have been consistently excellent, with many at 100%. Pass rates on the NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 are very high. The pass rate on the national diploma in public services course is satisfactory. In 2001/02, the college ran the first certificate in public services course for the first time and this was the only course that year with a low pass rate, at 17%, below the national average. The retention rate on this course, however, was excellent. On most other courses, retention rates are high. The majority of students' work is satisfactory. However, the proportion of students gaining high grade passes is low, given that many students are well qualified for their courses. Limited use is made of any systems for calculating the extent of, or value added to, students' achievements. In many lessons, students participated in their learning tasks with enthusiasm and contributed to debate and discussion. They produced good work and developed analytical skills. The teaching of key skills is now becoming an integral part of vocational courses. Attendance at key skills lessons has improved on some courses. Attendance of students at key skills lessons on the national diploma in early years and the first and national diploma in public services courses is very poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Foundation GNVQ in health and social care	1	No. of starts	9	17	7
		% retention	89	71	86

		% pass rate	75	92	100
Intermediate GNVQ in health and social care	2	No. of starts	26	26	25
		% retention	77	65	84
		% pass rate	50	82	86
Advanced GNVQ in health and social care	3	No. of starts	19	17	*
		% retention	79	82	*
		% pass rate	100	100	*
AVCE double award	3	No. of starts	*	*	10
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	100
National diploma in childhood studies (early years)	3	No. of starts	23	25	24
		% retention	87	72	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	18	23	16
		% retention	78	61	63
		% pass rate	86	92	80
NVQ in care	2	No. of starts	13	46	34
		% retention	92	85	91
		% pass rate	83	95	100
NVQ in care	3	No. of starts	15	37	46
		% retention	73	76	91
		% pass rate	64	100	94
Community care practice advanced manager	3	No. of starts	17	14	12
		% retention	82	100	83
		% pass rate	93	100	100
National certificate in childhood studies (early years)	3	No. of starts	20	20	14
		% retention	80	80	86
		% pass rate	93	94	100

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

*course not running that year

Quality of education and training

93. Overall, teaching is good. In the better lessons, there are some imaginative teaching methods. In one lesson, students did a practical exercise to experience what it was like to become breathless and not be able to recover from this state immediately. This exercise, a quiz and good use of materials helped all students to understand the nature of asthma and the fear that children can feel when they suffer an attack. In a few lessons, students receive valuable advice on ways of developing their study skills. Teachers have substantial knowledge of their subjects and communicate this well to the students. In lessons, they illustrated points effectively by drawing on their own workplace experience and that of their students. Teachers encouraged all students to become fully involved in learning tasks. In a few instances, however, they did not give some students the more demanding work they needed, or ensure that others who were making slower

progress were given the help they required.

94. Staff are appropriately qualified and suitably experienced. Many part-time staff are current practitioners. Some accommodation and learning resources are inadequate. Some classrooms are too small for size of the group. In one instance, a laboratory was inappropriately used for an application of number lesson. The mobile classrooms and the rooms in the old school building are drab and they do not provide students with a stimulating and inspiring environment in which to learn. Some of the book stock in the learning resource centre is out of date.

95. Assessment is fair and accurate and subject to regular internal verification. Students receive detailed feedback which includes suggestions on how they may improve their work. Additional learning support is made available promptly to those students who need it and their tutors are informed accordingly. The tutors are not always told, however, what kind of learning support the students have been given and they do not receive any formal report on the students' subsequent progress.

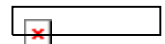
96. There are many productive links with employers and external agencies and through these, provision has been widened. For example, the college has a strong link with the local NHS Trust and the local hospital has recently asked the college to work with it in partnership to offer the nurse cadet scheme from September 2003. The college is an active member of the Norfolk Early Years Development Partnership.

97. Individual tutorials are good. Good records are kept and issues are followed up. There is careful monitoring of students' attendance and punctuality. When students have personal problems, their first point of call is their tutor. Students say how helpful they find their tutors and are appreciative of the way tutors understand and meet their needs.

Leadership and management

98. Team leadership is good. Aspects of course management are unsatisfactory. For example, meetings of course teams do not focus sufficiently on ways of improving teaching and the effectiveness of learning. Many course teams do not meet regularly. Course reviews do not have a common format and do not address all key questions in the common inspection framework. Most course reviews lack detail and are not evaluative. When carrying out action planning to improve students' performance, staff do not carry out any systematic comparison of the final results students obtain with their level of attainment on entry, in order to calculate the extent of students' achievements. Retention and pass rates are included in reviews but targets are not systematically linked to them. Observations of teaching and learning were carried out during 2001/02 and included lessons taken by part-time staff. Strengths and weaknesses identified through the observations and priorities for staff development were shared with all staff in April 2002. Since then no further observations have taken place.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- high standard of work

- good enrichment programme

- productive links with the local community

- good materials and equipment for performing arts.

