



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Canterbury College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The college as a whole](#)

[Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

[Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Land-based](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Business and administration](#)

[Computing and information technology/IT](#)

[Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Visual arts](#)

[Performing arts and media](#)

[English and modern foreign languages](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

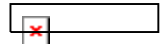
[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

[Notes](#)

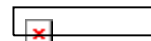
Basic information about the college



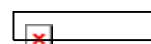
Name of college:	Canterbury College
Type of college:	General further education college
Principal:	Geoff Terry
Address of college:	New Dover Road Canterbury CT1 3AJ
Telephone number:	01227 811111
Fax number:	01227 811101
Chair of governors:	Stephen Kingsman

Unique reference number: 130730
Name of reporting inspector: Kenneth L Jones HMI
Dates of inspection: 3 - 7 March 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

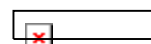


Canterbury College is a general further education (FE) college which provides education and training for some 12,000 students. Courses are provided from foundation to degree level. The mission of the college is: 'Canterbury College - providing excellent education for all'. Some 58% of students attend the college on a full-time basis, of whom 60% are aged 16 to 18. Some 90% of part-time students are adults. Kent has a selective education system. Some 90% of the 16 to 18 year old students at the college come from 20 non-selective feeder schools, all but one of which have sixth forms. The achievement rate for pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C is in the 16 to 26% range at 12 of the schools, and in the 38 to 52% range at the remainder.

Since 1993, the college population has grown by approximately 6% each year. Students are drawn from across East Kent, mostly from Canterbury, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Sandwich, Deal, Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheppey. Approximately half of the students at the college come from Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay. In addition to the main site at Canterbury, the college operates a satellite college at Sheppey. As part of its strategy for providing equality of opportunity and increasing diversity, the college has expanded its outreach work. Education and training are provided for some 2,500 students in 40 community venues.

Some are located in economically disadvantaged area such as Northgate, Wincheap, Murston, Milton Regis, Hersden and Sheerness. The Canterbury district is an area of significant economic growth offering employment to 50,000 people. However, the proportion of the work force qualified to intermediate or advanced level in Canterbury and East Kent is some 11% lower than the average for the south east of England. Approximately two thirds of employees work in the retail and tourism industries or in the public sector. Overall, unemployment is low and most companies employ between one and 24 people. Some 5% of the students at the college are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 3.4% of the local population.

How effective is the college?



The quality of teaching and the achievements of students are good in three of the 13 curriculum areas inspected, satisfactory in nine and unsatisfactory in one. Work-based training is unsatisfactory. The college is committed to widening participation and the number of adult enrolments increased by 40% between 2001 and 2002. Achievement overall is satisfactory. In 2002, pass and retention rates, which had fallen in a number of areas in 2001, were at or above the national averages for general FE colleges. At course level, there has been significant fluctuation in retention rates both between

adults achieve better results than 16 to 18 year old students. The level of good or better teaching is lower than the average level for colleges of the same type. However, the level of good or better teaching is higher and learning is more effective in lessons for adults or lessons attended predominantly by adult students. Students receive good advice and guidance, and are well supported.

Key strengths

- good strategic leadership

- a broad curriculum

- effective information, guidance and support services for students

- good enrichment activities for students

- effective partnerships with the community.

What should be improved

- the student retention rate on some courses

- the student attendance rate

- the quality of teaching

- action planning for individual students

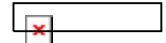
- the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures

- the quality of accommodation at Canterbury

- o the quality of work-based training.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

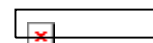


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Unsatisfactory. There is much poor teaching. Teachers make insufficient use of information and communications technology (ICT) to promote learning or of laboratory work to consolidate the teaching of theory in science. Many courses have low pass and retention rates, although pass rates on vocational science courses are high. The marking of students' work is thorough.
Land-based	Satisfactory. There are good pass rates on courses in animal care, NVQ 1 horse care and floristry, but the retention rate is poor on first diploma courses. Teaching is mostly satisfactory on animal care and equine courses and mostly good on veterinary nursing courses. Timetabling and the planning of work experience are unsatisfactory for animal care courses. Internal verification of animal care courses is ineffective and there are insufficient resources for companion animal teaching.
Construction	Satisfactory. Lesson planning is effective and there is much good teaching, but group tutorials are poorly planned and ineffective. The retention rate on most courses is high but there are some low pass rates. Some good equipment has been provided as a consequence of effective links with industry, but there is much unsatisfactory specialist accommodation. Work-based training is unsatisfactory.
Engineering	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on most college-based courses and the retention rate is improving on many courses. Most teaching is satisfactory or better and theory and practical teaching are well integrated. Support for literacy and numeracy is good. Work-based training is unsatisfactory.
Business and administration	Satisfactory. Teaching is good or better on most courses and students' progress is well monitored. There are high pass rates on accounting courses. Pass rates on GNVQ courses and the retention rate on AVCE business are low. There are insufficient resources for developing practical skills.
Computing and information technology (IT)	Satisfactory. Teaching, which is mostly satisfactory or better, is more effective with adult groups. There is extensive and effective outreach provision and adult and community provision is well managed. There

	is good progression and retention and pass rates are satisfactory overall. The management of the 16 to 18 curriculum is unsatisfactory and there is insufficient use of targets to raise the attainment of 16 to 18 year old students.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good. There is much good teaching and high pass rates on most courses, but some erratic attendance by students. There are good specialist resources in sport and travel. Students achieve high standards in practical work in food preparation although the range of equipment is inadequate.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Much of the teaching in the area is satisfactory but dull and there are insufficient clients in practical lessons. Students' progress is well monitored but the organisation and teaching of key skills are poor. There are high pass rates on most courses but the retention rate is low on intermediate and advanced hairdressing programmes. Facilities at Sheppy are outstanding but those at Canterbury are poor.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on many adult courses but retention and pass rates are low on some full-time courses. Support and guidance are effective, but teaching on many full-time courses is unimaginative. Effective links with the community are leading to the expansion of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) provision. Work-based learning is unsatisfactory.
Visual arts	Good. There are very high pass rates on most courses. There is good or better teaching on intermediate and advanced courses and students develop sound communication skills. Students are very well supported. Course reviews are not sufficiently self-critical.
Performing arts and media	Good. Most teaching is good or better and tutorial support is effective. Pass rates are high on intermediate and advanced media courses. There are low retention rates on the national diploma in music technology and the national diploma in performing arts. Resources are good for performing arts but are insufficient in music, relative to the number of students.
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. Teaching is good on advanced modern foreign languages courses and General Certificate of Education (GCSE) English. English and modern foreign languages students develop good oral skills. Students receive effective individual support and there are good enrichment activities and links abroad for students. Rates of attendance in lessons are low, as are retention and pass rates on some courses.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Students who receive support perform well on their vocational courses. Tuition at the college's essential skills centre is effective. There has been much action to improve the teaching of key skills but the quality of the lessons is not always satisfactory. The initial assessment of students' basic and key skills is not sufficiently rigorous.

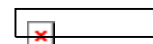
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers set a clear strategic

remain low or below average for the sector. The standards of curriculum management are generally satisfactory. Some aspects of the management of work-based learning are unsatisfactory. Governors bring valuable skills and experience to the college and monitor its performance very effectively. The college sets challenging but realistic targets for improvement, although it makes insufficient use of value added analysis. The well-established and comprehensive quality assurance procedures are not applied sufficiently thoroughly to the planning and teaching of the curriculum. Financial management is sound. The college provides good value for money.

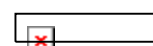
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Arrangements to meet the needs of the different communities served by the college are good. The college is committed to widening participation in education and training. It rigorously promotes opportunities that are open to all and recruits a high proportion of students from groups which have not traditionally been well represented in further education (FE). Many courses are taught in the community settings away from the college sites and succeed in attracting students from a wide range of backgrounds. The college is expanding its adult education provision, which includes tasters and short courses, to further encourage adult students back into education and training

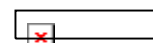
In its policies, the college demonstrates a high level of commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. All college policies are cross-referenced with its equal opportunities policy, which is reviewed annually. There is a suitably detailed race-relations policy and action plan. All aspects of the college's performance in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability are monitored thoroughly. An annual equal opportunities report is presented to the corporation.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The college provides good support and guidance for most students. There is a coherent framework of support and guidance activities for all full-time and part-time students. Pre-entry information is clear and well presented and initial guidance and selection procedures are thorough. Induction is effective. Initial screening to identify students' key skill and additional learning needs is carried out systematically and sensitively, but action plans produced for students are uneven in their quality. Support provided to help students with their literacy and numeracy skills contributes to an improvement in their performance on their main programmes of study. Some students who are underperforming or who are at risk of not completing their course are provided with additional mentor support. Teachers and tutors provide both full-time and part-time students with much informal support. The quality of teaching in group tutorials is uneven and the attendance rate in some tutorial sessions is low. One-to-one tutorials are effective overall, but some students do not receive their entitlement. There is insufficient monitoring of the effectiveness of tutorials. Tutors maintain personal files for every student, but there is insufficient emphasis on setting clear targets to help individual students to improve their performance. Procedures for monitoring student attendance and following up absenteeism are not having sufficient impact on attendance.

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

- knowledgeable and supportive staff

- respect for students from staff

- the learning resource centres and helpful staff

- good extra curricular activities

- access to good IT equipment

- welfare support

- the location of the Canterbury site close to the city centre

- courses in the community.

What they feel could be improved

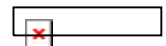
- timetabling

- the teaching of key skills

- student facilities at the IT centre at Canterbury

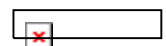
- the poor quality of some classrooms and workshops
- space available for car parking
- the number of toilets.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



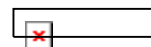
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	55	36	9
19+ and WBL*	62	33	5
Learning 16-18	47	41	12
19+ and WBL*	62	33	5

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. The profile of achievement for the college is satisfactory. In 2002, over 7,000 students were expected to complete qualifications requiring one or more years of study. Of these, some 55% were aged 16 to 18. In 2001, pass rates declined at foundation level for all age groups and at intermediate levels for 16 to 18 year old students. Pass rates recovered, however, in 2002, and were at or above the national average for the sector for all age groups and at all levels of study. Overall, retention rates have shown less variability over time and, in 2002, were at or above the national average. At course level, however, there has been significantly more fluctuation in retention rates both between years for the same course and between courses. The standard of students work in most lessons is satisfactory. Much work is of a good standard in the performing and visual arts, hospitality, and sport, leisure and tourism. Attainment is good in only 43% of lessons, overall, which is below the national average, and is unsatisfactory in 10% of lessons. Levels of unsatisfactory attainment were highest in the areas of science and mathematics, land based, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. At 74%, overall attendance is below the national average.

16 to 18 year olds

2. In 2002, overall pass rates were at the national average for the sector for all levels of study, and for advanced students, who form 60% of 16 to 18 enrolments, they have remained at this level for several years. Some 10% of 16 to 18 year old students are enrolled on foundation level courses. Retention rates at this level improved in 2001, but were accompanied by a sharp fall in pass rates. The pattern was similar, but not as marked, on intermediate courses. The retention rate on these courses improved further in 2002 to above the national average, while pass rates remaining at the national average.

3. General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) pass rates are at the national average and have improved with the introduction of GCE A2 examinations. Pass rates in GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) examinations are also at the national averages. Retention rates both for GCE AS examinations and for full GCE A levels are below national averages, and progression from GCE AS to full GCE A levels is low. There is considerable fluctuation in performance between subjects. Retention rates at the time of the inspection compared with the same time the previous year indicated that retention rates on GCE AS courses are improving. The proportion of students gaining A to C grades is below the national average but is in line with the levels of students at enrolment, which are mostly low. The college does not hold sufficient data to assess fully the achievements of GCE A-level students in relation to their qualifications on enrolment.

4. Retention rates on advanced-level general national vocational qualifications (GNVQ) and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses were just below the national average at the time of this inspection and have been improving. Overall pass rates for these courses are at the national average and pass rates on most AVCE courses are good, but not always accompanied by satisfactory or better retention rates. Pass and retention rates on national certificate and diploma courses are at or just below the national average and they too have been showing improvement.

5. Students aged 16 to 18 do not perform well on GCSE courses. Pass rates on GCSE mathematics, for example, are low and declining and pass rates on GCSE English are declining and are below the national average. The retention rate for GCSE courses, overall, is at the national average and a higher proportion than average pass the examination but a lower proportion than average achieve the A* to C grade. Performance of students on GNVQ intermediate qualifications is at the national average and first diploma students have high pass rates and above average retention rates. The retention rate on foundation level GNVQ courses is below and the pass rate mostly at or above the national average.

6. The retention rates on NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 have improved during the three years prior to the

inspection and are above the national averages at levels 1 and 3. There are examples of high retention rates on courses leading to these qualifications in construction, electrical installation and beauty therapy, and of low rates in horse care. Pass rates have fluctuated from year to year; they do reach, but are mostly below, the national average. Most students in work-based learning are aged 16 to 18 and the rates for completion of training and successful completion of the framework are low for both foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships.

7. Pass rates in key skills improved significantly in 2002, which reflects a change in the college policy of only entering for the end test those students likely to succeed. Previously, pass rates were low.

Adult learners

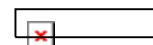
8. There has been a significant growth in the numbers of adult students taking college courses, particularly at community venues. The growth between 2001 and 2002 was 40% and the growth on short courses was 148%, which represents an overall increase of over 5,000 students and reflects the college's commitment to widening participation through the development of community-based and outreach provision. Many of these students follow short courses of varying duration in IT. Adults perform well on these courses.

9. Approximately 25% of the college's GCE A-level students are adults and they perform better than 16 to 18 year old students. Both pass rates and achievement of A to C grades are at the national average but the retention rate is consistently below. On GCE AS courses, both retention rates and pass rates for adults are at the national average. Adults also perform better than 16 to 18 year olds on GCSE courses and pass rates are above the national averages.

10. Numbers of adults on GNVQ foundation courses are low and, although the retention rate is below average, most students pass. Numbers of adults on GNVQ intermediate courses are also relatively low but retention rates are high and pass rates are mostly at or above the national average, although overall pass rates were low in 2000. Adults on advanced GNVQ courses perform well and pass rates were well above the national average in 2000. On other intermediate and advanced courses, excluding NVQ programmes, adult pass rates are at or above the national average and the retention rate is at or below it.

11. Some 500 adults follow NVQ programmes annually at levels 1 and 2, and 50 at level 3. The retention rate for the three years prior to the inspection was satisfactory and pass rates at level 2 were high. At level 3, overall pass rates were mostly average or above, but were low in 2001.

Quality of education and training



12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 264 lessons. Teaching is good or better in 57% of lessons, satisfactory in 35% and less than satisfactory in 8%. The level of good or better teaching is lower than the average level of 63% observed in general FE colleges during inspections in 2001/02. The level of satisfactory teaching is proportionally higher. The level of less than satisfactory teaching is just below the national average for general FE colleges. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in 11 of the 13 curriculum areas inspected and there is much poor teaching in science and mathematics. Where teaching groups are composed of adults or mostly adults, the quality of teaching is higher, 63% of lessons being good or better. Only 19% of all the lessons observed were excellent or very good. There is also a marked difference in the effectiveness of teaching at advanced, intermediate and foundation levels, where the levels of good or better teaching observed during the inspection were 64%, 53% and 50% respectively.

