



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Barnsley 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](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Business administration](#)

[Business and management](#)

[Information and communications technology](#)

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

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Visual and performing arts and media](#)

[Humanities](#)

[English](#)

[Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

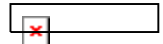
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

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

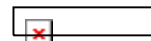
Basic information about the college



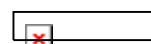
Name of college:	Barnsley College
Type of college:	General Further Education / Tertiary
Principal:	Joe West
Address of college:	PO Box 266 Church Street Barnsley S70 2YW
Telephone number:	01226 730191
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Chair of governors:	Pauline Acklam MBE

Unique reference number: 130534
Name of reporting inspector: Jan Bennett HMI
Dates of inspection: 3-14 March 2003

Part A: Summary



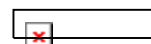
Information about the college



Barnsley College is a large tertiary college serving Barnsley and surrounding areas of South Yorkshire. It was formed in 1990 from an amalgamation of Barnsley College of Technology, Barnsley College of Art and Design and Barnsley Sixth Form College to become the main provider of post-16 education in the borough. There is one school in the borough with a sixth form. The college offers programmes in all 14 areas of learning funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and has approximately 3,400 full-time and 4,800 part-time students. It has an annual budget of £23 million. There are 557 full-time equivalent staff. The college has five sites, one of which is scheduled for closure in 2003. The borough covers an area of 328 square kilometres and has a population of 228,000. Just less than 1% of the population and 2% of college students are from a minority ethnic background. The Index of Multiple Deprivation highlights Barnsley as one of the most deprived parts of England. The borough is part of the South Yorkshire Objective One area, which identifies it as one of the poorest areas in the European Union. The unemployment rate is 4.3% compared with 3.7% in Yorkshire and Humberside and 3% in the UK. Only 19% of the workforce is qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 compared with 24% in Yorkshire and Humberside and 28% in England. In 2001, the proportion of Year 11 school leavers in Barnsley who obtained grade C or above in five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects was low, at 35%, compared with the national average of 48%. The proportion of students aged 16 who stayed on in full-time education was only 65%; well below the national average. In 2001, 53% of local school leavers enrolled on full-time courses at the college.

In 2002, the college revised its mission statement to emphasize its commitment to serving the local community. The new mission statement is 'to meet the requirements of learners predominantly in Barnsley and the surrounding communities of South Yorkshire'.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged that education and training were outstanding in one of the fourteen areas of learning, good in four areas and satisfactory in seven. Education and training were unsatisfactory in one of the areas of learning and very weak in another. The quality of work-based learning was considered to be satisfactory in one of the three areas inspected and unsatisfactory in the other two.

Key strengths

- clear strategic direction by the new management team

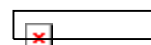
- high pass rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) and Advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses
- good individual support for students aged 16 to 18
- good accommodation and resources.

What should be improved

- aspects of management
- literacy and numeracy provision
- initial assessment
- key skills provision
- individual learning plans
- work-based learning.

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



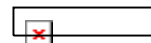
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were

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	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates for most GCE A-level subjects are high, but retention and pass rates for some level 2 subjects and on GCE AS mathematics are below the national average. There is much good teaching. In a few lessons, however, there is a lack of variety in teaching approaches and in the use of information and learning technology (ILT). Many students progress to HE. Recruitment to GCE AS mathematics courses is declining and, in turn, fewer students are progressing to GCE A-level mathematics.
Construction	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on nearly all courses. Students' portfolios are of a high standard. Learning resources and the monitoring of students progress are good. Students do not receive systematic help with literacy and numeracy. Staff have insufficient access to management information for planning and target setting purposes. Work-based learning is poorly organised.
Engineering	Satisfactory. Retention rates on most courses are good. Overall, pass rates are satisfactory and, on level 3 courses, some are high. Learners on work-based programmes make slow progress towards achieving their qualification. Most teaching is at least satisfactory, though the proportion of good or better teaching is below the national average. Resources are generally fit for purpose. Courses meet the needs of students and employers. Staff are well managed.
Business administration	Outstanding. Lessons are very well planned. Teaching is excellent. Pass rates are high. Students at all levels are well motivated, enthusiastic and take pride in their work. The area is very well managed with a strong team ethos amongst the staff and much sharing of good practice. Numbers on some courses are declining and the range of provision above level 2 is narrow.
Business and management	Good. Pass rates are high on GCE AS accounting and business and GCE A-level business courses. Teaching is good or better on most business, management and professional courses. Lesson planning is thorough and learning is set in a practical business context. Effective support is given to students on full-time courses. Pass rates are low on some NVQ accounting courses and the range of courses below level 3 is narrow.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses, most of which have high retention and pass rates. The computing facilities are modern but are not appropriate for the specialised nature of computing courses and there is inadequate technical support. Staff are highly motivated and do all they can to help the students. Students on computing courses, however, do not have work placements in order that they may experience the real world of computing. Key skills are not taught as an integral part of programmes. Students are punctual and are seldom absent.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high, with a few exceptions, but retention rates are low on some courses. Most teaching is good. The realistic working environments and the sports facilities are good. Initial assessment of students is poor and some students are placed on unsuitable courses.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Most retention and pass rates on beauty therapy courses are high but they are below the national average on a number of hairdressing courses. Some theory teaching fails to meet the needs