Weaknesses

- insufficient courses at levels one and two

- substandard accommodation in performing arts

- low retention rates on many courses in 2000/01

- lack of inspirational teaching.

Scope of provision

99. Full-time provision is predominantly at level 3 and is for students aged 16 to 18. GCE A-level courses are offered in art, photography, graphics, textiles, drama, music and music technology. There are national diploma courses in fine art, graphic design, fashion, textiles, performing arts and music. All full-time level 3 students take GCE AS photography. At level 2 there is a full-time GNVQ intermediate course in art and design as well as a range of NCFE level 1 short and long part-time courses. There is a foundation diploma course in art and design and a first diploma course in performing arts. Student can also prepare for music theory examinations from grade 3 to grade 8. The Futures programme includes music technology, improvisation, music on personal computer, music theory and introduction to jive.

Achievement and standards

100. Overall, the standard of work observed in lessons, written work, sketch books, workbooks and in practical applications is high. Practical work in performing arts is very good. Students on GCE A-level music and photography courses achieve higher grades than those predicted for them. In photography, there is a high value added score. Students on the GCE A-level photography course do well and have high value added scores, calculated by comparing their GCSE grades with their final GCE A-level grades. Pass rates are above the national average on the foundation diploma in art and design, the Business and Technician Educational Council (BTEC) national diploma in design and GCE AS photography courses. The pass rate on the commercial music course is outstanding

and on the full-time courses in music and performing arts, it is consistently above the national average. On GCE A-level courses in music and the performing arts, students achieve the grades predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE scores. In 2000/01, the retention rate on full time performing arts courses was significantly below the national average. The pass rate on the GCE A-level music technology course is below the target set by the college. Retention and pass rates are low on the GNVQ intermediate level course in art and design. In 2000/01 one student progressed to the Royal College of Music and was a finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Foundation diploma in art and design	3	No. of starts	31	11	5
		% retention	81	64	100
		% pass rate	95	100	100
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	17	17	15
		% retention	71	65	80
		% pass rate	58	45	83
BTEC national diploma in design	3	No. of starts	61	59	*
		% retention	72	75	*
		% pass rate	98	88	*
GCE AS photography (one year)	3	No. of starts	11	43	67
		% retention	70	51	75
		% pass rate	100	90	86
BTEC first diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	12	7	8
		% retention	75	57	88
		% pass rate	100	75	86
BTEC national diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	22	25	29
		% retention	73	52	83
		% pass rate	100	85	100
GCE A-level music technology	3	No. of starts	21	10	13
		% retention	57	80	85
		% pass rate	89	71	91
BTEC national diploma in popular music	3	No. of starts	22	16	19
		% retention	80	73	79
		% pass rate	100	100	92

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

*Course not running

Quality of education and training

101. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of learners. In all the lessons observed, the teaching was satisfactory or better and students learnt effectively. In most lessons, students participate fully and enthusiastically in demanding practical activities. There is very good teaching in performing arts and in photography. A national diploma graphic design student studying photography

on a 'fragment of reality' project used the images of Aeron Siskind as the stimulus for an imaginative investigation into the typographical influences in the work of the painter Franz Kline. In a music theory lesson on a national diploma course, the teacher did not draw sufficiently on students' knowledge of scales, intervals and chords.

102. Attendance rates for lessons are high and above the national average. In two music lessons, the teacher talked a great deal, did not question the students to check their understanding or encourage them to explore their own ideas and failed to engage their interest. In contrast, in a technical theatre lesson, the students discussed and resolved authentic problems of stagecraft, such as how to lower a coffin on stage, and benefited from the professional knowledge and experience of the teacher. Both the students and the teacher gave proper consideration to health and safety issues. There is, however, a lack of inspirational and imaginative teaching. A group of first-year students on a performing arts course did not work in a disciplined way in a rehearsal and missed deadlines. In art and design, students work well together, they listen to one another respectfully and respond critically to presentations delivered by their friends. In less successful lessons, teachers include too much material and fail to check on students' understanding.