13. The best teaching is in business administration, hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, performing

arts, and visual arts. In the better lessons observed across all curriculum areas, teachers demonstrated that they knew their students well and planned effectively to accommodate the learning needs of all the students in their groups. However, in intermediate and foundation lessons in particular, teachers often failed to involve and motivate all the students in their groups. There was significantly more unsatisfactory learning in foundation-level lessons.

14. In the more effective lessons, teachers explain the purpose of the lessons clearly and their students understand what is expected of them. They use their knowledge and their industrial experience well to enliven lessons and provide interesting activities that motivate students. Teachers select activities carefully and retain the interest of their students in their work, particularly the less able ones who can become inattentive when not continuously involved through questioning and discussion. Students contribute well to discussions and students on vocational courses often share their own experiences of working which helps to consolidate learning and bring theory to life. Teachers do not just convey information in the lessons but question their groups carefully to help them understand topics. Practical activities are used to explain or consolidate theoretical concepts. Teaching was good or better in 61% of lessons which were practically based or mostly practically based. In these lessons, teachers spend time with individual students or small group of students exploring their understanding and providing support. The activities in practical lessons often provide realistic work related experiences which students enjoy.

15. Many of the lessons observed, while not unsatisfactory, were dull and failed to motivate students fully. The teaching often lacked interest and imagination. Teachers tended to follow a well-worn pattern of exposition followed by discussion or completion of exercises which failed to gain sufficient response from students. There is poor attendance in many lessons and in some lessons, frequent late arrival of students disrupts learning.

16. Students with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons and in some curriculum areas they receive effective help from teachers to develop literacy and numeracy skills. In many lessons, effective use is not made of a second teacher or a teaching assistant in the classroom. There is insufficient planning of joint and complementary activities and a lack of understanding about what each member of staff will contribute. The same weaknesses were observed during team teaching in the areas of visual arts and hairdressing and beauty therapy.

17. Most teachers are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience. They are provided with good opportunities to upgrade and develop their skills. Some 60% of lessons taught by full-time teachers are good or better compared with 48% of lessons taught by part-time teachers. Part time-teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to share good practice and be fully involved in the activities of teaching teams.

18. The college has two main sites at Canterbury and Sheppey (known as Sheppey College). It also has approximately 30 outreach centres. One centre at Canterbury is used for corporate IT training. The main campus has a mix of permanent and temporary buildings, some of which are in a poor state of repair. The college has a good range of resources and some good or outstanding facilities, such as those for the performing arts and for hairdressing at Sheppey. However, some other facilities are unsatisfactory in, for example, visual arts, construction and hair and beauty therapy at the Canterbury site. The college has not been able to implement its proposals to relocate to a green field site in Canterbury due to protracted enquiries and appeals. Just prior to the inspection, the college had decided not to relocate because it could not delay development any further and is exploring alternative options. The satellite college at Sheppey had been open for seven years at the time of the inspection and is a modern two-storey building providing good accommodation. All areas of the college including outreach centres are accessible to students with restricted mobility.

19. The internal decoration of most buildings is good and the corporate image is carried over into the leased premises in surrounding towns. Some classrooms and workshops at Canterbury are cramped and cluttered. There are good refectory, social areas and recreational facilities at both main centres. The student information centre at Canterbury had recently been relocated to new buildings. This well designed unit provides a welcoming focal point for potential students. The learning resource centres at both centres are spacious and well designed to provide students with good access to computers for individual or group work. There are helpful and experienced staff available to support students

and staff, particularly with the development of resource packs for key skills and enrichment activities. There are two well-equipped and stocked shops at the Canterbury site which are managed by college staff and students. They provide good opportunities for work-based learning. The travel shop and florist shop are open to the public.

20. The college has invested heavily in computers for teaching on the main sites and at outreach centres. All of the centres are well equipped with up-to-date computers which have Internet connections. Where the college is unable to provide permanently located computers, mobile facilities are used.

21. The college provides good support for teachers, offering a 25% reduction in the teaching load for teachers who are new to the college to facilitate curriculum planning and bring about improvements in teaching and learning. Most full-time and part-time teachers have or are working towards teaching qualifications.

22. The college has a clear and comprehensive assessment policy which sets out the standards of good practice expected across all areas of the curriculum. Good guidance is provided on the implementation of the policy and for the promotion of good practice across all levels of provision. Implementation of the policy is monitored through internal quality assurance and external verification procedures. Most of the assignments produced by teachers for students are well planned and vocationally relevant and assessment practice is generally good. The most effective schemes of work and lesson plans identify clear learning objectives and assessment opportunities. Where learning objectives are not clearly set out, assessment and monitoring of progress are less thorough and effective. Examination board requirements are strictly adhered to and students are mostly well informed about assessment requirements and practice.

23. Students' work is marked regularly and thoroughly and moderation and standardisation procedures are good. On most courses, students are given clear indications as to how they can improve their work. Oral skills are assessed in modern foreign languages and English as an integral part of courses, enabling students to develop their fluency and confidence within a range of contexts and situations. Students' practical skills are assessed in class and in their work-based learning situations, using appropriate procedures. Personal tutorials receive assessment information which they use during discussions with students about their progress. Teachers keep accurate records of students' progress but clear improvement targets are not set for individual students to help them improve the standard of their work and help teachers monitor their progress. There is insufficient use of value-added methodologies for setting improvement targets for individual students and for assessing and monitoring their progress. Assessment is validated through internal and external verifications procedures and verification procedures are effective in most areas. Students' learning needs are assessed early in the course and additional support provided where necessary. In most cases, teachers assess students' previous achievements carefully when advising them on appropriate courses to study.

24. The college offers a wide range of programmes across all 14 areas of learning to meet the needs of the people of Canterbury, Sheppey and the surrounding areas. Programmes are carefully designed and provide good progression routes for most full-time and part-time students. There are, however, gaps in provision at foundation level in beauty therapy, media and performing arts, health and social care, land based, and science. There are good opportunities for students to progress to higher education (HE) within the college in many curriculum areas. Most full-time students follow intermediate or advanced programmes. There are increasing numbers of 14 to 16 year old pupils following applied GCSE programmes. There is provision for students with special learning needs.

25. The college places considerable emphasis on developing community-based learning and on widening participation, and is generally successful in achieving its objectives. In 2002, for example, there was a significant increase in the number of students enrolled from disadvantaged areas as well as from specific groups within the community, such as full-time carers of dependent relatives, adults and 16 to 18 year olds with low literacy and numeracy skills, and people with mental health difficulties.

26. A substantial amount of community-based education is provided at over 30 venues. Enrolments

on community-based courses have grown substantially during the three years prior to the inspection, from 1,000 to well over 8,000. Most of the community-based courses are in IT, and literacy and numeracy. A range of short courses is provided during the evenings and at weekends at the Canterbury site. The college has developed extensive and strong community links which are generating imaginative projects and partnership arrangements. A mobile learning unit is used to provide computing courses in isolated locations. The Barham School project runs in the local primary school and provides IT programmes for parents of primary school children and other local residents and is partly funded through the rural development scheme. Another example of community-based learning is the IT suite at Northgate Community Centre which offers IT programmes including unlimited access to the Internet, job search opportunities and literacy and numeracy support. This centre has received 'UK online' centre status as have a number of other centres run by the college. Programmes are also run in collaboration with the Local Education Authority (LEA) and local schools as part of the offer to young people who are disaffected with education.

27. The college provides an extensive enrichment programme for full-time students. For example, art and design students benefit from visits to art galleries, to New York and to specific exhibitions. Film studies students visit the Venice Film festival and animal care students visit South Africa. In addition, there is a separate enrichment programme managed and organised by the student union and funded by the college. The programme includes expeditions and projects, both in this country and abroad, which have a social as well as an educational impact. For example, students built a crèche for a local community as part of the remit for a visit to Africa. This expedition received business sponsorship to offset costs. There are a number of college sports teams and students are able to use the sports hall, without cost most of the time, but for a small charge during weekday lunchtimes. There are opportunities to join the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at the college, and these opportunities are extended to other organisations, for example, local schools and the University of Kent as well as a local scout group

28. The college provides good support and guidance for students. There is a coherent framework of support and guidance activities for all full-time and part-time students which is explained in well-documented policies and procedures. Support staff are well qualified in guidance and related areas and have relevant, comprehensive and up-to-date resources to work with. Students receive good, impartial, confidential advice. Students' first contact with the college is usually through its student information service which, in January and February of each year, deals with some 3,500 enquiries. Guidance and selection procedures have been improved and most selection procedures focus closely on matching students to the appropriate course. Induction of students, including those who enrol after the start of the course, is effective. The college monitors the effectiveness of its information and guidance services well and gives suitably detailed consideration to the views of students. Through the college's welfare resources service, students receive advice and assistance on a range of personal and financial matters.

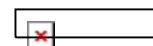
29. Students are screened systematically to identify their additional learning support needs but practices are different at the two main sites. Most needs are identified but the individual learning plans produced are very uneven in quality and are not made sufficient use of when teachers are planning lessons and monitoring students' progress in their main area of study. Students receive good support at the college's essential skills centre but support provided during key skill lessons varies and is not always adequate. Students at the college who received additional support achieved results above the average for all students at foundation and intermediate levels in 2002. There is good specialist support for students with physical and sensory impairment, as well as for those with difficulties caused by dyslexia. A helpful booklet provides teachers with information and guidance which helps them to make appropriate provision for students with dyslexia. The support provided has a significant impact on the progress and achievements of individual students.

30. Tutorial support is mostly good. There is a comprehensive tutor handbook to guide practice in personal and curriculum tutoring. All full-time students have a minimum entitlement to six individual tutorials each year and part-time students have a minimum entitlement to three. Students speak highly of the individual tutorials and many receive regular additional support from course and personal tutors. Tutors are approachable and helpful and give generously of their time. However, not all students receive their full entitlement and course teams were reviewing their tutorial provision at the time of the inspection. In order to increase the support for individual students, the college

introduced a system of academic mentoring in September 2002 for some students who were underachieving. Feedback from students and improvements in classwork and homework suggest that the additional support is having positive impact in those areas where it has been implemented. Additional subject tutoring has also been introduced for GCE AS level students. An additional session is provided, in every third week, by subject specialists and is used for individual or group subject support. The additional support measures being developed seem to be improving some retention rates. The rate for GCE AS students for example was 92 % at the time of the inspection, compared with 75% at the same time the previous year. Group tutorials are based on tutorial programmes which reflect the level of the course and cover an appropriate range of topics, activities, careers information and guidance. These are scheduled to take place once a week for full-time students. The quality of the teaching and the coverage of the programmes vary significantly. In at least one curriculum area, construction, students were not receiving their full tutorial entitlement. Attendance at tutorials also varies. Tutors keep a personal file for every student which is maintained and updated in discussion with the student. There are examples of well-written, suitably detailed records, but there are also records which contain very little information and few clear targets for improvement. Tutors place insufficient emphasis on setting clear targets to help individual students to improve their performance and make inadequate use of the individual learning plans which students had produced in their first tutorial. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are informed of their progress at an annual meeting. A written report is sent home if parents are unable to attend.

31. The college has established lesson procedures to address poor attendance and achieve punctual arrival of students but they are not applied consistently by teachers. Late slips are not completed in some lessons, and, while the use of a red card system and the intervention of support staff have resulted in improved attendance in some curriculum areas, attendance in other classes continues to be very low. Overall attendance is below the national average for colleges of a similar type.

Leadership and management



32. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Those running the college have a clear vision and sense of purpose. Student numbers in all age groups are growing significantly. College data indicate that at all levels, overall examination pass rates in 2002 were at, or above, national averages, having declined in the previous year. The college acknowledges that there needs to be continued efforts to improve retention rates in many curriculum areas and had begun to introduce a range of measures to address this issue by the time of the inspection. Most teaching is of at least a satisfactory standard. However, the profile of good or better teaching is below the national average for general FE colleges. Opportunities for teachers to share good practice are underdeveloped.

33. Governors and senior managers have set a clear strategic direction for the college. The suitably detailed and comprehensive strategic plan contains a clear set of values and addresses local and national priorities for education and training appropriately. It emphasises the college's central purpose: to raise achievement; to implement a relevant and responsive curriculum; to extend participation in college courses; and to provide high-quality education. The college's long-standing plans for addressing its unsatisfactory accommodation and for achieving relocation to a new site have been severely affected by legal and other procedural matters outside the college's control.

34. A key strategic aim of the college is to shape provision to meet the needs of different categories of learner. In September 2002, a new management structure was introduced aimed at focusing more effectively on the specific needs of young people, adults and community learners, work-based learners, and those undertaking degree-level studies at the college. The intention is to enable staff to benefit from more flexible working arrangements and contribute to different areas of curriculum provision. Senior and middle managers understand their new roles and responsibilities well, although the new structure had not been fully established in some areas of the college at the time of the inspection and not all staff were clear about the lines of responsibility.

35. The standard of curriculum management is satisfactory. In a few areas, for example, visual arts and media, and adult and community provision for ICT, it is good. Curriculum teams meet regularly and concentrate effectively on monitoring student performance and improving achievement. In some curriculum areas, the new management structure is beginning to provide good opportunities for curriculum development. In a minority of curriculum areas, the strategies for improving the retention rate have not been applied effectively. Some aspects of the management of work-based learning are unsatisfactory. For example, in plumbing and carpentry and joinery, there is poor liaison between employers and the college. However, in other areas, such as electrical installation, there is good procurement and monitoring of work placements and effective co-ordination of on and off-the-job training.

36. The college benefits from a knowledgeable corporation, committed to the success of the college. Governors bring valuable skills and experience to their work and have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development. They are very clear about the distinction between the roles involved in governance, leadership and management. The corporation monitors all aspects of college's performance effectively. The quality assurance committee conducts suitably detailed and thorough reviews of the college's educational performance and adopts a critical approach to the information it receives. Good attention is paid to governor training. New governors receive sound induction training and support. As one of its targets, the corporation expects all members to attend at least one external training event each year. Strategic planning days are used very effectively to review the future direction of the college. Governors have acted swiftly and appropriately in the light of the continued uncertainty regarding the outcome of the college's relocation plans and intend to develop a new accommodation strategy aimed at developing the present site in Canterbury.

37. There is a strong emphasis throughout the college on monitoring of performance and setting targets for improvement. The senior management team receives regular reports on enrolments, and retention and achievement rates. Reports are clear and make good use of performance indicators. Demanding, but realistic, targets are set in the context of relevant national averages and the historical performance of the college. However, the college does not make sufficient use of value added analysis, particularly in terms of measuring the comparative performance of courses and curriculum areas. Target setting at curriculum team level is uneven.