	of all students. Practical facilities are good. There have been major changes in the management and staffing of this curriculum area within the last year Staff are addressing some of the weaknesses in the provision.
Health and social care	Unsatisfactory. Teaching on courses for adults is good but there is unsatisfactory teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18. Some courses are poorly managed. There are long delays in the marking of students' work on some courses and the feedback teachers give students is inadequate. Quality assurance systems are weak.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good. Pass rates are very high but retention rates on a number of courses are low. There is much good or better teaching and strong support for students. Resources are good and the standard of the students' practical work is high. There are very effective links with the community, industry and schools.
Humanities	Good. Pass rates on most GCE A-level courses are high and the proportion of students who obtain high grades is above the national average. Retention rates for full-time students are satisfactory or better. Teachers provide strong academic support for younger students but much of their teaching is undemanding. There is a wide range of provision. Many students progress to HE.
English	Good. Retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses are high. The proportion of students on GCSE courses who obtain grade C or above is below the national average. There is much good teaching. Students benefit from a good programme of subject enrichment activities. Assessment and the monitoring of students' progress are effective and well organised, but there are inadequate arrangements for supporting students with specific learning needs.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Satisfactory. There is much good teaching. Teachers take account of the individual needs of students. Teachers help the students to further their personal development and acquire essential skills for the world of work. Initial assessment of students is not carried out effectively and does not provide enough information to enable teachers to draw up realistic individual learning plans. Some schemes of work and lesson plans are not detailed enough.
Literacy and numeracy	Very poor. There are inadequacies in the initial assessment of students, target setting and the process for reviewing and monitoring students' progress. Learning support is poor and the take up for it is low. Quality assurance systems are inadequate. Pastoral support is very good and there are good initiatives to widen participation.

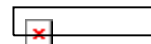
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good progress has been made in implementing actions for the college recovery plan. Governors and senior managers set a clear strategic direction and give strong leadership. The staff do all they can to help their students and the college to succeed. The college has developed a good range of external links. Communications across the college are good. Many standard management and administrative procedures have only recently been re-introduced or improved. Arrangements for reviewing the performance of senior managers are good, but some managers are unable to complete their staff appraisal programme. Quality assurance is not carried out with consistent thoroughness. Demanding targets are not set for

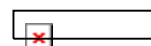
level. Some managers have line management responsibility for too many staff. The college is financially weak and not achieving its funding targets for growth but is offering satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



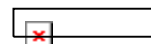
The college's response to social inclusion is satisfactory. A comprehensive equality and diversity policy and plan was introduced in May 2002. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly higher than the proportion of persons from these backgrounds in the local community. Managers and governors have begun to use data analysis to monitor the promotion of equal opportunities and set realistic targets for improvement. Accommodation on most sites is easily accessible to students with restricted mobility. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, particularly for those students with visual or hearing impairment. Significant numbers of students are recruited from socially and economically deprived areas and they find the college welcoming and supportive. There is a very good programme of events aimed at raising aspirations of Year 10 and 11 pupils in the area and this includes taster days, master classes and visits to universities. The college is beginning to work in partnership with other local organisations in order to develop initiatives to attract more adults from groups under-represented in further education (FE).

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Student support is well managed and carefully co-ordinated. Support for students aged 16 to 18 is good but it is less effective for adults. Arrangements for providing students with additional support are inadequate and few students take up the support offered. Arrangements for recruiting and helping prospective students are effective. There is comprehensive and well-designed course and college information, including prospectuses that provide appropriate and useful details. Good impartial advice is given to students. Students receive an effective induction to the college. Career guidance for students is good. The tutorial system is satisfactory. Welfare and support services are effective and include good links with other external support services. Most students attend regularly.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- helpful and supportive teachers

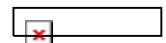
- friendly and safe college environment

- learning centres
- food in the refectory
- IT equipment.

What they feel could be improved

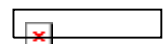
- car parking facilities
- some accommodation and social space
- course staffing to ensure continuity
- some teaching and tutorials.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	60	31	9
19+ and WBL*	64	27	9
Learning 16-18	59	35	6
19+ and WBL*	63	27	10

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. Data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 were provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2001/02. Inspectors also used additional data held by the college, particularly in the area of work-based learning. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses. Retention and pass rates have been compared with those of other colleges that recruit a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas.

2. In 2000/01, pass rates rose significantly at all three levels, especially on courses for adult students, but retention rates fell. In 2001/02, retention rates improved and pass rates were above, or around, the national average, except on level 1 courses for adult students. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses have been above, or around, the national averages and pass rates have been well above the national averages throughout the three-year period from 1999 to 2002. On GCSE courses, both retention rates and the percentage of grade A to C passes have been around the national average for the last three years. On General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses, overall retention and pass rates have been around the national averages and on level 3 courses, the pass rates and the percentage of high grades achieved have been well above the national averages. On NVQ courses, retention rates are generally around, or above, the national average but the pass rates are very low. Pass rates for key skills were well below the national average in both 2000/01 and 2001/02, and the retention rate fell significantly in 2001/02.

3. The overall attendance in lessons observed by inspectors was 81%, which is higher than the national average of 76% for all inspections carried out in general FE colleges in 2001/02. Attendance was highest on business administration and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and it was lowest on literacy and numeracy courses. Most students are punctual: particularly students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those on business administration courses. Insufficient action, however, is being taken to deal with some students on construction, art and GCSE science courses who are late for lessons.

4. The standard of students' practical work, particularly on business administration courses, is high. Students on visual arts, construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy courses compete

successfully in national and regional competitions. The college has won three gold medals for media awarded by the LSC. Visual arts and media students have produced work of a professional standard for a number of local organisations, including a video for the South Yorkshire Police Dog Training School and a mural for the Barnsley Interchange. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities further their personal development. A record of their work is maintained in the form of photographs and video recordings in order that they may see what they have achieved. Students in some areas, such as humanities and construction, are not given enough scope to develop the skills of working effectively on their own.

5. The college has 159 work-based learners, of whom 89 are advanced modern apprentices, 67 are foundation modern apprentices and 3 are on NVQ courses. The areas of work-based learning include construction, engineering, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. All foundation modern apprentices in beauty therapy completed their programme and met all the requirements of their apprenticeship framework. On other work-based learning programmes, few learners completed their modern apprenticeships successfully. Of the 111 learners who have joined a foundation modern apprenticeship programme since 1998, 61% are still on it and of those who have left, 16% met all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework and 60% did not gain any qualifications. Of the 123 learners who have joined an advanced modern apprenticeship programme since 1998, 65% are still on the course and, of those who have left, 14% met all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework and 77% did not gain any qualifications.