103. Staff are suitably qualified and many are external examiners, module writers and moderators for major awarding bodies. Teaching accommodation for performing arts is sub-standard. Rooms are poorly heated, in urgent need of redecoration and too small for the groups using them. In a lesson in the sound recording studio, some students did not have a clear view of the teacher's demonstration. In another lesson, performing arts students undertook a group rehearsal in an untidy and cluttered scenery store. In visual arts, the room used by students on the foundation diploma course is similarly cluttered and also too small. Students do not have enough room to withdraw far enough to view their board and the model simultaneously and move their arm freely. The self-assessment report acknowledges that the accommodation is poor and that plans for a new arts centre are only in the early stages of preparation. There are good displays of small artwork in corridors, such as prints, collages and textile samples. Off-site provision for Futures classes is good. The attendance of 24 adult learners at a jive dance course has been consistently 100%. These students can progress to full-time courses in performing arts. The library is well stocked with books, journals and CDs.

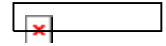
104. Students' work is assessed fairly and accurately, in accordance with the requirements of awarding bodies. Teachers on music courses give students clear and detailed written feedback on their work and tell them how to improve it. Assignments are returned promptly. Teachers on visual arts courses, however, give students oral feedback rather than written comments they can keep as a record.

105. There is insufficient provision at levels one and two. Applicants for the national diploma course who do not have the necessary qualifications to meet the entry requirements are advised to join the GNVQ intermediate media course instead. Many then find that the GNVQ course is not what they want and become disruptive. In general, students feel they are well supported and most meet their personal tutors once a week. For example, on the foundation diploma course in art and design, a mature part-time student was given sensitive but firm advice about his progress in colour exercises. An extensive range of visits is arranged for students. Art students have recently returned from a trip to New York. Students on both full-time and part-time courses benefit from enrichment workshops. Many students do well on level 3 courses. In 2002, seven out of nine students entered on the national diploma course in fine art went on to HE.

Leadership and management

106. Staff development activities meet the individual needs of staff and relate to the aims of the institution. One art lecturer who is studying for a doctorate is fully supported by the college. Team leaders set a clear direction for staff. Course review and evaluation are not systematic enough. For example, data on the value added to students' achievements are not taken into consideration when setting performance targets or carrying out action planning for the improvement of provision. Curriculum planning is not closely aligned with strategic planning.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates in languages

- high retention and pass rates in GCSE English

- high standard of work in languages

- much good teaching in languages

- thorough assessment and internal verification procedures

- broad range of provision

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on GCE AS English and creative writing courses

- low standard of work on GCE AS and A2 English courses

- much uninspiring teaching in English

- inadequate range and use of ILT and other resources

- some unsuitable accommodation.

Scope of provision

107. The college offers a broad range of provision in English and modern foreign languages to meet a variety of needs. English provision includes GCSE English, and GCE AS and A2 in English language and literature and in English literature. All courses are offered during the day and in the evening on either a full-time or part-time basis. English literature is offered as part of the full-time access to HE programme in humanities and social science. Creative writing is offered as a 10-week part-time course. The modern foreign languages programme includes French, Spanish, Italian, German, Dutch, Greek, Russian and Japanese. Courses in these languages are offered at various levels from entry to level 3, and can lead to various qualifications. All the language courses are part-time, and two thirds of the provision is in the evening.

108. At the time of the inspection, there were 123 enrolments on English courses and 348 enrolments on language courses. Most of the language students are part-time and aged over 19. Two-thirds of the students on English programmes are full-time, and half are aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

109. Student's achievements are very good across the range of language courses. Pass rates for all qualifications over the last three years have been consistently above the national averages, reaching 100% in many cases. Retention rates in most language courses are close to, or above, the national average. Retention and pass rates in GCSE English are above the national average. Retention rates on GCE AS English language and literature, English literature and creative writing courses are low.

110. The standard of students' written and oral work in languages is consistently high. In most language lessons, students confidently use the foreign language at the appropriate level and are able to communicate successfully. On the GCSE English course and the access course in English literature course, however, students' work is of a low standard. It is often poorly presented and lacking in substance. Many students do not express themselves well and their work contains errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

111. Most students are punctual for lessons. Attendance was erratic in a few lessons. During the inspection the average attendance rate in the observed lessons was 71.5%.