38. The college has well established and comprehensive quality assurance procedures but their application often lacks rigour. Course reviews, for example, are conducted systematically, but, in many curriculum areas, analysis is superficial and fails to identify key weaknesses in performance. Since the last inspection, the college has developed a more focused and detailed review of each area of the college's curriculum on a four-yearly cycle. The reviews involve the use of external consultants, governors and student representatives. They consider a wide range of evidence and produce a comprehensive report which clearly identifies areas for improvement. Some reviews have a thematic approach. For example, a review has been undertaken of the college's response to Curriculum 2000.

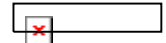
39. In 2001/02, the college's lesson observation scheme was extended to cover all teachers. The college acknowledges that the grades awarded by internal observers during the first year of the modified scheme have been over-generous. A staff development programme has been introduced to address this issue. Three advanced practitioners were appointed shortly before the inspection to promote good practice in teaching and learning and to work with new teachers and those identified as underperforming. The college's appraisal system applies to all full-time and substantive part-time teachers. Appraisal records are kept up-to-date and the scheme is effective in identifying staff development needs. The college has introduced a teachers' pay initiative scheme which rewards staff who take effective steps towards improving their teaching performance.

40. The college's annual self-assessment report is, in most respects, a clear and evaluative document. In some curriculum areas, however, insufficient attention is paid to identifying weaknesses in achievement and in teaching and learning. Development plans form the basis for identifying and pursuing objectives. The plans contain clear action points, targets and success criteria, timescales for achievement and also specify the persons with responsibility for implementation. Some targets, however, are not sufficiently clear and nor are they easily measurable.

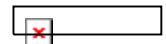
41. The college demonstrates a high level of commitment to seeking to ensure equality of opportunity. All college policies are cross-referenced with the equal opportunities policy, which is reviewed annually. A suitably detailed race-relations policy and action plan has been produced. There is thorough monitoring of all aspects of the college's performance in terms of gender, ethnicity, and disability. An annual equal opportunities report is presented to the corporation. A two-day conference for all members of staff held in January 2002 had the theme of 'celebrating diversity'. It included sessions on working with asylum seekers, responding to people with physical disabilities, tackling issues arising from age diversity and providing for those with hearing and sight impairment. Through its participation in the National Black Managers' Initiative, the college has been successful in recruiting a member of a minority ethnic group to its management team.

42. Financial management is sound. Governors and senior managers monitor college expenditure very carefully. The college achieved its funding target in 2001/02 and has exceeded this target in 2002/03. Substantial cash reserves have been accumulated to support the long-standing plan for relocation and accommodation improvement. The system for allocating and monitoring budgets is good, although the college currently lacks a model for course costing.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and AVCE science courses

- thorough and helpful marking of students' work.

Weaknesses

- much poor teaching

- low pass and retention rates on most courses

- insufficient practical work

- insufficient use of ICT in lessons

- insufficient use of value-added measures

- poor specialist resources.

Scope of provision

43. The college offers an appropriate range of GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, geology and mathematics. Some 24 students enrol for GNVQ intermediate and AVCE science courses annually. There are no science courses at foundation level. At the time of the inspection, about 330 students, mainly aged 16 to 18, had enrolled for advanced courses and about 130 had enrolled at intermediate level, mainly for GCSE mathematics.

Achievement and standards

44. Retention and pass rates are unsatisfactory. Retention rates are below the national averages for many courses and have declined significantly on GNVQ intermediate science during the three years prior to the inspection. Retention rates on two-year GCE A-level courses were low in 2000 and 2001 and progression rates from GCE AS to A2 have also been low. Retention rates for GCSE mathematics improved significantly in 2002. Pass rates for a number of courses are below the national average for colleges of a similar type. Pass rates for GCSE mathematics at grade A* to C are consistently low. For vocational science courses, pass rates are high, but they are accompanied by low retention rates. All the AVCE science students who completed the course in 2002 were successful in gaining the qualification. College data indicate that for GCE A-level students completing their course in 2002, about a half achieved a lower grade than would be predicted from their performance at GCSE.

45. The standard of many students' work in lessons is unsatisfactory. Written work is often untidy and many science students fail to understand basic concepts. For example, some GNVQ intermediate students did not understand the basic properties of acids and bases. In a GCSE mathematics lesson, students found it difficult to convert basic units, such as changing centimetres to metres, and were unable to explain what a scatter diagram was, even after the teacher had explained it to them. Students arrive on time for lessons but attendance is low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	227	166	129
		% retention	72	70	92
		% pass rate	40	34	29
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	10	11	13
		% retention	90	73	62
		% pass rate	67	63	88
AVCE science	3	No. of starts	12	13	10

		% retention	33	38	60
		% pass rate	25	80	100
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	61	49
		% retention	*	72	80
		% pass rate	*	48	41
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	*	25	24
		% retention	*	88	71
		% pass rate	*	59	76
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	39	31
		% retention	*	72	68
		% pass rate	*	61	65
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	**	45	32
		% retention	**	44	91
		% pass rate	**	74	72
GCE A-level environmental protection/conservation	3	No. of starts	16	13	14
		% retention	56	62	100
		% pass rate	89	100	79

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

*course not running

** data unreliable

GCE A2 level in 2002 are in-year retention and not directly comparable with the data for the previous two year GCE A-level courses

Quality of education and training

46. There is much poor and unimaginative teaching. Schemes of work and lesson plans are prepared carefully, but insufficient attention is given to the consolidation of theoretical concepts through practical work and students' laboratory skills are not sufficiently developed. The amount of practical laboratory work carried out is inadequate. Schemes of work and lesson plans do not focus sufficiently on the needs of individual students and students do not make adequate progress in many lessons. Some students lack self-confidence and do not answer the questions posed by teachers. In many unsatisfactory lessons, students spend too long copying notes from the whiteboard or from overhead projector slides. In a GCE AS geology lesson, students copied notes on sediments from a poor handwritten projector slide. This activity failed to hold the interest of students who became bored and inattentive. Teachers sometimes spent too long describing theoretical topics. In a GCE A2 biology lesson, the teacher spent 30 minutes reading to the class from a sheet on cystic fibrosis. The students made no contribution to the lesson and all the students in the group were set the same task, which the more able students found too easy. In the more effective lessons, teachers question individual students carefully to help them learn and ensure that all members of the group have grasped key points before moving on. For example, in a GCE AS physics lesson, the teacher questioned the students carefully to ensure that they understood the relationships between current and electromagnetism.

47. Teachers are well qualified and are knowledgeable about their subjects but their knowledge and experience is not used effectively to enliven lessons and motivate students. A wide range of enrichment activities are planned to enliven the curriculum and promote students' personal

development. These include trips and visits, and specialist lectures when external speakers are invited to the college. However, the uptake of enrichment activities by science and mathematics students is small, due to timetable constraints. Resources to support learning in science and mathematics are inadequate. Most teachers do not use computers to aid learning or to develop students' interest in their chosen subjects. There are insufficient computers in laboratories and mathematics classrooms and insufficient staff development on their use in teaching. There are some online learning materials available to biology students. There is only one science technician who has to cover all science subjects. Accommodation is adequate for both science and mathematics, although there is an absence of displays of students' work

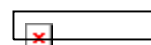
48. Teachers are supportive both during and outside lessons and relate well to their students. Parent's evenings are well attended. Students receive good feedback on their written work, particularly for science courses, and their grammatical errors are corrected. Detailed comments from teachers to GNVQ intermediate and AVCE science students help them to improve their work. Tutors set target grades for GCE A-level students, based on their prior performance at GCSE. The progress of students is compared with their target grades through regular individual tutorials; the process provides effective support for individual students. A workshop is offered to mathematics students at lunchtime but few students attend and there are insufficient resources to support their learning.

49. Students are given effective guidance to enable them to choose the most appropriate course. There is a well-planned induction programme that covers students' rights and responsibilities in the college and includes subject-specific information. GCE A-level and AVCE students receive good support from tutors and subject teachers when applying for admission to HE.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, although, at the time of the inspection, a recently appointed manager for the area was implementing new policies and procedures to address weaknesses, it was too early to judge their impact. Sufficient attention is not given to improving the quality of teaching and learning and there are not enough opportunities for staff development. There is insufficient use of value added methods for monitoring the performance of individual courses; the college had recognised this weakness by the time of the inspection.

Land-based



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on animal care, NVQ level 1 horse care and floristry courses

- good teaching on veterinary nursing courses

- benefit to learning through effective links with industry

- effective curriculum enrichment activities.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on first diploma and NVQ level 1 horse care courses

- unsatisfactory planning of work experience and time-tabling of animal care courses

- ineffective internal verification of animal care courses

- insufficient resources for practical companion animal teaching.

Scope of provision

51. The college provides first and national diploma courses in animal care, countryside and forestry, a first diploma course in horse studies, and a national certificate in floristry. At the time of the inspection, work-based training courses in veterinary nursing were offered at NVQ level 2 and 3 for some 25 students, mostly adults, based in veterinary practices in the region. There were over 100 students on animal care courses most of whom are aged 16 to 18. Numbers on countryside courses were low; they totalled some 18 students. The college is the only provider of these courses in the region and the provision offered covers a wide range of disciplines, which ensures that students have access to specialist provision locally. Numbers of full-time students on floristry courses were increasing and evening classes for part-time students were well subscribed. There is no land-based provision at foundation level. Animal care courses use facilities at the Canterbury site and an animal care centre is close to the college on a separate site at Spring Lane. Practical teaching of equine courses takes place at two riding centres, one local to the Canterbury campus and one on the Isle of Sheppey. A flower shop on the main college site is run by floristry students and staff.

Achievement and standards

52. The retention rate is poor on first diploma and NVQ level 1 horse-care courses. Of those students who are retained on the NVQ 1 horse-care course, pass rates are high. Pass rates are also high on animal care and floristry courses. Pass rates for animal care courses at first diploma and national levels were well above the national average in 2002. Retention rates on the first diploma animal care course declined to below the national average during the three years prior to the inspection. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ 2 floristry course are consistently high. Pass and retention rates on land and countryside courses are low and declining at first diploma level. Pass rates on the NVQ level 3 veterinary nursing qualifications are above the national average but pass rates at level 2 are low and there were no successful candidates on the pre-veterinary courses in 2001/02. Achievement of key skills is low, with no achievements in 2001/02. At the time of the inspection, students were making satisfactory progress in communication but not in the other key skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in land-based, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ level 1 horse care	1	No. of starts	-	14	11

		% retention	-	43	36
		% pass rate	-	83	100
First diploma in animal care	2	No. of starts	36	38	25
		% retention	89	74	68
		% pass rate	81	100	94
NVQ level 2 in floristry	2	No. of starts	8	8	8
		% retention	75	75	100
		% pass rate	83	100	88
National diploma in animal management	3	No. of starts	57	49	39
		% retention	60	61	72
		% pass rate	82	96	93

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002) - course not running

Quality of education and training

53. Most teaching is satisfactory; teaching on veterinary nursing courses is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers relate theory to practice effectively and draw on the experiences of students. In a lesson on radiography for veterinary nursing students, the group discussed the use of radiography in veterinary practices and students described examples they had encountered during their work. Students contributed well to the discussion and learnt from each other. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects and have relevant industrial experience which is used effectively during practical teaching. Working relationships between teachers and students are good and students receive plenty of informal support and encouragement. Teachers maintain the interest of small groups of students on countryside courses well by employing a suitable range of activities. In one lesson, for example, there was an effective Internet search activity to research a conservation topic.

54. Some animal care and equine lessons are poorly planned. The time allocated for different activities during lessons is often inappropriate to the subject matter. Some handouts are poorly produced and do not encourage students to think about their content or consolidate their learning. Some teaching is pitched at too high a level for the ability range of the students. Complicated and inappropriate terminology is included in some handouts, which also contain irrelevant subject matter. In a lesson on equine legislation, too much time was spent unnecessarily explaining contract law and the principles of negligence. There is insufficient use of effective demonstrations. Some demonstrations are conducted too quickly and are not clearly related to the accompanying handouts. For example, during a demonstration of health checks on a rabbit, the sequence of checks was completed quickly and did not match the checklist in the handout. Later in the lesson, the students did not use the checklist to record their findings effectively.

55. Resources are satisfactory or better apart for those for dog grooming and handling; there are no facilities for students to work with cats. Space for the teaching of practical animal handling is too restricted, but neither is maximum benefit obtained through well-planned timetabling. Land and environmental courses make effective use of off-site resources and students value the experiences offered. A well-equipped veterinary nursing classroom provides good learning opportunities and includes useful models of dogs, which can be used to practise resuscitation, and examples of radiography equipment. Floristry teachers use the campus flower shop to provide valuable experience of working with suppliers and customers. Students create good window displays and arrangement around the campus to practice their design and arrangement skills. Health and safety checks take place at the Spring Lane accommodation but there was low awareness of health and safety requirements in one of the lessons. Students wore jewellery, hair was not tied back and hand-washing requirements were not strictly observed. There is insufficient checking of work experience placements.

56. Effective enrichment activities provide students with good learning opportunities and allow them to make good industry contacts. Visits are frequently made locally, as well as elsewhere in the UK and abroad, and enrich learning opportunities. An expedition to Exmoor is used effectively to study the ecology of the locality, including that of a native pony herd. A two-week visit to South Africa for national diploma animal care students provides opportunities to observe animal behaviour in a natural habitat and to see a wide range of unusual species. The college helps students meet the costs of these courses by arranging payment schemes over a period of time and also supports students through a college bursary system. Small numbers of students progress from the national diploma in animal management to HE courses within the college.

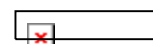
57. Assessment is satisfactory, but internal verification systems are not rigorously implemented thoroughly, especially for practical assessments. Assessments are marked satisfactorily but feedback is often brief and not aimed at helping students to improve. Internal verification comments are too general and do not help assessors to improve the quality of assessment.

58. Tutors support students who have personal problems effectively. They do not, however, monitor students' progress through the tutorial system sufficiently thoroughly or give enough attention to setting and monitoring personal targets to help students improve their performance. Some tutorial records are sparse and contain too few references to targets for improving performance. Teachers take prompt action when students are absent from classes, and attendance is good. There is no provision at foundation level and some students are placed inappropriately on intermediate courses. The college was considering developing foundation provision at this level at the time of the inspection.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvements were being established on the use of resources and the general organisation of the curriculum area at the time of the inspection. Students do not get sufficient practical experience because the planning of work experience and timetabling are unsatisfactory. Planning of work experience takes place late in the academic year and best use is not made of practical resources. The self-assessment process is not sufficiently thorough and inadequate attention is given to planning for improvement. Teachers across the area are not sufficiently aware of what needs to be done to bring about improvement.

Construction



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

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

Strengths

- many high retention rates

- well planned lessons for meeting individual learners' needs

- effective links with industry

- effective co-ordination of work-based learning in electrical installation.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most programmes
- low achievement and retention rates on the modern apprenticeship framework
- unsatisfactory specialist accommodation
- ineffective planning and delivery of tutorials.