16 to 18 year olds

6. In 2001/02, approximately 32% of students at the college were aged 16 to 18 and 81% of these were on full-time courses. Some 36% were studying at level 3, 25% at level 2 and 18% at level 1. The retention rate at level 3 was around the national average for the two years from 1999 to 2001 and rose by 9% in 2001/02 to well above the national average. Pass rates have been significantly above the national average for the three-year period. At both levels 1 and 2, retention rates fell sharply in 2000/01, but rose to around the national average in 2001/02. In 1999/2000, pass rates on level 1 and 2 courses were very low, at 58% and 32%, respectively. They rose markedly to 74% in 2000/01 and have remained above or around the national average in 2001/02. In both 2000/01 and 2001/02, pass rates for key skills were very low, at 12%, compared with the national average of 31%.

7. Comparison is made of the final examination grades students obtain with their GCSE grades on entry, in order to calculate the extent of, or value added to, their achievements. In 2001/02, students added value to their achievement in half the GCE AS and A-level subjects offered by achieving grades higher than those predicted for them. Students on only one of the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses added value to their achievements. Over the three-year period from 1999 to 2002, most students taking GCE A-level general studies have achieved grades higher than those predicted for them but many of those on the GCE A-level sociology course failed to do so.

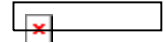
8. Many GCE A-level students are successful in gaining places in higher education (HE) and, in 2002, five out of the six humanities students who applied to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge succeeded in gaining places at one of them.

Adult learners

9. In 2001/02, approximately 68% of students were adults and 85% of these were studying part time. The majority of enrolments were on level 1 and 2 courses. In 2000/01, the retention rates on adult courses fell to below the national average at levels 1, 2 and 3 and, although they rose, in 2001/02 they were still below it. Pass rates on courses at levels 2 and 3 were very low in 1999/2000 but rose sharply in 2000/01 and have remained around the national average in 2001/02. At level 1, however, the pass rate has fallen from 69% in 2000/01, to 54% in 2001/02 and is below the national average. The overall retention rate on short courses has remained at over 90% over the three-year period. The overall pass rate was around 60% in 1999/2000 and 2000/01, but rose to 73% in 2001/02. In 2000/01 and 2001/02, the pass rates for key skills certification were very low, at 10% and 15%, respectively, compared with the national average of 30%.

10. Retention rates for adult students have fallen more sharply than those for students aged 16 to 18. In 1999/2000, the retention rates for adult students on courses at all three levels were higher than those for students aged 16 to 18. In 2000/01 and 2001/02, however, these rates fell to below those for students aged 16 to 18. Pass rates for adult students are also below those for students aged 16 to 18, especially at level 3. In 2001/02, the pass rate on level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18 was 86% but was only 70% for adults.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 245 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 61% of these, satisfactory in 30% and less than satisfactory in 9%. These proportions are very close to the national average for colleges of the same type. The highest proportion of good or better teaching was in business administration, business and management studies and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The weakest teaching observed was in literacy and numeracy, where 36% of the teaching was less than satisfactory. More than 10% of the teaching observed in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in health and social care was less than satisfactory. Learning was good or better in 60% of the lessons observed, satisfactory in 33% and less than satisfactory in 7%.

12. Adults are better taught than students aged 16-18. The teaching in 67% of lessons for adults was graded good or better compared with 60% for students aged 16 to 18. Adult students also learn more effectively than those aged 16 to 18. Learning was good or better in 66% of lessons for adults, compared with only 59% for students aged 16 to 18. The proportion of good or better teaching was the same at levels 1, 2 and 3 but there was a much higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching at level 2. At level 2, 14% of teaching was less than satisfactory compared with only 4% at levels 1 and 3. At entry level, a high proportion of teaching, at 17%, was unsatisfactory. However, 67% of the teaching was good or better compared with around 61% at levels 1, 2 and 3. Learning was least effective at level 2. Learning was good or better in only 52% of level 2 classes, compared with over 60% at the other levels. On GCSE courses, there was a particularly low proportion of good or better teaching and learning.

13. In the better lessons, teaching is well planned and teachers ensure that learning methods and activities meet all the students' needs. Teachers make sure that all the students understand the lesson by asking the class well-phrased questions and then naming individuals to answer them. They explain new concepts and ideas carefully and make sure the students have grasped them. Teachers develop the students' critical understanding skilfully and give help to individual students. In business administration, the individual needs and preferred learning styles of students are carefully analysed and learning activities are planned carefully to take account of these. In English, teachers give very good support to individual students and encourage them to explore ideas and think for themselves. The better practical sessions in performing and visual arts move at a brisk pace and the teacher sets demanding but achievable tasks that challenge and inspire the students. In some engineering lessons, students carry out group work effectively. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are divided into groups, according to their ability, and they work well together in these. In the better lessons, the students participate in their tasks confidently and with enthusiasm. In information and communications technology (ICT) lessons, most students are able to work confidently on their own. In business administration lessons, students are not afraid to seek help and they help one another when necessary.

14. In the weaker lessons, teaching is often unimaginative and does not challenge or interest the students. There is little reference to the use of ILT in the lesson plans and schemes of work. In some of the weaker lessons, little use is made of computers and graphical calculators and the students are not given demanding practical tasks to test and extend their skills. In GCSE science lessons, teachers do not deal effectively with some students who are inattentive and disruptive. In some humanities lessons, the pace of learning is slow, the range of teaching methods is very narrow and

the learning tasks are too easy for some students. In some care lessons, students spend too much time copying from overhead projector slides. In some of the less effective literacy and numeracy lessons, students are set work at a level inappropriate for them, are not given the help they need and teachers do not check their understanding adequately.

15. Full-time students attend a key skills workshop in order to develop their skills in preparation for the external test. It is college policy that evidence for the key skills portfolio should be drawn from the students' main programme of work wherever possible. There is a lack of co-ordination between vocational teachers and the key skills team. Some vocational teachers do not encourage students to gather evidence of the key skills they use as they carry out their vocational tasks. Students are required to complete key skills assignments that have little vocational relevance. Some teachers include references to key skills in their schemes of work and in lesson plans but others do not. Students on health and social care and ICT programmes seldom learn key skills as an integral part of their course.