Quality of education and training

112. Much of the teaching of languages is good or better. Lessons and courses are well planned to meet the varied needs of learners. Assessment is an integral part of the learning process. Most teachers use different teaching techniques, vary the pace of the lessons and continuously engage the students' interest. In lessons, students communicate well with one another and with the teacher. They engage in discussion and ask and answer questions. In a few lessons, however, the teacher does most of the talking and students are not given the opportunity to work in small groups and learn collaboratively through exploring one another's ideas.

113. The range of resources for the teaching of some languages is narrow. Some teachers, however, are creative and produce their own learning materials. One French teacher, for example, arrived to a lesson on shopping for food with a basket full of fruit, vegetables and other food items that were used for effective presentation and practice of vocabulary.

114. English courses and lessons are carefully planned, but some of the GCE AS and A2 English lessons are insufficiently demanding and the teachers' expectations are low. Although all the

teachers have good subject knowledge, they sometimes fail to communicate enthusiasm or inspire the less motivated students. In some lessons, little effort is made to involve the more reticent students in discussion. Handout materials are often used effectively to help students develop and consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

115. Course work for both English and languages is marked accurately and returned to students promptly with written comments to encourage them and help them to improve. Assessment tasks and dates are clearly identified in schemes of work. Internal moderation arrangements are thorough and effective, and meet the requirements of the awarding bodies.

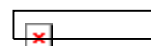
116. Full-time students receive exceptionally good support from their teachers, personal tutors and other college staff. Pre-course advice and guidance are good. Initial assessment is thorough, and additional learning support is available as required, for example, for those with dyslexia. Progress is reviewed regularly, and targets are set. There are no systematic arrangements for providing part-time students with support. It is largely up to subject teachers to give part-time students the help and support they need. Students speak very highly about the accessibility, helpfulness and friendliness of their teachers.

117. Resources for teaching and learning are inadequate. The range of up-to-date language resources available to students and staff is narrow. The library contains a relatively small collection of books or other materials on English language or literature. All full-time students, however, are provided with all their course books and the library will borrow books requested by students through inter-library loan arrangements. Good use is made of a new language laboratory with audio facilities. Students have good access to computers and the Internet, but little use is made of ILT in teaching and learning. While some classrooms are adequate, others are noisy, poorly lit or equipped, and some have furniture that cannot be moved easily to facilitate discussion or group activities.

Leadership and management

118. The English and languages curriculum areas are well managed on a day-to-day basis. There is a clear line management structure, and teachers are supported well by their team leaders. Staff appraisals are carried out infrequently. The lesson observation scheme has not always been effective in identifying weaknesses in teaching. Support for staff training and development is good. Internal communication within the subject areas is good, and some sharing of practice takes place. Targets by course for recruitment, retention and achievement are set and monitored. Course reviews are carried out at the end of each year and findings from these are fed into the self-assessment report. Inspectors mainly agreed with the findings of the self-assessment report. However, actions set out in the development plans to address weaknesses are often insufficiently detailed and precise.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- effective help for students with literacy and numeracy

- good development of students' practical skills on literacy and numeracy courses.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates for literacy and numeracy sessions across all courses
- insufficient use of initial assessment and individual learning plans
- insufficient differentiation of learning tasks to suit students' individual abilities
- narrow range of opportunities for adults.

Scope of provision

119. The college helps students with literacy and numeracy through full-time vocational access courses, an additional learning support service, on programme support to students in vocational areas and GCSE mathematics and English courses. The vocational access programmes cater for students aged 16 to 18 whose primary learning goal is to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Most students are full-time and aged 16 to 18. The range of provision for adults and part-time students is narrow.

Achievement and standards

120. Pass rates on many programmes are high and above the national average. The pass rates in GCSE mathematics, wordpower and numberpower are consistently high. Students on the vocational access course work towards the vocational access certificate awarded by the London Chamber of Commerce Institute and make good progress towards achieving their goals. In addition, there are extensive opportunities for students to practise literacy and numeracy skills, including a good work experience programme. Students on the vocational access course are able to demonstrate notable gains in confidence. Retention rates across the provision are inconsistent. Insufficient account is taken of students' prior attainment, and initial assessment and individual learning plans are not comprehensive. There are good opportunities for measuring and recognising students' non-accredited achievement and progress on vocational access courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	73	68	67
		% retention	47	54	64
		% pass rate	74	79	85
London Chamber of	E	No. of starts	34	30	41

Commerce Institute vocational access certificate	% retention	85	87	90
	% pass rate	76	23	35
City and Guilds London Institute. wordpower foundation	No. of starts	8	20	31
	% retention	63	74	27
	% pass rate	100	93	86
City and Guilds London Institute numberpower stage 1	No. of starts	27	9	27
	% retention	89	50	63
	% pass rate	100	100	67

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

Quality of education and training

121. The majority of teaching is good. Lesson planning is satisfactory. Students' individual learning plans, however, are not taken into account sufficiently when planning lessons to ensure that all students are given sufficiently demanding tasks. In the best lessons, methods and styles of teaching are used which promote good working relationships that foster learning. Some teaching is unsatisfactory and does not stimulate students or challenge them to use all their skills to the full.