Scope of provision

60. The college provides traditional craft courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, plumbing and electrical installation. Courses are also provided which lead to technician qualifications at intermediate and advanced levels. Short courses cover gas safety, lead bossing and a range of do-it-yourself topics. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 100 students aged 16 to 18 and 65 adults on full-time programmes, and some 200 students aged 16 to 18 and 500 adults on part-time programmes. There were 112 work-based learners on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. Some 20 students under the age of 16 from the county's school exclusion unit were following full-time or part-time programmes.

Achievement and standards

61. Retention rates are high on foundation electrical installation, NVQ level 2 wood occupations, GNVQ intermediate construction, and NVQ level 3 bricklaying. The pass rates on most courses are low and pass rates on NVQ level 2 bricklaying and AVCE in construction and the built environment courses declined sharply in 2002 to well below the national average for the sector. Achievement and retention rates are low for learners on modern apprenticeship frameworks.

62. Most students work well in lessons, particularly in workshops. They produce satisfactory practical work that meets course requirements. Assignments produced by students are also of a satisfactory standard, but few assignments are word-processed. Students' portfolios vary in quality. In plumbing, for example, they are comprehensive and include assessment plans and graded assignments. In other areas, they are poorly structured and not well organised. Students' attendance is satisfactory overall.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 2360/6	1	No. of starts	41	54	41

Electrical Installation		% retention	66	78	80
		% pass rate	52	40	55
NVQ in wood occupations	2	No. of starts	45	57	21
		% retention	29	74	71
		% pass rate	85	87	60
NVQ in plumbing	2	No. of starts	41	64	38
		% retention	63	47	53
		% pass rate	62	69	65
NVQ in bricklaying	2	No. of starts	37	30	15
		% retention	41	60	53
		% pass rate	70	92	33
GNVQ intermediate construction and the built environment	2	No. of starts	16	15	19
		% retention	69	67	74
		% pass rate	55	70	64
AVCE construction and the built environment	3	No. of starts	14	10	11
		% retention	43	70	55
		% pass rate	33	71	33
NVQ in bricklaying	3	No. of starts	*	16	15
		% retention	*	75	87
		% pass rate	*	92	100

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

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

63. Most teaching is good or better, but there are also some unsatisfactory lessons. Lessons are mostly well organised and well structured and have clear learning objectives which students understand. The more effective lessons are taught in an industrial context and teachers often refer to industrial practice. Teachers also often illustrate key points and promote discussion through reference to their own experience. They make good use of handouts to support learning. In an intermediate NVQ carpentry and joinery lesson, for example, a handout on drawings, symbols and abbreviations was used effectively by students to interpret building plans. All the students in the group contributed to the discussion and were able to interpret building drawings by the end of the lesson. The handouts and materials produced by teachers enable weaker students to grasp key concepts but also provide additional challenges to the more able students. In a practical brickwork lesson, students worked as a team to build a bungalow. Different groups of students worked on different aspects of the job. The teacher monitored their work carefully, provided encouragement and advice to each student and ensured that every student was developing appropriate skills in a realistic industrial context.

64. In the less effective lessons, students repeat tasks with which they are familiar, practical activities are not linked to theory and students are not provided with handouts that consolidate learning. An electrical installation lesson, for example, took place in a cramped workshop. The teacher provided little guidance and the students worked on a number of wiring projects which involved skills they had already mastered. In weaker theory lessons, teachers do not phrase questions carefully and do not spend sufficient time ensuring that students have understood theoretical principals. In an AVCE lesson on architectural styles, for example, students became

confused, were unclear what was expected of them, and could not see the relevance of the lesson to an assignment they had to complete.

65. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. In most craft areas, students have workbooks in which assignments and industry standards are clearly outlined. Students are provided with useful information packs that help them complete assignments. Work-based learning assessment procedures in electrical installation, which had been introduced just prior to the inspection, are effective. Students' progress is monitored effectively on and off the site. In other areas of construction crafts, the monitoring of work-based learning and the assessment of learners progress is not effective. Assessors' feedback to students is uneven in quality ranging from constructive and helpful observations to superficial comments. Internal verification of students' assessed and graded work is inconsistent. In some instances, it is merely confined to the signature of the internal verifier and no comments on assessors' grading decisions or feedback to the students themselves are given.

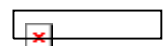
66. Tutorial programmes are poorly planned and ineffective. For example, on the AVCE course, tutorials, although timetabled, do not actually take place. Support and guidance for students on work-based learning in electrical installation is good. All full-time students and those on work-based learning programmes are tested to assess their learning needs at the start of their course. Students who are given support are regularly monitored.

67. Teachers are vocationally qualified and most have appropriate industrial experience. They have assessors/verifiers qualifications that meet course requirements. Specialist accommodation is poor. Workshops are cramped and the temporary classrooms used for some of the teaching are unsatisfactory. Some workshop tools, particularly in carpentry and joinery, are of a poor quality, which impedes students' progress. There is insufficient computer software to aid learning. In contrast, newly built workshops and classrooms at the Sheppey campus are of a high standard. Work-based training advisers are used effectively within electrical installation to support the links between the industry and the college. Effective links with industry lead to donations to the college. For example, some state of the art equipment for gas safety courses has been provided by employers.

Leadership and management

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has developed good links with local employers. Safe working practices are promoted. The new management structure introduced by the college prior to the inspection is well documented, but lines of communication across the curriculum area are not fully understood. College quality assurance procedures are followed but are not applied with sufficient rigour. Course review and evaluation reports, for example, are not sufficiently detailed and evaluative. There is insufficient analysis of the retention and pass rate data that are presented in course reviews. Targets and strategies for improving the performance of courses have been introduced but it was too early at the time of the inspection to judge whether these are having an impact. There is insufficient sharing of good practice across the area but there is a strong emphasis on safety issues and on ensuring that students develop safe working practices. Overall, the management of the learning itself is unsatisfactory but work-based learning is effectively co-ordinated and managed in electrical installation.

Engineering



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on college-based courses

- effective integration of theory and practical teaching

- good support for work on literacy and numeracy

- effective strategies for the improvement of retention rates.

Weaknesses

- poor resources in motor vehicle workshop

- poor key skills development for work-based students

- inadequate target setting for work-based learners

- poor completion of the framework in work-based learning

Scope of provision

69. The college provides a good range of courses in automotive, mechanical and electrical engineering at foundation, national certificate and diploma levels as well as NVQ courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 for students who, at the time of the inspection, numbered 500. Enrolment on many courses is low. Two large engineering companies in the locality had stopped recruiting in the two years prior to the inspection. Around 220 students were full time, 150 part time and the college provided a significant programme of work-based training for 125 students who were following modern apprenticeships. Most adult students are on part-time courses. Courses include introduction to welding, computer aided design (CAD), national certificate in automotive engineering, general engineering programmes and commercial electronic servicing and computing at diploma level.

Achievement and standards

70. There are high pass rates on most college-based courses. Enrolments have declined significantly on both the national certificate and national diploma courses in engineering. Both retention and pass rates on the national diploma course are poor. Enrolment on the first diploma in engineering had increased significantly in 2002 and the retention rate was high at the time of

inspection. Retention rates on full-time motor vehicle courses are below the national averages for colleges of a similar type and retention rates have declined to below the national average on the NVQ engineering manufacture (foundation) programme. Both retention and pass rates are high on the national certificate in engineering. Few trainees achieve both NVQ level 3 qualifications and the full modern apprentice framework, but many trainees achieve NVQ level 2 qualifications. The achievement of key skills within the modern apprenticeship framework is low. Students develop good practical skills. Electronic circuits and welded assemblies produced by students are mostly of a satisfactory or good standard. Attendance in lessons is satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ engineering manufacture (foundation)	2	No. of starts	46	33	11
		% retention	76	84	67
		% pass rate	24	95	83
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems	2	No. of starts	78	20	17
		% retention	33	65	65
		% pass rate	72	61	73
City and Guilds fabrication and welding	2	No. of starts	26	35	22
		% retention	76	88	89
		% pass rate	55	86	86
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems	3	No. of starts	27	23	13
		% retention	92	73	77
		% pass rate	80	52	100
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	35	25	2
		% retention	65	80	100
		% pass rate	77	84	100
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	42	53	4
		% retention	52	46	75
		% pass rate	68	45	100

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

Quality of education and training

71. Most teaching is satisfactory or better but there are some unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles to motivate students and most lessons are well planned. In the more effective theory lessons, teachers explain the objectives clearly and check through review and discussion at the end of the lesson that students have learnt key facts. Effective use is made of visual aids and models. For example, the use of sectionalised valves and cylinders in the pneumatics lessons and of pressure instruments showing the operation of levers during mechanical science lessons was effective in maintaining students' interest in their work and in relating theory to practice. Teachers make extensive and effective use of work in small groups to encourage students to discuss their work. In a lesson on customer service, role-play was used successfully to teach motor vehicle students how to deal with complaints. Students discussed different ways of dealing with complaints and different options for communicating with customers. Teachers often use examples from their own experience to enliven lessons and demonstrate how to put theory into practice. They also encourage students to share their experience. Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for their subject during lessons and students are complimentary about the manner in

which they are taught. During a materials science lesson students particularly enjoyed using microscopes to measure carbon deposits in metals. During most lessons students are attentive and interact well with their teachers. Theory and practical teaching are well integrated and practical work is used effectively to consolidate students' understanding of underlying theory and to develop their practical skills. In some practical lessons, however, there is insufficient assessment of students' work and insufficient feedback to students to help them improve the standards of their work. Little formal feedback or grading of practical work takes place other than during scheduled assessment periods. There is insufficient integration of key skills teaching with courses run in the occupational area and students are not clear about how they are meant to achieve the qualifications. Students are able to use computer facilities such as autocad outside timetabled hours and are well supported by their teachers.

72. Assessment and testing requirements are clearly identified in course timetables. Students are fully informed of the assessment and testing requirements and when they are due to take place. Internal verification arrangements follow appropriate guidelines. Internal verifiers take samples of portfolio assessments and observe assessments. Constructive and suitably detailed feedback is given by assessors. Student's additional learning needs are met. All students receive feedback on the results of diagnostic tests and, where appropriate, individual action plans are agreed. Attendance at additional mathematics and English lessons is good. Support lessons for numeracy and literacy are designed so that there is appropriate use of engineering terms and reference to work-place activities. The basic skills tutor has engineering experience. The additional support provided is well integrated within students main learning programme and support for literacy and numeracy was being extended to the workplace at the time of the inspection.

73. Work-based students are employed in a wide range of engineering companies. Students are well supported by their employers and gain experience of a wide range of engineering activities. Performance reviews for work-based students are carried out poorly. There is insufficient measurement of the skills developed by students against the NVQ and key skills requirements of their programmes and against the individual targets set out in training plans. Few measurable targets are set for individual students which could be considered during the performance review discussions. All students have regular meetings with tutors throughout the year and students are reminded of deadlines for different aspects of their work. They receive informative feedback on assignments during tutorials which helps them identify where improvements need to be made. Discussions during tutorials include a review of both vocational and pastoral issues. As part of the process of providing individual support, students are set challenging individual assignments to be completed by the next tutorial. At the time of the inspection, managers in the area were establishing a number of initiatives for improving retention rates, including a review of tutorial methods and strategies.

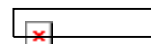
74. Staff in the area are well qualified and have good practical experience. The quality of teaching and the technical knowledge of individual tutors are continually reviewed and teachers receive useful feedback on their performance. Resources for teaching engineering courses are satisfactory but those for motor vehicle courses are dated. The vehicles used by students in workshops are in an advanced state of disrepair and utilise dated technology. The resources are adequate for pre-apprenticeship and NVQ level 1 programmes but not for the higher-level qualifications. There is sufficient up-to-date equipment in most other mechanical and electronic workshops.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff in the area work well as a team and meet regularly. At the time of inspection, a number of initiatives to improve retention rates and to re-structure the curriculum were beginning to have positive impact on standards. There has been a decline in enrolment on a number of courses in the area and the college has been slow to adapt and re-organise the curriculum until recently. Attendance monitoring and analysis of attendance data have improved. Staff development is effective and teachers regularly review and update their industrial knowledge by working at local engineering companies during college termly breaks. Quality assurance arrangements include regular analysis of student feedback questionnaires. Where negative comments are received, action is taken and the students are informed of the outcome. Self-assessment procedures are effective and, in most instances, identify strengths and areas for

improvement. The management and monitoring of workplace training, however, is weak. There is insufficient monitoring of workplace training. Staff who carry out work-place visits do not have the qualifications and experience required to identify poor practice or establish corrective measures. Insufficient attention is given to promoting equality of opportunity during workplace visits.

Business and administration



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ accounting courses

- good teaching on most courses

- good monitoring of students' progress on most courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses

- low retention rate on AVCE business

- insufficient resources for developing students' practical skills

- ineffective matching of students' needs to course provision at foundation level.

Scope of provision

76. The range of full-time and part-time courses is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, there were some 500 students aged 16 to 18 and 430 students on courses for adults. The provision includes full-time GCE A-level, AVCE, GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate level and NVQ courses in administration. The range of courses in accounting is good. It includes part-time and evening provision for NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4 accounting, and a range of short commercial courses in book keeping and accounts. There is a small amount of work-based provision for foundation modern apprenticeships in administration and accounts, and the range of management courses is limited.

Provision at foundation level is narrow.

Achievement and standards

77. There are high pass rates on NVQ accounting courses and retention rates are average or above average for the sector. Pass rates on NVQ 2 accounting courses are some 26 percentage points above the national average for colleges of a similar type. Retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses are mostly average or above average but progression rates from GCE AS to GCE A2 are low. Pass rates on GCE A-level economics have been declining. The retention rate on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses improved in 2002, but pass rates have been declining and are low. The retention rate of students on the AVCE business is low, although the students who remain achieve the qualification. The NVQ 2 administration course achieved average results; the business skills programme that was its successor achieved both high pass and retention rates. The office skills programme at Sheppey had high retention rates in 2002 and all learners met their individual learning goals. Pass rates are average or above average on most short courses.