16. Full-time teachers are well qualified and suitably experienced. Part-time visiting teachers bring valuable experience of current working practices to the college. Some 64% of the full-time teaching staff hold a recognised teaching qualification but only 18% of the part-time lecturers have one. Few newly appointed full-time lecturers are qualified teachers. The college has recognised the need to focus much of its staff development activity on teacher training. There were some poor health and safety practices in catering and electrical installation courses. The health and safety committee did not meet for an 18-month period but a new committee, which meets regularly, was formed in August 2002.

17. The college has 3 main sites and provides courses at 27 community centres. The accommodation is well maintained and clean. The findings of a recent room utilisation survey showed that the use of accommodation has improved. With the aim of improving room usage further, the college now has plans to relocate some provision. Since the last inspection, the college has improved the accessibility of its learning resources. All staff rooms and communal learning areas are linked to the college's internal computer network. Students have good access to computers and other learning support material at various points throughout the main college and they are able to open an e-mail account. The college monitors the use of learning resources and it has identified a shortage of computers during busy periods. There are appropriate resources in all curriculum areas with good facilities and specialist equipment in construction, sports, visual and performing arts, media, business administration, engineering and the sciences. Some ICT courses lack specialist facilities and the technician support is inadequate. Students with restricted mobility can reach most areas of the college.

18. The college has clear policies and procedures for internal verification and assessment that are in accordance with requirements of awarding bodies. The assessment of students' work is fair, accurate and is carried out regularly on most courses. Some assignments on health care courses, however, had not been marked after two months. Learners on work-based programmes in construction and engineering are not assessed often enough in the workplace. Students are provided with feedback on their work that is clear and outlines progress made in meeting course objectives. On business administration courses, teachers are rigorous in checking students' spelling and punctuation and in ensuring the presentation of their work is up to industry standards. The parents of students aged under 18 receive very clear and detailed progress reports and parents' evenings are well attended.

19. The monitoring of students' progress is carried out far more effectively in some curriculum areas than in others. In business administration, there is very close monitoring of students' progress and effective support is given to weaker students. Staff ensure that students on construction courses at the college have a clear understanding of the extent of their progress. The monitoring of students' progress on health and social care, literacy and numeracy and work-based engineering courses is poor. Reviews of students' progress on these courses are not carried out regularly or rigorously and do not lead to action planning to improve the students' performance. Students are not always set targets during reviews. When students are set targets, these are not always agreed with them and the timescale for their achievement is not specified. Some students do not know when they will receive reviews of their progress and do not consider them important.

20. The college offers a wide range of courses and progression routes from entry level to level 4 in most areas. Work-based learning programmes for modern apprentices, leading to NVQs, are offered in three occupational areas. The college is working successfully with local organisations and employers to ensure that its curriculum meets local needs. It is also part of a local learning partnership to develop a curriculum for students aged 14 to 19 and liaises very effectively with local secondary schools. The college has representatives at careers events and parents' evenings in schools and runs school links programmes that are particularly popular in the craft area. The college also offers programmes that are encouraging students from socially deprived backgrounds to stay on in education. The college provides a range of programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from special schools. Provision for adults includes courses such as family learning programmes and courses to attract women from groups under-represented in FE. There is no college crèche but the college finances places in local nurseries for the children of students who are attending college.

21. Students in many areas benefit from good curriculum enrichment activities, including visits and competitions. Many curriculum areas have good links with industry. Students on computing courses, however, have insufficient links with industry and full-time students on computing and construction courses do not have work placements. Few students take part in the college-wide curriculum enrichment programme. The college does not have a successful key skills strategy. Few students complete their key skills portfolios and key skills are not an integrated part of the curriculum. There is little teaching of wider key skills.

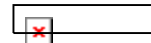
22. Student support is well managed and carefully co-ordinated. Students are aware of the services available to them. The learning information service centre is centrally located at the main site and is both welcoming and well used. Support staff are well qualified and suitably experienced. The support that teachers give to students aged 16 to 18 is especially strong and the students appreciate the friendly atmosphere created by the college. There is, however, inadequate support and guidance for adult students in humanities. In construction, adult students and those who attend evening classes are not given enough help with literacy and numeracy.

23. Initial assessment is used to identify students' needs for help with literacy and numeracy. These needs are identified soon after the students start their course. Across the college, however, arrangements for providing students with learning support are inadequate and some students, including adult students on construction and health and social care courses, do not receive the help that they need. There is low take-up of help with literacy and numeracy. Just over half of the students identified as needing such help, opt to take it.

24. Arrangements for recruiting and advising prospective students are good. Students speak highly of the help and information they received before joining the college. There is a notice board in every local secondary school specifically for displaying college information. The college holds open evenings for prospective students and well-designed prospectuses and student handbooks provide information that is appropriate and helpful. Information about the support services that are available is publicised in posters throughout the college, the students' newsletter, leaflets and on the college web site. Most students feel that careers education and guidance are effective. Comprehensive careers information, including computer-based resources, are available in the learning information services centre. The college has received several awards for the excellence of its careers guidance for students. Induction is well planned and students speak highly of the information that they receive. Students are aware of the complaints procedure and their concerns are addressed.

25. There are weekly group tutorials and individual tutorials take place every six weeks. The tutorial system is satisfactory. Individual tutorials are good but some group tutorials are not. All full-time students, and some part-time students with substantial timetables, have a personal tutor. Part-time students on short courses receive tutorial support from the class teacher. The welfare services include financial advice, a counselling service and the chaplaincy. All these services are readily accessible and well regarded by students. There are good and useful links with external agencies that specialise in personal support and guidance. On most courses, students' attendance is monitored carefully. Most students attend regularly but some are late for lessons.