122. There is an extensive provision of learning support for students across the college. This provision is used effectively by both students and staff. Students in some vocational areas are not given effective initial assessment and their needs for additional learning support are not always identified clearly. There is a large team of learning assistants available to provide support on a one-to-one basis or to small groups in class. Good records of the support given are kept along with an action plan agreed with the students. This facility is highly valued by students.

123. Students have the opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy skills as part of their vocational programmes. In a few areas, however, the take up of the support on offer is low. Where vocational teams have made the teaching of literacy and numeracy an integral part of courses, students' pass rates have risen.

124. Vocational access students are well supported on their main programme and in tutorials. Staff hold weekly meetings at which they consider the individual support needs of students. There are good links with support agencies and families. Considerable time is given to ensuring that individual students stay on their programme. Students are able to broaden their learning experience through trips and out-of-college activities. Across the vocational access programmes, partnerships with other support agencies ensure comprehensive support can be provided for those students who need it.

125. Provision for adults is limited to two sessions a week and two sessions on the futures programme. There is no evening or weekend provision related to literacy and numeracy, with the exception of an evening class for GCSE English. The college is extending its literacy and numeracy provision to the workplace through a programme in communications skills for staff at a local hospital.

126. There is a good supply of well-produced paper-based learning materials. Classrooms are mainly good. Some rooms, however, are drab and lack appropriate display materials. There is little use of ILT equipment in lessons. Staff work areas, particularly those for part-time staff, are poor.

Leadership and management

127. The leadership and management of literacy and numeracy provision are satisfactory. There is a college-wide strategy to make the teaching of literacy and numeracy an integral part of courses and help students achieve key skills certification. The provision is well resourced in terms of staffing. Management of the literacy and numeracy course is good. The model whereby the teaching of key

skills and support with literacy and numeracy is integral to all courses was introduced this year. There is some particularly good practice in the teaching of key skills, but there is poor practice as well. The college recognises that the range of adult and community based provision is narrow and a full-time learning support co-ordinator has been recently appointed to develop new courses. Teaching and learning support staff are very well qualified. Staff are well informed about national developments in literacy and numeracy and have all attended training and development sessions relating to the adult core curriculum and national standards for literacy and numeracy.

Part D: College data

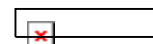
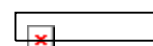


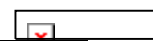
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2001/02



Level	16-18	19+
1	39	55
2	33	16
3	23	12
4/5	0	3
Other	5	14
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2001

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	344	97	5
Land-based provision	18	2	0
Construction	91	140	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	178	187	4
Business administration, management and professional	83	454	6
ICT	386	643	11
Retailing, customer service and transportation	84	26	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	230	138	4

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	75	43	1
Health, social care and public services	160	199	4
Visual and performing arts and media	442	292	8
Humanities	101	111	2
English, languages and communication	389	311	8
Foundation programmes	1669	2315	43
Total	4250	4958	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	317	365	305	1037	1012	1054
	Retention rate	70	70	78	54	51	55
	National average (%)	80	79	80	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	79	72	64	73	83	77
	National average (%)	65	68	68	60	66	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	615	577	602	568	585	590
	Retention rate (%)	63	73	74	65	78	76
	National average (%)	76	76	77	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	69	65	67	74	79	77
	National average (%)	66	69	69	65	69	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	706	923	841	491	521	508
	Retention rate (%)	65	65	82	66	73	80
	National average (%)	76	77	81	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	89	82	83	83	88	90
	National average	74	76	81	66	69	69

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.
2. College rates for 1997/8-1998/9: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.
3. College rates for 1999/2000: provided by the college in spring 2001.

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)	66	31	3	59
Level 2 (intermediate)	44	44	12	48
Level 1 (foundation)	68	26	6	31
Other sessions	70	20	10	18
Totals	61	30	9	156