78. Most students produce work of a satisfactory or better standard, organise their work well and in lessons have sound records of attendance. Students on accounting courses are highly motivated and respond well to the teaching. Many manage their learning effectively, work well with fellow students and produce good work in class. In one NVQ level 2 administration lesson, students completed a project involving their research and reached a more advanced standard than was required by the national standards. Many students on the GNVQ foundation programme do not produce work of the required and are poorly motivated. Attendance on part-time courses is good and students' work is of a high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	17	16	22
		% retention	65	63	85
		% pass rate	64	50	41
NVQ business administration	2	No. of starts	64	53	*
		% retention	69	79	*
		% pass rate	64	74	*
Oxford, Cambridge and RSA business skills	2	No. of starts	*	*	57
		% retention	*	*	82
		% pass rate	*	*	80
NVQ accounting Association of Accounting Technicians	2	No. of starts	40	39	38
		% retention	73	77	74
		% pass rate	86	87	96
NVQ accounting Association of Accounting Technicians	3	No. of starts	41	37	34
		% retention	90	86	79
		% pass rate	62	56	74
GNVQ advanced 2000 and 2001 AVCE business 2000	3	No. of starts	84	54	37
		% retention	65	56	38
		% pass rate	72	79	100
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	89	76	28

studies		% pass rate	56	84	84
---------	--	-------------	----	----	----

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

GCE A2 level in 2002 are in-year retention and not directly comparable with the data for the previous two- year GCE A-level course

Quality of education and training

79. Most teaching is satisfactory or better and there is much good teaching. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced, and demonstrate a good command of their subjects. Classroom management is good in most lessons and students respond positively to teachers. Most lessons are well planned and organised and build on students' prior knowledge and experience. Teachers use exercises and case studies to illustrate the practical application of theory. In one lesson, the teacher added interest and conviction to his teaching by drawing on his experience of running a small business. This approach helped students understand the issues involved in business start up, and investment in capital equipment. Most teachers have an appropriate understanding of the learning needs of their students'. In a GNVQ intermediate lesson, for example, the teacher had prepared individual learning tasks which took account of the dyslexic learners' specific needs. Similarly, in an advanced accounting lesson on capital gains tax, the teacher was careful to ensure that students with different background experiences understood the key principles. The main elements of the lesson were introduced clearly and supported by a handout reinforcing the aims of the lesson. In most lessons, teachers provide appropriate learning activities and practical exercises to consolidate learning. In an AVCE lesson, good use was made of a business plan to stimulate discussion. Paper-based exercises on cash flow analysis enabled students to work on their own with support from the teacher. Interesting and topical case study materials are used to develop students understanding of business principles. In one GCE A-level business strategy lesson, students worked on a case study involving supermarket acquisition. In the more effective lessons, teachers draw on both students' own experiences and contemporary business issues, and explore local topics. For example, in one lesson, press cuttings about local enterprises were used to illustrate issues relating to marketing and business strategy. In some lessons, challenging group tasks are set which enable students both to develop their own ideas and contribute to the lesson through presentations made to their peers. For example, in one GCE AS lesson, after a good introduction to the main theories on motivation, students were asked to consider their own ideas about motivation, drawing on their own experience. After a group discussion, they presented their conclusions using visual aids and good presentation skills. Further lively class discussion led by the teacher identified and consolidated understanding of the key points. In the less effective lessons, little demand is made on some students and there are insufficient opportunities for individual work and discussion. Teachers talk far too much in the lesson and spend too much time introducing theory; students lose interest. In some lessons where group sizes are large, some students struggle to understand concepts and there is too little group work. In some GNVQ lessons, there is an over reliance on handouts and printed text.

80. The assessment and monitoring of students' work are good. Teachers have a good working knowledge of the progress and attainment of their students. Students are provided with regular feedback and advice on their progress. Teachers make good use of homework and assignments to ensure that students are making appropriate progress. They mark students work carefully and provide feedback which helps students improve their performance. Internal verification processes are appropriate.

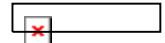
81. Students have good access to staff for support and advice on personal issues. Initial screening for identifying additional learning support is effective and classroom assistants are provided where appropriate. All full-time students have a structured key skills and tutorial programme. Tutorial support is satisfactory and focuses on monitoring students' progress. Tutors and subject teachers are approachable and provide much informal support when students request it. The parents of 16 to 18 year old students are kept informed about their children's progress. GCE A-level students are provided with additional tutorials to help them develop study skills. Most teachers and tutors know their students well and monitor their progress carefully. They keep careful records of students' progress.

82. The college does not have sufficient, good, industry-standard equipment and practical facilities for developing business and administrative skills. In most lessons, students have access to IT and word-processing facilities, but the equipment, software and network systems and are not of an industrial standard. Business administration students do not have sufficient access to e-mail facilities. Students do not have regular opportunities for developing and practising skills using techniques, equipment and systems that are found in modern business and commercial environments. For example the office skills update course timetable and the NVQ level 2 administration students do not have sufficient access to modern office equipment or practical activities such as reception duties.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities, identify priorities and give clear direction to staff. Changes in the management structure have contributed to better teamwork. Quality assurance procedures are implemented but are not having sufficient impact on some courses. Course reviews are not sufficiently self-critical. College self-assessment arrangements lead to identification of overall key strengths and weaknesses in the area, and targets for improvement are set and reviewed but not always met. Actions have been taken to improve retention and pass rates. These have led to some improvements and also some modification of teaching styles and course design. Teachers have individual improvement targets for their areas of responsibility. Insufficient action has been taken to assess and analyse performance and attendance issues on some courses. Staff development activity is planned and carried out satisfactorily. The small amount of work-based learning is managed satisfactorily.

Computing and information technology/IT



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

Strengths

- good management of adult and community provision

- extensive and effective outreach provision

- good progression.

Weaknesses

- insufficient staff development for the 16 to 18 curriculum

- unsatisfactory management of the 16 to 18 curriculum

- o insufficient use of target setting.

Scope of provision

84. The college provides a wide range of full-time courses. There are good progression routes at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, which, at the time of the inspection, were followed by some 180 full-time students, mostly aged 16 to 18. Pupils from a local school attend college once a week over a two-year period to follow a foundation IT programme. There were also 5,500 adults attending part-time courses at 14 outreach centres and 23 community venues serviced by 3 mobile learning units. The college collaborates with a number of partners to provide courses at a further 10 locations. Together, these partners are contributing effectively to widening participation in education and training in the locality. Courses are offered at times that are convenient for adults and offer clear progression routes. Many centres are also OK Online centres and offer drop-in access opportunities for students. Specific courses meet the training needs of employers, particularly for the local tourist industry.

Achievement and standards

85. Retention rates on full-time courses are mostly at the national average. Most pass rates are also average with the exception of the rates for the full-time courses provided at Sheppy which are low. The overall college pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate course improved significantly in 2002 but remains below the national average for colleges of a similar type. Students on the AVCE IT course performed well in 2002 and retention and pass rates were above the national average. Progression rates from GCE AS to GCE A2 computing are low.

86. The attendance of 16 to 18 year old students in lessons is mostly satisfactory but the record for punctuality is poor. The standard of students' work is satisfactory or better and most full-time students are competent in the use of computer software. Most assignments are well presented. Full-time students have the opportunity to develop their key skills but few take advantage of the opportunity and the number of students taking the key skills tests is declining. Adults on part-time courses are enthusiastic and many progress well through the different courses on offer. They become more confident both personally and in the use of computers.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 7621 certificate in computer applications	1	No. of starts	85	18	50
		% retention	73	72	78
		% pass rate	72	69	95
Computer learning and information technology (CLAIT) (short)	1	No. of starts	269	427	585
		% retention	93	98	97
		% pass rate	63	79	63
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	51	47	39
		% retention	75	85	79
		% pass rate	32	38	52
European computer driving license (short)		No. of starts	17	22	103
		% retention	71	100	98

		% pass rate	50	95	78
AVCE IT	3	No. of starts	-	10	38
		% retention	-	0	92
		% pass rate	-	0	66
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	-	43	33
		% retention	-	88	76
		% pass rate	-	79	60
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	23	24	20
		% retention	70	58	95
		% pass rate	86	64	79

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002) - course not offered. GCE A2 level in 2002 are in-year retention and not directly comparable with the data for the previous two year GCE A-level course

Quality of education and training

87. Most teaching is satisfactory but there is also some unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is most effective where groups are composed of adult students. Many schemes of work lack enough detail and teachers do not plan and modify their lessons to take account of the full ability range of students in the groups. Insufficient use is made of worksheets or textbooks to help 16 to 19 year olds to learn. In a key skills IT lesson, for example, students being introduced to Access databases were told to follow the instructions in a book. No account was taken of their varying levels of skill. In another lesson, students were directed to answer a question every 15 minutes about a database case study. The more able students finished quickly, were given no other work and made no further progress for a significant part of the lesson. Teachers do not vary their approach to accommodate students' different ability levels and motivation. In one lesson, the teacher spent the first 30 minutes talking about different security coding systems and made little attempt to involve the students in discussion. They became restless and inattentive and used their laptops for inappropriate tasks; they learnt little. Students aged 16 to 18 are often late for lessons and procedures for dealing with poor records on punctuality are ineffective. For example, a spreadsheet demonstration was repeated for two late students. Meanwhile, the other students in the group were finishing the allocated task, became restless, interrupted the demonstration and then wasted further time waiting for a new task.

88. In the more effective lessons for adults, students are enthusiastic and are motivated by challenging tasks. In a lesson on desktop publishing, students produced a board game for their children and grandchildren by downloading Harry Potter and Teletubbies images from the Internet. In these classes, teachers support their students well and develop their confidence and encourage them to progress onto higher-level courses. One student, who three months previously had not been able to switch the computer on, was teaching her daughter and producing leaflets. In these lessons, teachers make learning fun; names such as 'Ivor Chestikoff' used by the teacher in an introductory lesson to databases caused plenty of mirth. Teachers provide a good balance of theory and practical activities and these activities help students develop skills quickly. In a CLAIT lesson, a range of worksheets were provided to enable students of differing abilities to make rapid progress.

89. On many full-time courses, teachers do not set clear, staged deadlines for students to submit assignments to help them complete the work on time. The marking of students' work is not sufficiently thorough. The written feedback on students work is inadequate and does not tell students enough about their performance or help them to improve the standard of their work. On full time courses, the assessment and monitoring of work other than assignments is not rigorous. The work of adults on short courses, such as the ECDL course, is marked carefully and accurately. There is a clear procedure for internal verification but it is not followed fully.

90. Induction procedures for full-time students are comprehensive. Part-time students are assessed at induction to ensure that they are enrolled on to the appropriate programme. Students with a range

of conditions that include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Asperger's syndrome and dyslexia are supported by learning support assistants.

91. There is a detailed tutors' handbook clearly outlining policies and procedures for the curriculum area. All full-time groups have two hours timetabled for weekly group and individual tutorials. Students on GCE AS courses have tutorials every three weeks to help with their personal development and learning. Students value the support provided by their tutors and the specific help provided over University and College Admissions Scheme forms and careers options. The quality of tutorial support varies, from effective tutors who, for example, help students develop time management and organisational skills, to less satisfactory tutoring which is, for example, vague on action planning and does little to help students improve their performance. The quality of tutorials is not effectively monitored.

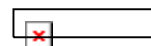
92. Outreach centres are well equipped but, in many cases, the accommodation is cramped. At the time of the inspection, a new centre was being built in Whitstable which will provide good access for learners with disabilities. Staff develop and share effective learning materials. There are many large rooms with industry standard computers and software at the Rutland House centre in Canterbury, but some students have difficulty using the equipment because of security restrictions. The range of software is restrictive and no sound and graphic editing packages are available. The college has recognised that the rooms are very hot and are not adequately ventilated. Learning and assessment materials are made available on the college intranet for students who have missed lessons. Students have opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills of computing and IT through work experience and educational visits.

Leadership and management

93. Provision for adults and study opportunities in the community are well managed. Quality assurance procedures are implemented effectively and unsatisfactory teaching addressed. Good practice is shared through course reviews and regular staff meetings. There is a well-planned programme of staff development which is shared by the college's community partners which involves standardising learning materials for new courses and developing teaching skills. Communication between sites is good.

94. The management of provision for 16 to 18 year-old students is unsatisfactory. Communication is not effective and clear direction is not provided on matters such as schemes of work and curriculum development. There is insufficient sharing of good practice across the curriculum area. Quality assurance mechanisms are poorly understood and ineffectively implemented. Course reviews are not sufficiently detailed and there is inadequate monitoring of action to bring about improvement. Self-assessment procedures lack accurate assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. There is insufficient use of value added data to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and the progress of individual students.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on most courses

- much good teaching

- high standard of practical work in food preparation

- good specialist resources in sport and travel

- wide range of additional qualifications.

Weaknesses

- erratic attendance by students

- inadequate range of equipment in food preparation areas.

Scope of provision

95. The college provides a good range of full-time programmes in hospitality and catering ranging from foundation to level 3. These include NVQ courses in food preparation and cooking at levels 1, 2 and 3, food and beverage service at level 2, and level 3 restaurant supervision. The European diploma programme enables students to achieve the national diploma in hospitality supervision as well as a range of additional qualifications. Part-time programmes include NVQ level 2 courses in food preparation and cooking and food service. Courses in sport, recreation and leisure and tourism are offered at intermediate and advanced level and there is also a foundation-level course in leisure and tourism. At the time of the inspection, some 230 students aged 16 to 18, and 70 adults were following full-time programmes, and approximately 20 students, mostly adults, were on part-time programmes. There were 12 foundation modern apprentices and two advanced modern apprentices in sport and recreation and one foundation modern apprentice in hospitality and catering.

Achievement and standards

96. Retention and pass rates are at or above the national average for most courses. Pass rates for NVQ levels 1 and 2 food preparation and cooking are well above the national average for colleges of a similar type. The retention rate on NVQ level 3 food preparation has shown continuing improvement. Pass rates have declined but remain above the national average. Retention and pass rates on the foundation, intermediate and advanced GNVQ leisure and tourism courses are above the national average and show sound improvement in the pass rate at foundation and intermediate levels. Pass rates on the national diploma in travel and tourism are high but the retention rate is declining. The achievement of key skills qualifications is good in hospitality and catering. There are high retention and pass rates on the Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VTCT) diploma in health and fitness. Pass rates on GCE A-level sport and physical education are high and retention rates and progression from GCE AS to GCE A2 improved to a high standard in 2002 from a low base in 2001. There are also high pass rates on the community sports leaders award.

97. Students' attendance at lessons is erratic, and in a few lessons, is as low as 50%. Students produce both practical work and assignment work of a high standard. Assignments are well presented and illustrate high levels of computing skills. NVQ level 3 students develop craft skills to a

high level. Students across the area develop good interpersonal and team skills during their studies.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ food preparation and cooking (one year)	1	No. of starts	41	44	31
		% retention	95	86	74
		% pass rate	77	68	91
GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	16	21	15
		% retention	69	71	73
		% pass rate	82	67	91
Community sports leaders award	2	No. of starts	77	106	52
		% retention	95	92	69
		% pass rate	85	17	58
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	27	28	42
		% retention	67	71	82
		% pass rate	50	55	81
NVQ food preparation and cooking (one year)	2	No. of starts	31	25	43
		% retention	87	88	93
		% pass rate	67	77	95
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	35	14	*
		% retention	69	64	*
		% pass rate	78	100	*
AVCE leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	*	10
		% retention	*	*	78
		% pass rate	*	*	86
GCE A-level sport and physical education	3	No. of starts	*	19	18
		% retention	*	33	83
		% pass rate	*	100	100
VTCT diploma in health and fitness	3	No. of starts	*	14	28
		% retention	*	57	75
		% pass rate	*	75	100

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

*course did not run

GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism replaced by AVCE leisure and tourism. GCE A2 level in 2002 are in-year retention and not directly comparable with the data for the previous two year GCE A-level course

Quality of education and training

98. There is much good teaching across the curriculum area. In most lessons, students are

motivated and enthusiastic. Teachers encourage them to participate in discussions and group activities that develop confidence and consolidate learning. In one effective lesson, students used a suitable range of research methods, including the Internet, to prepare short presentations on safety legislation. The teacher skilfully helped the groups sort and organise information for their presentations and the students also learnt from each other. In a foundation leisure and tourism lesson, students prepared flow charts to explain how they would deal with complaining customers. They worked in groups to identify different types of complainers and how best to deal with them. They shared their ideas confidently and planned with a sense of realism, demonstrating a good understanding of different methods of communication. During a lesson on pastry preparation, the teacher led a discussion on bread making. All the students contributed to the discussion and developed their understanding of different types of bread and methods of preparation. The lesson built on students' previous experience and they demonstrated a high level of knowledge and understanding. They prepared good products for serving in the restaurant. There is much team teaching in sport and leisure where lessons are taken by more than one teacher. These lessons are well planned and managed, students receive good personal support and there is much effective learning. Teachers make effective use of the periods students spend on work placement and draw on students' personal experiences during lessons and for assessment purposes. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not clarify the aims of the lessons sufficiently and students are not clear about what is expected from them and what they should be learning. Students are provided with good enrichment activities to broaden their experience. These include a variety of trips to different work places, exhibitions, residential experiences and student exchange trips. Students on advanced courses in hospitality have the opportunity to spend six months on work placement in France.