Leadership and management



26. Since 2000, five interim principals have been in post. A new principal was appointed in December 2001. Of the 15 governors, 9 have been appointed in the last 15 months. The college now has strong leadership. Staff are keen to help the college succeed. They feel valued and their morale is high. Since the last inspection, the college has phased out its collaborative provision and between 1999 and 2001 it failed to meet its funding targets. Between 1996 and 1999, the college claimed more funding than it was entitled to and has been required to repay £5.4 million. The college is in financial recovery and is implementing action plans to address its difficulties. Important developments have taken place, with the aim of improving the college's finances. A new sixth form centre has been established, management has been restructured, the curriculum has been remodelled and the total number of staff has been reduced by 250. The college's new mission statement, revised corporate aims and the comprehensive recovery plan give staff a clear sense of purpose and the impetus to help the college succeed. The recovery plan is under constant review and its implementation is monitored closely. The objectives in the college's development plan for 2001/02, to improve policies and procedures, have been achieved. The development plan for 2002/03 has new targets for retention and pass rates. The college's recovery plan and development plan are not systematically linked.

27. Most of the college governors are new to their role and are still acquiring a full understanding of their duties. They give strong and enthusiastic support to the college's new mission statement and are well supported by an experienced and skilled chair of governors and an experienced clerk. Governors bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the college. A governors' working party has carried out self-assessment of the corporation's performance, produced a new handbook for governors and established a new committee structure for the governing body. Governors monitor closely the implementation of the action plan they drew up after self-assessment. Most of the action in the plan has now been carried out. Governors, however, have not yet identified performance indicators for the corporation. The training needs of governors have been analysed but no training plan has been drawn up.

28. The governors' quality, standards and curriculum committee, overseeing the college's quality assurance arrangements, now receives a series of reports on the college's performance. These reports do not always provide detailed recommendations for action or clarify what needs to be done to secure improvements. This committee has recently started to monitor student recruitment and retention and pass rates. During the current academic year, quality assurance procedures have been revised and made more comprehensive. There is now a detailed programme of quality assurance activities leading to reports. These activities, however, are not carried out with consistent thoroughness across the college and their effectiveness is not evaluated. In some areas, there is little systematic identification and sharing of good practice by staff.

29. New management information systems provide easier access to more reliable and accurate data. Some course teams, however, make little use of the good management information available to them but spend time and effort collecting and recording data themselves. There are reports on enrolments, attendance, retention and pass rates. Challenging targets, however, for retention and pass rates are not set for all programmes. Detailed analysis is carried out of students' responses to questionnaires about the college and its provision. Staff have taken action to address concerns the students have but this has not yet been evaluated.

30. There is outstanding provision in business administration. Of the 14 areas of learning inspected, 12 were graded satisfactory or better. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment grading for 9 of the 14 curriculum areas inspected. Many course self-assessment reports use a narrow range of performance indicators, lack detail or clear judgements and do not take feedback from students into account. Inspectors did not agree with the identified strengths and weaknesses in some reports. Service teams complete self-assessment reports. Some teams have service standards, but there is little detailed monitoring or evaluation of performance against these standards. Course reviews are

completed each autumn. Course reviews are summarised at school level and report on enrolment and on retention and attendance rates, but there is little aggregation of these data.

31. A few schools are not well managed. In these, managers have line management responsibility for too many staff. They have heavy workloads. Timetable clashes prevent some staff from attending team meetings and training events regularly. Observations of lessons have been introduced recently with the aim of identifying how teaching can be improved and learning can become more effective. Trained and experienced teachers undertake classroom observations in order to help teachers improve their performance and to identify good practice and disseminate it across the college. It is not yet possible to quantify their impact. The proportions of particular grades awarded by the college for teaching, learning and attainment were broadly similar to those awarded by the inspectors and were also in line with the national average.

32. Communications across the college are good. Individual governors maintain direct links with college faculties and they have developed a good understanding of the college and its work. Communications between governors and staff have improved. The principal uses various means in order to communicate with staff effectively, including surgeries when individual members of staff may raise issues or problems they may have. There are standard items on the agenda of senior management team meetings. Summaries of senior management team meetings and notes of governors' meetings are circulated to staff in newsletters and posted on the college intranet. Minutes of all college meetings are reviewed effectively at senior management team meetings. A comprehensive schedule for meetings has been introduced. Notes of meetings are kept. These do not always give details of agreed action plans, however, or state whether the implementation of such plans is being monitored, or if the plans have been carried out.

33. The college has developed a good range of external links. Three school link tutors visit schools weekly. There are innovative projects to encourage pupils to progress to FE and to win over youngsters who are disaffected with education. Some 150 pupils aged 14 to 16 attend weekly vocational training lessons. Deputy heads of 12 out of the 13 local schools meet regularly to discuss issues such as a common timetable for students aged 14 to 19 and course design. The college has good working relations with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The college has entered into partnership arrangements with a private training provider who is meeting the needs of a group of young students. Employers are members of college advisory boards and exchange views with staff at meetings.

34. Arrangements for reviewing the performance of senior managers are good. The chair of governors appraises the principal, who then appraises the senior management team. Individual objectives for senior staff are agreed and these relate to the college's development plan and the strategic aims. Senior managers meet with middle managers to agree supporting actions plans which are then shared with college staff. In December 2002, senior managers attended their first performance management review and agreed action to improve their performance. The review covered curriculum, quality, financial and resource issues. This review served as an important means of demonstrating the accountability of senior staff for improving the quality of teaching, making learning more effective and increasing financial stability.

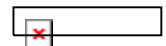
35. No staff appraisals were undertaken between 2000 and 2002. An abridged appraisal programme was introduced in November 2002. Some staff who had a group appraisal expressed dissatisfaction with the new system as their individual training needs and issues relating to their individual performance were not always addressed. In some cases, appraisers had too many staff to appraise and were not able to complete their programme.

36. Staff promote equality of opportunity effectively. There is a new equality and diversity committee. The college has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures on equal opportunities. There are guidelines for monitoring the promotion of equal opportunities. The college has policies on race equality, provision of additional support for students and harassment. There is a complaints procedure and also a system for recording compliments about the college and its provision. There is a combined equality and diversity strategy and action plan, which is regularly reviewed. The equality and diversity committee, chaired by the principal, meets twice a month. The governors have approved a comprehensive report on the promotion of equality and diversity in the college and also

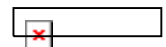
recommendations on action to avoid discrimination in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability when recruiting students. Students' achievements are not analysed to find out whether students from particular groups or categories perform better or less well than those from others. Staff have received training on equality of opportunities and diversity. In work-based learning, there is little monitoring of employers' promotion of equality of opportunity and race equality. Staff seldom discuss issues related to equal opportunities with work-based learners when carrying out reviews of their progress.

37. The college is financially weak. It is unlikely to achieve its funding target in any of the four years of the recovery plan. Budgetary responsibility is delegated to faculty heads and main college budgets are carefully monitored. Responsibilities for expenditure on consumables are delegated to heads of schools. Recruitment of new staff is centrally managed. There is no systematic procedure for course costing. The college recovery plan has addressed issues of value for money. For example, staffing shortages are carefully identified and there is rigorous monitoring and control of the amount of overtime working by staff. External consultants have confirmed that the costs of non-teaching staff are near the average for the sector. Room utilisation is satisfactory. Student attendance rates are high. The college gives satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for most GCE A-level subjects

- high value added scores for many students on most science courses

- high progression rate to HE

- much good teaching, particularly on level 3 courses.

Weaknesses

- low and declining numbers on GCE AS mathematics courses

- failure to address some students' poor attendance rates in a few subjects

- some poorly motivated students on GCSE science courses

- little use of ILT in lessons.

Scope of provision

38. There are approximately 400 students on science courses and 350 on mathematics courses. There is a satisfactory range of courses in science and mathematics, though the science curriculum has contracted during recent years, following the withdrawal of a vocational programme at level 3 and two GCSE subjects. Recruitment to GCE AS mathematics courses has declined significantly over the last two years and fewer students now progress to GCE A-level mathematics. GCE A-level mathematics students have a common first year but they are able to choose between statistics and mechanics units in their second year. Students are normally expected to have a grade B in GCSE mathematics before commencing GCE AS mathematics. Those with a C grade are advised to take a GCE AS course in the use of mathematics. GCSE mathematics is available to students who have not previously achieved C grade or above in the subject. Some students follow an Open College Network level 2 progression course prior to joining a GCSE course.

Achievement and standards

39. Retention and pass rates are high on most GCE AS and A-level subjects. In 2000/01 and 2001/02, the retention rate for GCE A-level biology was 100%, as it was for GCE A-level chemistry in 2001/02. Pass rates for GCE AS biology and human biology were 20% above the national average in 2000/01 and 2001/02. In recent years, pass rates for several GCE A-level subjects, including biology, chemistry and mathematics, have been more than 10% above the national average. In the past three years, there have been some low retention and pass rates on GCSE single award science courses and low pass rates on GCSE biology and mathematics courses. In 2001/02, the pass rate for GCE AS applied mathematics was low, at 42%.

40. Students of most GCE A-level subjects achieve higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. Teachers set students minimum target grades, determined on the basis of their GCSE results, and monitor students' progress towards achieving these. Most GCE A-level students are attentive and work diligently in class but some students have difficulty maintaining their concentration in the longer lessons. Many students produce good coursework and do well in tests. The standard of students' work is high.

41. The number of students who progress to HE is impressive. In 2002, more than 75% of students who were successful in GCE A-level biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics obtained university places. Of these, 65% went on to science and mathematics related courses, including those in computing, engineering and medicine.

42.

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	209	234	206
		% retention	72	69	78
		% pass rate	31	47	32
GCSE science (dual award)	2	No. of starts	27	34	12
		% retention	85	85	82
		% pass rate	32	44	56
GCE A-level mathematics *	3	No. of starts	38	70	36
		% retention	76	46	100
		% pass rate	79	84	89
GCE A-level biology *	3	No. of starts	36	26	35
		% retention	66	100	100
		% pass rate	92	88	100
GCE A-level chemistry *	3	No. of starts	60	64	45
		% retention	72	67	100
		% pass rate	91	95	89
GCE A-level physics *	3	No. of starts	35	38	39
		% retention	74	87	97
		% pass rate	81	85	87
GCE AS human biology	3	No. of starts	**	128	139
		% retention	**	86	85
		% pass rate	**	86	87
GCE AS environmental science	3	No. of starts	**	29	24
		% retention	**	99	88
		% pass rate	**	85	86

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

* GCE A-level two-year courses in 2000 and 2001, one-year A2 course in 2002

** course not available

Quality of education and training

43. There is much good teaching, particularly to level 3 students. Most lessons are well structured and cover the course content at an appropriate pace. Teachers have good subject knowledge and relate well to students, giving support to those who need it in lessons. Teachers give clear expositions of principles and techniques, but some of the teaching of mathematics is unimaginative. In some lessons, students were asked questions but not encouraged to develop their answers fully. There are schemes of work for all courses. Some schemes of work for mathematics list topics but give few details of teaching and learning methods, how the students will be assessed and what resources will be used. In a good GCE AS lesson on the use of mathematics, students were developing ideas for a major piece of coursework. The support the teacher gave individual students was a key factor in ensuring that they knew what they had to do and had clear objectives for their assignment.

44. Some teaching of mathematics is dull. In lessons, students undertake few practical activities and

make little use of computers and graphical calculators. Some teachers rely too heavily on textbooks and seldom use imaginative and original teaching methods to excite the students' interest. Little account is taken of students' different abilities and preferred learning styles. Some teaching does not inspire poorly motivated students on GCSE science courses. In some lessons, the teacher failed to deal appropriately with students who were late or inattentive and with a few who were attempting to be disruptive. There is little use of ILT in lessons. In some three-hour lessons, the teacher does not vary the classroom learning activities sufficiently to hold the students' interest and attention.

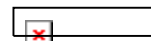
45. Science and mathematics are currently being taught at a separate site about half a mile from the main college until new accommodation is built. The building is old and some areas are poorly heated but accommodation is spacious and serviceable. There is a well-equipped learning resource centre. Much of the accommodation, other than the chemistry and physics laboratories, is accessible to wheelchair users. There is good technical support. Specialist laboratories and preparation areas are well maintained. Science equipment is also well maintained and appropriate for the current courses.