99. Students' work is assessed carefully and accurately and teachers keep good records of students' progress. Assignments are vocationally relevant, well structured and students receive good feedback from teachers which indicates clearly the standards achieved and areas where improvements can be made. Assignments in travel and tourism, and sport and recreation are carefully designed to help students develop their key skills. In hospitality and catering, students have access to knowledge tests through the departmental computer system. Internal verification and moderation are appropriate and conform to awarding body requirements. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are kept informed of progress through reports and parents' evenings. Where students are on work-based learning programmes, employers are also kept informed of their progress.

100. Pre-entry guidance is effective and interviewing procedures ensure that students are placed on courses at the appropriate level. Students are assessed at induction to determine any learning support needs and their level of competency in key skills. Learning support assistants are used extensively to support students in the classroom but the results of initial assessments are not made sufficient use of in the planning of lessons. There are regular and well documented tutorials. During group tutorials, students are given the opportunity to make comments on how they believe the provision could be improved. Students receive good support from staff on both academic and personal issues.

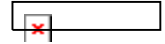
101. There are good specialist resources in sport and travel, which include an on-site travel agency and a well-equipped sports centre that are used to support teaching and assessment. The college sports centre is used both by students and the local community. Teachers are well qualified and have good industrial experience; most have teaching qualifications. Staff development activities do not provide sufficient opportunities for industrial updating. Resources within practical food preparation areas are inadequate. Much of the large equipment does not reflect the current standards found within the industry. The range and quality of small equipment is poor.

Leadership and management

102. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management structure had been changed shortly before the inspection. Communication across the area has improved and the new structure is enabling programme teams to become more involved in the setting and monitoring of targets for improving performance. However, it was too soon for the full outcomes of the changes to be apparent at the time of the inspection. Managers do not monitor attendance and punctuality sufficiently and are not taking enough action to address these shortcomings. Managers have identified the main strengths and weaknesses in the area through self-assessment but the process is

not sufficiently thorough and self-critical. Insufficient attention is given to weaknesses in teaching and learning and the assessment of teaching quality is not reliable. Development plans are not monitored effectively. The minutes of team meetings at curriculum level are poor and indicate few clearly identified actions that can be tracked and monitored.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- good pass and retention rates on beauty, holistic and complementary therapy courses
- good pass rate on NVQ level 1 hairdressing
- excellent accommodation at the Sheppey centre
- effective monitoring of student progress.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rate on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing programme
- insufficient client base in practical lessons
- poor facilities in Canterbury
- poor organisation of key skills teaching
- poor work-based assessment.

Scope of provision

103. The college offers a good range of qualifications in hairdressing and beauty therapy. At the time of the inspection there were some 170 students on full-time hairdressing courses and 190 beauty therapy students. Approximately 60 students were following combined courses covering both areas. There were only 7 students on a work-based modern apprenticeship programme in hairdressing. Hairdressing courses are provided at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. Beauty therapy courses are offered at intermediate and advanced level. A new national diploma in science (beauty therapy) was started in 2002. There is no pre-entry qualification for students of lower ability who have no formal qualifications. All students aged 16 to 18 study for key skills qualifications. There are no formal links with local schools.

Achievement and standards

104. Retention and pass rates are high on beauty therapy courses and on the diploma in holistic therapy. Both retention and pass rates are below the national average on the sports and body massage certificate. The retention rate on NVQ level 2 hairdressing courses has declined significantly and is well below the national average for colleges of a similar type. Enrolments are low on NVQ level 3 hairdressing and both retention and pass rates are also low. Retention is satisfactory on NVQ level 1 hairdressing and pass rates are high. Retention and pass rates were very low on the theatrical and media make-up diploma in 2002, which is no longer offered. There were seven foundation modern apprenticeship trainees still on programme at the time of the inspection, out of the 10 who started in 2002.

105. Most students develop practical skills to at least a satisfactory level and conduct themselves in an appropriately professional manner when working in the college salons. Students' portfolios are of an average or above average standard and many beauty therapy students produce work of a high standard. Some students are not developing their basic skills to a sufficiently high level to support their learning when they progress to higher-level courses. Student attendance in lessons is low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	1	No. of starts	30	26	63
		% retention	87	77	76
		% pass rate	100	80	98
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	22	67	25
		% retention	67	62	42
		% pass rate	79	38	90
NVQ beauty therapy (2 year)	2	No. of starts	22	49	64
		% retention	67	79	86
		% pass rate	79	76	93
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	3	No. of starts	6	8	-
		% retention	33	50	-
		% pass rate	100	50	-
Diploma in holistic therapies	3	No. of starts	9	14	19
		% retention	33	79	100
		% pass rate	100	91	95
NVQ beauty therapy (2	3	No. of starts	8	7	28

year)		% retention	38	100	88
		% pass rate	67	43	91
Diploma in aromatherapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	-	7	25
		% retention	-	71	84
		% pass rate	-	80	100
Body massage certificate (1 year)	3	No. of starts	20	32	28
		% retention	84	84	75
		% pass rate	94	74	86

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002) - course not running

Quality of education and training

106. Much of the teaching in the curriculum area is satisfactory but dull, and there are some unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers often fail to provide sufficient stimulating and challenging activities to motivate students with different skill and ability levels. Teachers often talk for too long and do not give students sufficient opportunities to explore and discuss theoretical aspects of their work constructively. Students are not given sufficiently varied practical exercises to consolidate their learning effectively. In one beauty therapy lesson, the teacher introduced the session by asking students to identify the main muscles of the body. The teacher handed out a picture of a male model in swimming trunks which the students found amusing. They worked well in small groups and named the muscles correctly. However, after a promising start, the remainder of the lesson failed to motivate the group. In one practical hairdressing lesson, full-time students and work-based trainees worked together in the same salon. The teacher was supported by a second teacher who helped students needing learning support. The full-time students worked on head forms practising setting techniques, while work-based trainees were being taught application of number through the task of designing a box which was unrelated to hairdressing. The students could not see the relevance of the exercise to their hairdressing qualification. They were left to complete their work unsupervised and became disruptive. The lesson was poorly planned and effective use was not made of the two teachers. There is often a shortage of clients in practical classes and students at Canterbury have to find their own clients to complete assessments. Facilities at Sheppey are more attractive to the public, and students have better opportunities to develop their practical skills as well as their IT and communication skills through their reception duties.

107. In the more effective lessons, teachers use their skills and knowledge effectively. In a theory lesson on reflexology, for example, the teacher managed discussion skilfully, encouraged all members of the group to participate and summarised key points at appropriate times. In an effective key skills lesson on IT, students understood the relevance to their hairdressing qualification of the skills they were learning. They were interested in what they were doing and worked effectively and independently. However, many of the schemes of work and lesson plans produced by teachers in the area fail to incorporate computer-based activities into the lessons and most lesson plans and schemes of work fail to indicate opportunities for key skills development. There are good enrichment opportunities for students including regular visits to Salon International and beauty shows, and the chance to participate in competitions

108. Teachers assess students' practical work thoroughly and assessment and the internal verification procedures meet awarding body requirements. Feedback is clear and constructive and teachers keep accurate records of student' progress. Progress tracking documents are clear, concise and easy to follow. At Sheppey, records of students' progress are displayed on a classroom wall for students to observe. Students' portfolios contain good evidence of their progress. There is insufficient tracking and assessment of the development of students' key skills and written feedback on students' written work is uneven in quality. Some teachers fail to correct spelling and grammatical mistakes. Assessment of work-based trainees is poor. There is insufficient recording of trainees' progress and insufficient feedback to employers.

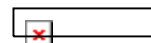
109. Students are assessed to determine their key skill levels during induction, but are not provided with sufficient support to develop their key skills at the appropriate level. Some students of lower ability do not receive sufficient support, in numeracy and literacy. All full-time students are provided with one-to-one and group tutorial support but attendance at sessions is low. All students have individual learning plans but targets for improvement are often of a general nature and cannot be monitored effectively to help students improve. Guest speakers provide information and advice about career opportunities. Reviews for work-based learners are infrequent.

110. Teachers are well qualified and have relevant vocational and teaching qualifications. Staff development activities are good, but arrangements for covering for absent teachers are not always appropriate. Resources at the centre at Sheppey are purpose built and are of an excellent standard. Facilities for developing computing and IT skills are good. Facilities at Canterbury are cramped and dated Salon facilities are scattered around the site making communication difficult. Reception facilities for the hairdressing salons are inadequate, and there is no computerized till. There is a shortage of sterilizing equipment and computers and no technician support at either site.

Leadership and management

111. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication across the area is not effective. Although managers and teachers meet regularly, they are not sufficiently familiar with changes in the management structure of the area and managers do not provide a sufficiently clear lead across the area. Quality assurance procedures are implemented according to college requirements but teachers do not have sufficient opportunity to contribute to the process. All teachers are aware of the action plan, but there is insufficient monitoring of its impact on specific courses and on the curriculum area overall. Measures have been taken to improve attendance and retention rates and students who are at risk of failing are identified, but the impact of the actions being taken are not monitored closely enough.

Health and social care



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

Contributory grade for work based learning **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high pass rate on many courses for adults

- good teaching accommodation

- effective support and guidance for students

- effective links with the community

- good development of students' knowledge and vocational skills.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on many courses
- poor pass rates on the national diplomas in health studies and public services
- dull teaching on many full-time courses
- weak management and organisation of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

112. The college provides a good range of full-time and part-time courses from foundation to advanced levels for some 350 and 650 students, respectively. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Full-time courses in health and social care include intermediate GNVQ, AVCE and the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma. Part-time courses include NVQs in care at level 2 and 3, and the certificate in welfare studies. Courses in counselling and a national diploma in public services are also provided. Early years provision includes full-time and part-time courses from intermediate to advanced level and courses for teaching and classroom assistants. The college has been responsive to the needs of the community by running many courses in community locations. There has been a rapid expansion of a wide range of NVQ provision to meet the needs of employers. The establishment of an innovative National Health Service modern apprenticeship scheme is especially notable. The college offers good progression from foundation to level 4 on both a full-time and part-time basis, thus meeting the needs of both school leavers and adults.

Achievement and standards

113. There are high pass rates on many courses for adults. For example, pass rates are high on counselling courses where pass rates are consistently above 90% on the certificate in counselling theory. Similarly, pass rates on the national certificate in early years care and education and the certificate in welfare studies are well above the high national averages for these courses. There are high pass and retention rates on NVQ courses. The retention rate on the certificate in counselling theory course is also high and has shown consistent improvement.

114. Retention rates on many courses are low and on some have declined steadily over the three years prior to the inspection to well below the national average. For example, the national diploma in public services and the national diploma in early years care and education have declined to well below the high national average for colleges of a similar type. The retention rate on some courses dropped significantly in 2002, including the certificate in childcare and education, and the diploma in childcare and education. Pass rates on the national diplomas in health studies and public services are low. Progress of work-based learners towards achievement of their NVQ qualifications and frameworks on the foundation modern apprenticeship scheme is slow.

115. Progression to the next level of study, to related employment and to professional training or HE is satisfactory. Most students' work is of an appropriate standard for the level of their course, and some of it is good. Students' contributions in several lessons are good. They use their placement and other experiences constructively and are able to link them to the theory being taught. In some lessons, students worked well in small groups and showed the development of assessment and evaluative skills. The college is aware of weaknesses in the development of students' competence in key skills and has taken steps to link key skills teaching more closely to students' vocational studies. Assessment is in the process of being integrated into vocational assignments. Students' attendance in lessons is low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Foundation award caring for children	1	No. of starts	*	10	25
		% retention	*	90	67
		% pass rate	*	44	81
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	21	38	35
		% retention	86	76	40
		% pass rate	61	55	79
Certificate in counselling theory	2	No. of starts	28	25	30
		% retention	82	88	90
		% pass rate	100	95	96
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	25	31	14
		% retention	72	45	71
		% pass rate	100	64	100
BTEC national diploma in health studies	3	No. of starts	*	34	38
		% retention	*	100	54
		% pass rate	*	76	75
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	*	46	46
		% retention	*	93	97
		% pass rate	*	72	70
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	41	47	39
		% retention	85	70	62
		% pass rate	63	77	83
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	52	46	44
		% retention	81	78	61
		% pass rate	61	63	96

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

116. Overall teaching is satisfactory. It is good in approximately half the lessons. In the more effective lessons, teachers use imaginative methods which sustain students' interest and help them

learn quickly. In one lesson on the use of objects to stimulate children's learning, the teacher took a ship in a small bottle and created a story around it. The students asked many questions and immediately produced their own objects and enthusiastically began to create their own stories, clearly enjoying themselves. The teacher constantly reminded them that the story needed to be appropriate for the age of the children with whom they would be working. In another lesson, following an initial discussion on the principles of observation and assessment, the students conducted a brief observation of the behaviour of people in the learning resources centre. On their return to the classroom, the teacher skilfully used students' reports of their observations to check and consolidate learning from the earlier part of the lesson. Students demonstrated their ability to transfer what they had learned from observing adults to the observation of children in the nursery or other early years settings. In many other lessons, teachers plan the work that is to be covered well and provide a sound context for learning, but do not make the learning objectives sufficiently clear. Students are given tasks to complete, but there is insufficient checking and consolidation of learning. Much of the teaching is insufficiently demanding and students' progress is slow. They lose concentration and become easily distracted. Group discussions are sometimes allowed to drift away from the main focus. Links with the community are effective. They enhance the students' learning experience through the provision of a wide range of activities in the workplace. Students also benefit from talks by speakers with current knowledge of the different vocational areas.