46. Assessment of science and mathematics assignments is carried out well. The written feedback some teachers give students on their work, however, is not detailed enough and does not show them clearly what they need to do to improve their performance. Students are well supported by their teachers, tutors and the support services of the college. Students on every course are asked to reply to questionnaires about the quality of provision and their responses are usually positive.

Leadership and management

47. Science and mathematics provision is managed within the newly created sixth form centre, which is currently located on two sites. Experienced teachers lead science course teams and they communicate well with both their colleagues and their students. Teachers of most subjects work well together and have devised common teaching and assessment materials. Teachers of mathematics are less close-knit as a team and seldom share good practice. There is a cycle of regular school and subject team meetings. The findings of course reviews and lesson observations are taken into account in the self-assessment report, which is thorough and detailed. Students' opinions are regularly sought. A range of strategies has been implemented to raise retention and pass rates in mathematics. These include stricter entry requirements for GCE A-level mathematics courses and the introduction of the GCE AS course in the use of mathematics for students with lower GCSE grades.

Construction



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses

- high standard of students' portfolios

- good learning resources

- good monitoring of students' progress at the college

- broad range of programmes

- good self-assessment and curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory work-based arrangements

- much uninspiring teaching

- unsystematic arrangements to help students with literacy and numeracy

- insufficient use of management information

- disruptive effect of students' lateness for lessons.

Scope of provision

48. There are 564 students on construction courses. Of these, 297 are aged between 16 and 18 and 267 are adults. Just over 60 are work-based learners. Only eight of the students are female. The school has set a target of increasing recruitment of persons from groups under-represented in FE by 3.5%. However, at present, there are no students from the minority ethnic community.

49. There is a broad range of courses at pre-16, pre-entry, foundation, intermediate, advanced and higher levels. This includes craft NVQ and technician training courses and also advanced and foundation modern apprenticeship programmes. Students can attend courses in various ways, through block and day release, on a full-time basis and as part-time students in the evening. Courses are relevant to the requirements of local industry and meet students' and employers' needs.

Achievement and standards

50. Students demonstrate that they have acquired the requisite knowledge and skills to gain their qualifications. Teachers encourage students to take pride in their practical and written work and to produce work to industrial standards. The standard of students' practical and written work is satisfactory or better. Many students use computers. They gather evidence of their acquisition of

skills in the workplace for their portfolios and these are impressive. Construction students regularly participate and succeed in national craft competitions. Attendance is monitored carefully and is good. Lessons are often disrupted when students arrive late for them. The current system for reporting lateness and dealing with students who fail to be punctual is ineffective.

51. Most pass rates are high. The pass rates on advanced GNVQ, national certificate and NVQ level 2 and 3 programmes have risen over the last two years and are above the national average. Pass rates on work-based learning programmes are low. Of the 52 work-based learners who started during the last three years, only one has met all the modern apprenticeship requirements. Retention rates on full-time NVQ level 1 and 2 programmes are high. Retention rates for the national certificate at level 3 and NVQ level 3 brickwork programmes have risen significantly and are well above the national average. Action has been taken to make the teaching of key skills to full-time and block-release students more structured and pass rates for key skills certification have risen. Day-release students and work-based learners, however, have not been taught key skills from the outset of their programme and many are making little progress towards achieving certification in key skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Construction occupations foundation certificate	Entry	No. of starts	49	128	46
		% retention	94	84	85
		% pass rate	91	93	83
NVQ building craft occupations (two year)	1	No. of starts	21	22	26
		% retention	76	95	92
		% pass rate	88	100	75
NVQ wood occupations (two year)	2	No. of starts	48	45	28
		% retention	65	60	75
		% pass rate	25	43	94
NVQ plumbing (two year)	2	No. of starts	30	59	33
		% retention	70	60	90
		% pass rate	35	18	76
NVQ brickwork (one year)	3	No. of starts	19	17	10
		% retention	58	82	90
		% pass rate	73	62	89
National certificate in construction (two year)	3	No. of starts	12	22	6
		% retention	50	73	100
		% pass rate	40	88	83
GNVQ advanced construction and built environment	3	No. of starts	13	16	16
		% retention	54	20	88
		% pass rate	60	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

52. Most practical and theory classes are taught well. In the most successful lessons, teaching, learning and assessment have been carefully planned and structured and teachers work to detailed

lesson plans and schemes of work. Teachers check students' understanding regularly and all students are encouraged to answer questions. The less successful lessons lack momentum. In these, the teaching was dull and the students were not challenged to use all their skills to the full. Assignments for technician students have clear briefs and are well constructed and demanding. On craft and technician courses, students receive informative feedback on their progress. They are very clear about the extent of progress that they have made and what they need to do in order to achieve their qualification. Work-based learners on modern apprenticeships know that they must obtain an NVQ but do not fully understand that they must also achieve key skills certification in order to meet all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework. Teachers give effective pastoral support and build good working relationships with students. Teachers organise and manage lessons well and demonstrate sensitivity and flexibility in responding to the needs of individual students. Teachers uphold high standards of health and safety in all lessons.

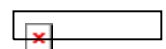
53. Teachers are well qualified, both in their subject area and as assessors. They have a good, up-to-date knowledge of their subjects. The part-time teachers provide students with a valuable insight into current industrial practices. Of the 18 full-time teachers and the 2 workshop instructors, 12 are qualified teachers and 4 are working towards a teaching qualification. Nearly all construction training takes place within a purpose-built construction centre close to the college's main campus. Teaching accommodation is good. Classrooms are stimulating places in which to learn and contain displays of students' work as well as information about courses and trade products. There is a key skills workshop and students use this facility outside teaching sessions for portfolio building and project work.