117. Assessment is fair and accurate and subject to regular internal verification. Students generally receive suitably detailed feedback on their work which usually includes how they might improve and gain higher grades. Assessment planning is poor on work-based learning programmes and internal verification is weak but the area is benefiting from the appointment of a new curriculum co-ordinator. Similarly, assessment and verification processes have become more thorough at Sheppey since the appointment of a new operations manager.

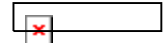
118. Tutorial support is extensive. Individual tutorials are good. Formal tutorial meetings are held regularly across all courses. Good records are kept and issues followed up from one meeting to the next. Targets agreed include behavioural ones. Tutors assist students with planning for the future and give sound careers advice. Students are made fully aware of their progress. Punctuality and attendance are monitored carefully and response to absence is immediate. The tutorial serves as the first point of call for raising personal concerns. The retention rate had improved on many courses during the year prior to the inspection and no second-year student had withdrawn during that time.

119. Teachers have appropriate qualifications and vocational experience. There are insufficient numbers of qualified assessors and verifiers for work-based learning. Many are working towards the relevant awards. Teaching accommodation is good. Classrooms at the Sheppey site are very well equipped. Course base rooms on the main site have very good displays of student work. They relate to themes in the curriculum and reflect the environment of their work placements. Specialist equipment is good and there is good access to computers. Learning resources are generally sufficient to support the courses being delivered.

Leadership and management

120. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent changes in the management of the area were starting to have an impact by the time of the inspection. Working relationships and communications within the curriculum area and other parts of the college have improved. Areas needing development have been recognised and plans initiated to bring about improvements. To combat low retention rates, tighter monitoring of attendance procedures was introduced. The retention rate has improved on most courses during the year prior to the inspection. The completion of course reviews is weak, but the new organisational structure is creating a more critical approach to the planning and teaching of courses. The management and organisation of work-based learning has been poor, but has improved in 2002/03. Equality of opportunity is a fundamental value which is reflected in the planning and running of all courses. It is appropriately promoted in the content of some lessons.

Visual arts



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates on most courses

- good teaching on intermediate and advanced courses

- very good support for students

- effective development of communication skills.

Weaknesses

- inappropriate accommodation

- insufficiently critical course reviews.

Scope of provision

121. The college offers a good range of courses including GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate levels, national diplomas in graphic design and fine art, which started in 2001 and 2002, respectively, AVCE art and design and GCE A-levels in art, art history and photography. There is a part-time access to HE course and part-time recreational courses in painting and drawing, ceramics, and photography. Two pre-access courses are taught in community venues. At the time of the inspection, some 350 students were full time and approximately 200 were part time. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

122. There are very high pass rates on courses for GCE A-level photography and GNVQ foundation art and design. All the students who completed the courses passed in 2001 and 2002 and the retention rate has been improving. The number of students enrolling on GCE A-level courses has declined because of the introduction of the new national diploma courses. Full-time vocational students are no longer entered for these awards as additional qualifications. Pass rates on GNVQ advanced, AVCE and GNVQ intermediate courses are well above the national averages. The retention rate on the newly introduced national diplomas in graphic design and fine art is high and

retention rates are improving on most courses.

123. Overall, the quality of work in portfolios and sketchbooks is good. Most students enjoy their work and can discuss it with confidence, although some students are not developing critical evaluation and analytical skills to a sufficiently high level. The best work is vibrant, carefully evaluated and demonstrates creative exploration of personal ideas. One printmaking student was layering colour and texture onto cloth developed through extensive personal research of heat-treated plastic. Less successful work lacks imaginative solutions and personal identity.

124. In contextual studies, most writing is based on sound research and understanding but some work relies on limited Internet research and fails to reach a satisfactory conclusion. GCE A-level students develop good skills in research and critical analysis. In one successful lesson, students were able to identify strategies for evaluating the context of Henry Moore's sculpture, supported by double slide projections of work by Michelangelo and Canova. In another successful lessons, students were writing Dada poetry from random words in an envelope with considerable success. Photography students develop good technical skills. Students progress well through courses at different levels and there is good progression to HE. Students' attendance rates in lessons are low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation art and design	1	No. of starts	*	11	11
		% retention	*	56	73
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	48	39	44
		% retention	81	75	88
		% pass rate	77	96	86
GCE A-level art studies	3	No. of starts	60	46	21
		% retention	59	70	100
		% pass rate	67	90	86
GCE A-level photography	3	No. of starts	19	20	12
		% retention	69	68	75
		% pass rate	90	100	100
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	60	55	**
		% retention	73	76	**
		% pass rate	98	95	**
AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	*	*	50
		% retention	*	*	64
		% pass rate	*	*	90

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

*course did not run

* *GNVQ advanced art and design replaced by AVCE art and design

GCE A2 level in 2002 are in-year retention and not directly comparable with the data for the previous two-year GCE A-level course

Quality of education and training

125. Most lessons are well planned. Teaching is good or better on advanced and intermediate courses and satisfactory at foundation level. In the most effective lessons, teachers recognise the diversity of student ability and use the students' prior knowledge to develop project work on an individual basis. In a printmaking workshop, for example, students worked confidently. The teacher moved around the class and managed discussions and supported students as they made decisions about the direction of their work. During an effective lesson on the Bauhaus movement, most students in a large group used the knowledge they had gained through personal research well during discussion. Many had developed clear personal views on topics such as Kandinsky's use of colour. The teacher was careful to ensure that weaker students were familiar with basic biographical details. Key elements of the lesson were consolidated through a quiz which the students enjoyed. Teachers are knowledgeable and have recent industrial experience or are current practitioners. They use their knowledge and experience well to motivate students and help them learn. However, sufficient demands are not made on some students to extend and critically evaluate their learning.

126. The less effective lessons are with foundation students, with mixed groups of adults and students aged 16 to 18, and with adults on recreational courses. In these lessons, teachers do not give enough attention to the individual learning needs of students. There are insufficient visual references to particular artists or art movements. For example, during a GNVQ foundation briefing, reference was made to Leonardo da Vinci and Escher without a picture to prompt recognition. Sufficient demands are not made on individual students that challenge them to extend their work and ideas beyond a satisfactory conclusion.

127. Working relationships between teachers and students are very good. Live projects in graphic design include a 'key skills are cool' project which produced imaginative results. Team teaching is regularly timetabled for large groups. While some of these lessons are effective, some lose the dynamism of the more effective lessons and there is insufficient planning to take full advantage of the complementary roles of the teachers. Enrichment activities are provided for all full-time students and include visits to galleries and museums, live external projects in the community, and visits to London, Amsterdam and Madrid.

128. The assessment of students' work is carried out carefully and accurately at all levels and students are clear about assessment procedures. Work for assessment is presented in a variety of forms and students receive prompt verbal feedback and written comments and advice on how they can improve to achieve higher grades. Some teachers schedule discussion opportunities as part of practical activities. Parents' evenings are held each term to inform parents of students aged 16 to 18 of their progress. For students with financial difficulties, grants are available from the John Millest trust.

129. Students are well supported from their first contact with the college and tutorial support is effective. Interview procedures, an optional summer school and induction processes are effective. Students value the advice, guidance and support they received. All students are assessed to determine their levels of competency in key skills and whether they require any additional support. Learning support is excellent and improves students' confidence and attainment. Development of key skills is effectively integrated into studio practice. For example, students' presentations and critiques are recorded on video and used to develop their communication skills. There is good support for dyslexic students and teachers have developed new extended essay units to replace the written examination on the access course.

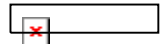
130. Although accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, storage facilities are poor for students. GNVQ foundation and intermediate classes use ceramic and three-dimensional workshops for drawing and writing which is inappropriate. The printmaking studio is used as a thoroughfare to other studios which disrupts lessons. Neither the photography studio nor the darkroom are large enough for the numbers of students using these facilities. The John Millest trust provides funding for specialist book purchases within the library which, nevertheless, has an inadequate range of specialist book stock and periodicals. Students make good use of the Internet sites for research. Teachers are provided with good staff development opportunities. The teaching load is significantly reduced for new teachers, each of whom is provided with a mentor. New teachers do not have

sufficient guidance on developing team teaching skills.

Leadership and management

131. Leadership and management are good. The management of the area was restructured quickly, but effectively, prior to the inspection. Teachers are content with the new arrangements and are planning developments with confidence but they are not clear about the role of curriculum development managers. Communication between teaching teams is effective at course level and courses are well managed. Course reviews are not self-critical and there is insufficient critical analysis of teaching and learning. Action plans are not effectively monitored. Improvement targets are not clearly set at course level and there is insufficient analysis of value added data for monitoring the performance of individual students or courses.

Performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on intermediate and advanced media courses

- good teaching

- effective tutorial support

- good resources in performing arts.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on the national diploma in music technology and the national diploma in performing arts courses

- insufficient resources for music students.

Scope of provision

132. The college provides a good range of full-time courses in the performing arts, music and media at intermediate and advanced levels. At the time of the inspection there were some 550 students,

mostly aged 16 to 18, enrolled on these courses. There are good opportunities for students to progress to HE. Music technology is also offered at foundation level. GCE A-level courses include media studies, film studies and drama and theatre studies. There were also some 120 students, mostly young adults, taking part-time day and evening courses from a good range that included music technology, sound recording, DJ technology and the performing arts.

Achievement and standards

133. Pass rates are high on most courses and are particularly high on both the intermediate and advanced media courses. The retention rate on the intermediate media course is also well above the national average for colleges of a similar type. The retention rate on the first diploma in performing arts dropped in 2002 but was high at the time of the inspection. However, retention rates on the national diploma in music technology and the national diploma in performing arts have been consistently low. The national diploma in performing arts has been replaced by two new courses in drama and dance. Enrolments increased significantly, and the retention rate improved slightly, in 2002. Actions taken to improve retention rates were having a positive impact at the time of the inspection. Retention and pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses are at or above the national average. Pass and retention rates on GCE A-level media studies, film studies and drama and theatre studies are at or well above the national averages. Pass and retention rates for GCE AS courses are at the national average but were low in GCE AS dance in 2001.

134. Students work well during lessons, produce work of a good standard and demonstrate satisfactory or better skills. Students are able to discuss their work with confidence and show appropriate use of research techniques. A good example was seen in a class on costume production where students had researched the background of their chosen characters well. Literacy skills are mostly good throughout the area. Students' attendance in lessons is satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	21	32	30
		% retention	76	78	57
		% pass rate	88	96	100
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	18	18	13
		% retention	69	89	92
		% pass rate	100	94	92
National diploma in music technology	3	No. of starts	45	87	68
		% retention	58	50	48
		% pass rate	64	74	94
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	71	61	*
		% retention	56	57	*
		% pass rate	98	94	*
GNVQ advanced media	3	No. of starts	58	57	**
		% retention	79	74	**
		% pass rate	93	95	**
AVCE media	3	No. of starts	**	**	54
		% retention	**	**	72
		% pass rate	**	**	100

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

* course replaced by two new courses in drama and dance

** GNVQ advanced replaced by AVCE

Quality of education and training

135. Most lessons are good or better and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are well planned and schemes of work are suitably detailed. Assignments are well structured and relate effectively to the needs of the industry. Teachers make good use of their experience in providing learning activities that are realistic and motivate students. Students speak highly of their training and the speed with which they develop their skills and increase their understanding. In an effective media lesson, for example, students were given tight deadlines to identify and rectify faults in a range of technical equipment including a digital video camera. The demands of the work kept the students busy; they worked well and gave each other advice in a helpful and mature fashion. The teacher discussed progress carefully with each group of students and helped them resolve problems through skilful questioning. All the students enjoyed the lesson and demonstrated high levels of skill and good understanding. Students are encouraged to develop their own creative ideas. Students working on an assignment on music techniques and using digital recording equipment, recorded and sampled a variety of sounds from various locations, including Canterbury Cathedral. They showed both imagination and a capacity to think creatively. Most students are committed to their work, and teachers and students work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In an outstanding dance lesson, students achieved exceptional results in a highly demanding and physically exacting warm-up and dance routine. The teacher led the lesson in an inspirational fashion and ensured that all the students understood what was expected of them, continuously monitored their performance and gave each student advice and encouragement. The level of skill and the standard of concentration and effort demonstrated by all the students were high and especially so for the less able members of the group who were not natural dancers. A few lessons developed too slowly to motivate students fully and teachers provided too few additional activities for the more able learners who had completed tasks quickly. Also, teaching in these lessons did not make sufficient demands on students, and teachers often asked questions in a way that did not allow students the opportunity to develop their own ideas or to discuss concepts that were of significance in their vocational area.

136. Teachers assess students' work fairly and use a suitable variety of assessment methods. Internal verification is carried out to the required national standards. Most students receive constructive feedback on their work, but errors are not always corrected and students are not always given sufficient written feedback on how to achieve higher grades.

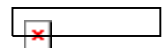
137. Students are well supported, and initial guidance and induction are thorough. All students are interviewed thoroughly. The interview process involves practical activities such as musical and acting auditions or media related activities. The process gives students a good insight into the courses for which they apply. Most tutorials are good and students' progress is carefully monitored but there is insufficient monitoring of the implementation of students' individual action plans. Actions and targets are identified to help students improve the quality of their work but teachers are not consistent in their monitoring and some action points are left unfulfilled or brought forward to be re-addressed. There is good support for dyslexic students and those who need literacy or numeracy support.

138. There are good resources in the performing arts. New, purpose-built facilities include a theatre, dance studios and rehearsal and costume production rooms. Facilities for popular music include recording studios and computer suites, but facilities are cramped for the number of students in the area. There are good video-editing facilities, which are of an industry standard, but, despite careful scheduling of their use, they are not adequate for the volume of students needing to use them. The sound production room is poorly furnished and noise from an adjacent classroom distracts students. There is good technical support in the area.

Leadership and management

139. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers provide good support for students and there is effective communication across the area. Course teams meet regularly and have clear agendas that focus on the quality of students' learning. However, there are shortcomings. For example, although action points are identified for individual teachers, there is insufficient monitoring to ensure that action is being taken and that it is having the desired impact. Similarly, action points emanating from course reviews are not regularly reviewed at course team meetings and progress towards their achievement is not monitored effectively on all courses. Lesson observation lacks a critical or self-critical edge and only half the teachers in the area were observed in the year prior to the inspection. The management of the area was restructured prior to the inspection and these weaknesses were being addressed at the time of the inspection.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- good teaching on advanced modern foreign language courses and GCSE English

- good oral skills in English and modern foreign languages

- good enrichment activities and links abroad

- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on GCE AS French and English

- poor attendance records for some students

- low pass rates on GCSE English and GCE AS Spanish and English.

Scope of provision

140. There is a good range of full-time and part-time courses in English and modern languages. At the time of the inspection, some 580 students, three quarters of whom were aged 16 to 18, were enrolled on these courses. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and most part-time students are adults. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in French, Spanish, German, English language and literature, and English literature. There are GCSE courses in Spanish, French and English. Community based courses are provided in the evening and on Saturdays in French, German, Spanish, Italian and English. Some are non-accredited courses but others lead to GCSE or GCE A-level qualifications. GCSE English and a basic French course are offered at the Sheppey centre. French and Spanish units are also provided for students on catering and tourism courses.

Achievement and standards

141. Pass rates on GCE A-level English and modern foreign languages are close to the national average. There were high pass rates on GCE A-level English language and literature in 2002. The retention rate on the GCSE English course in 2002 was very high at 94%, having previously been at the national average. Pass rates on GCSE English in 2002 declined, however, having previously been just below the low national average for colleges of a similar type. Pass rates on several community-based courses in languages at intermediate and advanced levels are low and all the students who complete the courses do not sit the final examinations, which distorts the overall college statistics. The pass rate on GCSE French fell to below the national average in 2002, but enrolments were low and pass rates for the previous two years were 100%. GCE AS results in English literature were unsatisfactory over two years. Pass rates on GCE AS English language and literature were poor in 2002, and only 55% of students progressed to the full GCE A-level. Pass rates on GCE AS French are at the national average but retention rates are low.

142. Students' oral work is of a high standard across all courses. For example, group presentations on the difference between fate and destiny in 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' were well structured and confidently delivered. Students contribute well during informal discussion. GCSE students organised their thoughts and contributed well during a group discussion on symbolism in soap opera. GCE AS German students discussed the treatment of asylum seekers passionately and demonstrated good oral skills in the language. Most students' assignments are of a high standard. Students listen to the advice given by teachers and achieve good marks. GCSE students, for example, had produced imaginative modern film scripts of 'The Taming of the Shrew', which were of a high standard. In most English lessons, many students do not complete homework tasks on time. Attendance, which is poor in many lessons, is satisfactory in advanced language courses. In English lessons, attendance fluctuates between low and average. Students are late to many lessons which disrupts learning.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	165	118	119
		% retention	72	68	94
		% pass rate	47	45	40
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	13	8	17
		% retention	38	63	88
		% pass rate	100	100	80
GCE A-level language and literature	3	No. of starts	126	124	72
		% retention	63	71	96
		% pass rate	79	79	94
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	20	22	15
		% retention	56	59	100
		% pass rate	100	85	87

GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	25	31	24
		% retention	72	68	96
		% pass rate	73	76	83

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

GCE A2 level in 2002 are in-year retention and not directly comparable with the data for the previous two-year GCE A-level course

Quality of education and training

143. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers work well together and produce good schemes of work. There is a productive working atmosphere in lessons; teachers know their students well and students respond to encouraging comments and constructive criticism. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan carefully, using a suitable variety of teaching and learning strategies. In a French lesson, for example, students made good progress in using the passive tense through a series of interesting tasks pitched at appropriate levels. Students use projected images effectively to summarise and present ideas to each other. Teachers use foreign news broadcasts and the Internet effectively to help language students develop their cultural knowledge. In GCSE English lessons, teachers develop students' literacy skills through encouraging reading aloud, through revision exercises, and through highlighting terminology. Adaptations and 're-writes' of texts for particular audiences are used effectively in GCSE and GCE A-level lessons. Teachers begin a lesson by briefly revising the key points of the previous lesson and finish it by summarising and evaluating what has been taught. In each three-week cycle of lessons, an extra lesson is provided where students catch up or, where appropriate, receive extra support. Students in the area benefit from good enrichment activities and links abroad.

144. In less effective lessons, the teaching is dull and does not motivate students. Some GCE A-level English lessons are not sufficiently demanding, particularly for the more able students, and they become inattentive. The activities in these lessons are often far too predictable and follow a regular pattern of reviewing texts through question and answer. In the weaker modern language and English lessons, the teachers and a few students talk too much and dominate the lessons. In some GCE A-level English language and literature lessons, too much emphasis is placed on literary concepts and terminology and not enough attention is given to linguistic concepts and terminology.

145. Catering students go on a six-month work placement in France, Swedish students attend language lessons at the college, and English students visit the Globe theatre. There are visits to Majorca and Paris. GCSE English students are actively encouraged to progress to GCE AS English. The number of students progressing from GCE AS to GCE A2 is low at approximately 50%. While there are some extra homework tasks for gifted and talented students, extension activities for these students are not yet fully developed.

146. Assessment is used effectively, both to plan and monitor students' learning. Teachers are assiduous in their marking and give helpful written feedback. Oral re-capping tasks, as well as written tests, allow both students and teachers to check that the work is fully understood. Subject reports for progress reviews give students clear indications of their targets and progress made against them. Students are also monitored by subject teachers through the three-week extra lesson cycle. Many teachers keep in close contact with tutors to support and monitor students. The assessment objectives for GCE A-level courses are not fully understood by some students. The handbook produced for modern languages contains useful advice to help students to improve their examination skills.

147. Procedures for accepting students on to courses have been improved and initial help and guidance is effective. Teachers respond flexibly and with sensitivity to the needs of individual learners. Students with special needs are well supported. GCE A-level students are provided with excellent opportunities for key skill and literacy support, where required, but too few students attend their additional timetabled sessions. Academic mentors had been appointed shortly before the

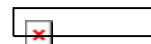
inspection to support students at risk. However, because of their poor attendance at lessons, tutorials and workshops, some of the students most in need of help are not getting enough teaching or support. Monitoring of their attendance and chasing up of absentees are not having sufficient impact on attendance and learning. Individual action plans produced for students by tutors are not used effectively to help students to improve their work and attendance. Targets are vague and poorly monitored.

148. Teachers are well qualified and update their knowledge through well-organised professional development. Most teaching rooms are spacious, light, well equipped and contain good displays. The college had established a state of the art multimedia centre shortly before the inspection. One teaching room used for languages lessons does not have blinds, and videos and projected images cannot be used effectively. Rooms used for teaching key skills have excellent facilities, which help students develop the essential skill of working well by themselves. The library is well stocked with English texts.

Leadership and management

149. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. The new management structure for the area has clarified and improved communication. Course-files are well organised and team meetings are beginning to address weaknesses in the curriculum area. There is insufficient collaboration across the area for improving retention and attendance rates. Good practice is not being actively shared through peer observations and sharing of lesson plans. Course reviews and action plans are not being used effectively to analyse and target improvements in teaching and learning. The better examples are in modern foreign languages. Part-time teachers are well supported.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on vocational courses for students receiving basic skills learning support

- good tuition in the college's essential skills centre

- an effective drive for improvement of key skills delivery

- good initiatives to widen participation.

Weaknesses

- a muddled key skills policy.

- the uneven quality of key skills lessons

- some poor teaching accommodation

- insufficiently rigorous initial assessment of students' basic and key skills

Scope of provision

150. In 2002, 742 students were enrolled for key skills communication at levels 1 and 2, and 647 students were enrolled for key skills application of number at levels 1 and 2. Basic skills support is available within the context of most key skills lessons, and in a small number of practical lessons. At the time of the inspection, some 300 students were receiving this form of support. Students re-sitting GCSEs also undertake key skills communications and application of number.

151. Approximately 100 students were attending basic skills classes in community settings. These classes are held over a 30-week year. A further 30 students were attending basic skills classes in the essential skills centre at the college's Canterbury site. One-to-one tuition is also available to students in this centre and at the Sheppey centre; some 135 students were receiving such support. Students may use the essential skills centre either on a drop-in basis or on a regular schedule of attendance agreed with a tutor.

Achievement and standards

152. In 2001, key skills pass rates for communication and application of number were very low. For communication at levels 1 and 2, the pass rates were 20% and 35 %, respectively. For application of number at levels 1 and 2, they were 27% and 21 %, respectively. In 2002, the college changed its approach, entering for the end test only those students who were likely to pass it, and making more flexible use of the various test dates on offer. The intention is to develop an approach which is more responsive to individual students' needs. At the time of the inspection, it was too early to judge the extent to which this strategy was enabling students to reach their full potential. Overall, pass rates have improved significantly, but performance across the college is inconsistent. For example, there are high pass rates in art and design and low pass rates for hair and beauty. The standard of work in students' files is satisfactory and, in some cases, good. Attendance in key skills lessons varies considerably. For example, it is very low in information and communications technology, but very high in construction lessons. The college has focused on developing the literacy and numeracy skills of vocational students who are at entry level. It provides prompt support on these courses, which traditionally recruit students with poor basic skills. A basic skills teacher or a learning support assistant works alongside the key skills teachers. Students receiving basic skills support in this way, or on a one-to-one basis, are highly successful in achieving their main qualification, and do significantly better than the average for their year group. In 2002, at level 1, 80% of 16 to 18 year olds achieved their main qualification, while 90% of those receiving basic skills support did so. At level 2, 70% of all 16 to 18 year-olds achieved their primary learning goal, while 90% of those benefiting from basic skills support were successful.

153. The standard of the work of community-based students is satisfactory. Students on discrete basic skills courses do not work towards qualifications, as the college is awaiting the further development of nationally recognised awards. However, their work is generally referenced to the

national curriculum.

Quality of education and training

154. Most lessons are satisfactory or better. However, there is a wide variation in the quality of key skills lessons which was not detected through the college's own observation scheme. The presence of the second teacher in the classroom is not fully exploited; in most cases, this teacher's task is to explain to individual students the literacy and numeracy elements in a task which has been designed for the whole group. Teachers rarely assume complementary roles or plan activities to take account of the different needs of students. There are few opportunities for students struggling with words or numbers to develop and practice their own learning strategies. Vocationally relevant assignments have been developed for nearly all curriculum areas, but some materials used to teach theoretical knowledge are of a general nature. Good examples of vocationally relevant materials include application of number assignments for trowel-trades students and Council for Awareness in Children's Care and Education students. The former require students to calculate how they would fulfil a customer's request for a specific building alteration, such as installing a disability ramp. The latter are based on activities in a nursery, such as helping children bake biscuits. Some material which is vocationally relevant contains complex technical jargon which is presented without explanation. In some lessons, more able students are working at an inappropriate level, and are repeating work they have done elsewhere and in which they have achieved competence.

155. Teaching in the essential skills centre is good. Students attending on a regular basis have individual learning plans which are referenced to the national curriculum. This cross-referencing is checked carefully at every visit by teachers. Lessons with groups of students are planned thoroughly and materials are well presented. Teachers work sensitively with students, providing a high level of individual support and constructive advice. Good use is made of computers to enhance learning. The centre provides a welcoming and reassuring atmosphere for anxious students.

156. Lessons taught in community settings are satisfactory or better. In a particularly effective lesson, women with literacy skills ranging from entry level to level 2, were developing their basic literacy skills through the study of contemporary dramatic texts. Work on adjectives was followed by a group reading from 'Abigail's Party'. The women were gaining a basic understanding of how language works while being introduced to ideas about drama, writing and morality. This was basic skills teaching which did not compromise on intellectual content. Students were enthusiastic. They had prepared for the lesson at home, and read together well and with conviction.

157. In some key skills lessons, groups are too large and are difficult to manage. The rooms in the construction area are too small, and cannot be organised so that all students can receive the necessary level of attention. The Whitstable learning shop has a prominent high street location, but the rooms are small and over-crowded.

158. The college has an on-going programme of staff development in basic and key skills. All basic skills staff have undergone training in the national curriculum, and many have relevant diplomas in the teaching of adult literacy. The college is a member of a consortium which had, at the time of the inspection, secured funding from the local LSC to establish a centre of excellence for professional development in basic skills. There are not enough staff appropriately qualified to teach application of number, which reflects a national shortfall.

159. The college operates different initial assessment practices at its two main sites for students on vocational courses. The individual learning plans produced as a result of these two sets of procedures are of a very variable quality. They range from appropriately detailed documents carefully cross-referenced to the national basic skills curriculum, to the imprecise and unsatisfactory. Most plans have little bearing on what is taught in key skills lessons. The college is aware of weaknesses in this area and has piloted a new approach to initial assessment. Students on basic skills courses undertake Basic Skills Agency assessments. In the essential skills centre, Basic Skills Agency assessments are used only when considered appropriate. Teachers working in community settings struggle to make individual learning plans clear and helpful to their students. In all aspects of the college's work in this field, progress reviews tend to focus on what has been done rather than what has been learned.

Leadership and management

160. Leadership and management are satisfactory. During the year prior to the inspection, a number of important steps had been taken to improve key skills delivery and the college has appointed a curriculum development officer for this area. The postholder has run a programme of training which representatives from across the college have attended and has strengthened the internal verification system for key skills and established a standardisation group, drawn from across the college.

161. The college's key skills policy is open to misinterpretation, and is not comprehensive. In some areas of the college, for example, in ICT, students are being allowed to opt out of key skills lessons, although the policy's intention is that all full-time students should be encouraged to achieve level 2. A lack of clear policy direction has allowed differing practices at the two main sites to go unchallenged and receives insufficient evaluation.

162. The college has expanded its range of community-based initiatives significantly over the three years prior to the inspection, and has a presence in many economically disadvantaged communities in the area. It has successfully developed links with other agencies, which has enabled teachers to establish work with vulnerable groups such as people with mental health difficulties and people with addictive behaviour. An externally-funded, community-based project completed in 2002, was successful not only in improving students' basic skills, but in raising their aspirations; 78% of students were considering taking another course. The college is an active member of the networks of organisations, such as the basic skills consortium for Kent and Medway, working to achieve the LSC's targets for literacy and numeracy.

Part D: College data

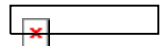
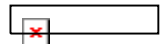


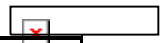
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18	19+
1	18	31
2	24	19
3	48	22
4/5	0	3
Other	10	25
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
-----------------	-------	-----	-------

	No.	No.	Enrolments
Science and mathematics	328	119	4
Land-based provision	122	59	2
Construction	251	189	4
Engineering, technology and manufacture	170	98	3
Business administration, management and professional	477	425	9
Information and communication technology	374	376	7
Retailing, customer service and transportation	26	7	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	551	160	7
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	242	186	4
Health, social care and public services	502	392	8
Visual and performing arts and media	662	154	8
Humanities	676	216	8
English, languages and communication	509	204	7
Foundation programmes	271	299	5
Curriculum areas not yet allocated	351	2124	24
Total	5'512	5008	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
		1	Starters excluding transfers	N/a	523	429	954
	Retention rate	78	65	79	72	72	79
	National average	80	80	79	59	68	58
	Pass rate	71	76	57	59	68	58
	National average	59	65	68	60	66	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	2007	1532	1247	1379	1060	875

	Retention rate	74	70	75	72	74	78
	National average	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate	62	65	61	67	77	75
	National average	65	66	69	62	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	2326	2143	2668	1278	1096	1295
	Retention rate	65	68	70	72	72	74
	National average	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate	71	77	75	69	70	69
	National average	72	74	76	62	66	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	35	25	14	242	227	138
	Retention rate	86	72	86	78	77	88
	National average	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate	69	57	92	59	66	68
	National average	64	66	55	56	56	53

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

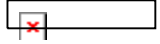
Sources of information:

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

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)	64	31	5	116
Level 2 (intermediate)	52	39	9	80
Level 1 (foundation)	50	39	11	46
Other sessions	50	36	14	22
Totals	57	35	8	264

Notes



© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2003. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Office for
Standards
in Education