54. At the start of their course, full-time students undergo diagnostic testing to find out if they need help with literacy and numeracy. Part-time students and work-based learners do not receive any initial testing and it is up to their teachers to find out whether they need additional learning support. Some students who have been identified as being in need of additional learning support, however, are not given it. Employers enable learners on work-based programmes to develop occupational skills in the workplace. Teachers have established good contacts with local schools for the promotion of college courses and they provide pre-vocational training courses for school pupils. The college has good links with employers. Some employers, however, have little understanding of the qualifications learners are working towards and do not work closely with the college to ensure co-ordination of training in the workplace with tuition and assessment off the job.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between staff is good and there is good monitoring of students' progression and retention. Successful initiatives to improve retention rates include the development and introduction of a range of pre-entry, foundation and level 1 programmes and close monitoring and recording of students' achievements of qualification units. The self-assessment report failed to identify that management information is not used systematically by teachers when action planning or by managers in their decision making. Data are not used when evaluating courses or in target setting. There is insufficient co-ordination of on-the-job training on work-based learning programmes. Work-based learners are not set clear and demanding targets during their progress reviews and employers are not sufficiently involved in the review progress. Some teachers are not fully aware of the extent of work-based learners' progress and the content of contracts drawn up between the college and the employers of work-based learners. The monitoring of employers' promotion of equal opportunities is weak.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most programmes
- very high pass rates on some level 3 programmes
- effective action to design courses in response to students' and employers' feedback
- good induction programme for work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- slow progress of work-based learners
- poor teaching of key skills
- inadequate reviews of work-based learners' progress
- unsatisfactory internal verification procedures on work-based learning programmes
- inadequate checks on students' understanding in many theory lessons.

Scope of provision

56. The engineering provision covers three curriculum areas: automotive engineering; mechanical engineering including fabrication and welding; and electrical engineering. Programmes range from foundation to advanced level. The foundation level course is full time. Other courses are part time and students attend them on a day release or in the evening. There are courses leading to NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 and national certificate, national diploma and other technician and craft programmes. The national diploma course replaces the GNVQ advanced and AVCE courses, which were failing to attract students. No students were enrolled on the first certificate or City and Guilds 2010 basic engineering in 2001/2002. A performing engineering operations course has replaced the engineering manufacture foundation course and the City and Guilds 4001 course has replaced that leading to the City and Guilds 6956 progression award. There are 518 engineering students altogether, of whom 113 are automotive students, 133 are studying mechanical engineering and 272 are studying electrical engineering. There are 215 full-time students and the rest are studying part time. There are around 70 work-based learners and, of these, over 70% are advanced modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

57. In 2001/02, retention rates on most courses were high but were low on the City and Guilds fabrication and welding course. In 2001/02, many pass rates fell. Pass rates for GCE AS electronics and on the national certificate course are well above the national average. Of the 79 advanced modern apprentices who have started since 1998/99, 65% are still in training. Of those who have left, 18% met all the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework and 79% left without gaining any qualifications. Of the 28 foundation modern apprentices who have started since 1998/99, 50% are still in training. Of those who have left, 14% met all the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework and 64% left without gaining any qualifications.

58. Students arrive promptly for lessons and the average attendance at lessons observed in inspection week was 78%, which is in line with the national average for this area of learning. Students' theory and practical work is satisfactory. National diploma students completing the inspection and measurement unit of their qualification produced work of a particularly high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds motor vehicle servicing and repair (light vehicle)	1	No. of starts	53	55	49*
		% retention	70	81	72*
		% pass rate	49	61	42*
NVQ performing manufacturing operations **	2	No. of starts	72	45	25
		% retention	80	72	88
		% pass rate	59	77	55
City and Guilds fabrication and welding	2	No. of starts	***	13	20
		% retention	***	77	45
		% pass rate	***	70	44
City and Guilds 4351-01 computer-assisted design	3	No. of starts	23	33	35
		% retention	91	76	80
		% pass rate	90	92	75
GCE AS electronic engineering	3	No. of starts	***	30	32
		% retention	***	97	91
		% pass rate	***	90	90
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	23	22	40
		% retention	70	82	80
		% pass rate	79	100	91
NVQ motor vehicle maintenance and repair	3	No. of starts	15	14	2
		% retention	100	64	100
		% pass rate	58	22	0

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

* progression award

** for 2000 and 2001 the equivalent qualification was in engineering manufacture (foundation)

*** course not available

Quality of education and training

59. Teaching and learning were at least satisfactory in almost all of the lessons observed but the proportion of good or better teaching was low. Most lessons are well planned and relate appropriately to previous and future work. In the best lessons, students engage in well-planned group work and practical activities and applications that hold their interest. In an automotive lesson, the students had to dismantle and re-build a starter motor and solenoid and every opportunity was taken to remind them of the electrical principals of motors. Skilful questioning by the teacher also ensured that they understood the function of each component and could trace the current path through the motor. In the weaker lessons, the pace is often too slow and, although the lessons have been carefully planned and are well ordered, students are not sufficiently challenged and there is too little checking of understanding. In lessons on courses at levels 1 and 2, students are often reticent and are reluctant to ask or answer questions or contribute to discussion. Schemes of work list ways in which students can collect evidence of their acquisition of key skills but teachers seldom draw these to the students' attention or explicitly help the students develop their skills of communication and number. In motor vehicle lessons, students are often required to complete 'gapped' handouts but teachers dictate the answers rather than allowing the students to think for themselves.

60. Resources in engineering are satisfactory. The majority of teachers hold teaching qualifications and work-based learning staff have completed the appropriate Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) units. Much equipment is dated but fit for purpose. There has been recent investment to upgrade some essential equipment to industrial standard, including welding units and laser tracking and diagnostic units for use in motor vehicle work. Resources for teaching microprocessor and programmable logic control are good and include industrial standard computer software that enables students to develop realistic solutions to industrial tasks. There is insufficient technician support and teachers have to spend lesson time preparing and putting away equipment themselves. Most accommodation is satisfactory, although some is only suitable for small classes. There is a shortage of word processing facilities on the two sites and demand for computers on one site can exceed supply.

61. Both the assessment and verification procedures are in accordance with awarding body requirements. Internal verification is carried out satisfactorily but, following staff problems, there have been short periods when it has fallen behind schedule. Students' work is set and marked regularly but it is not always returned promptly by staff who have to work additional hours. Teachers mark work fairly and the feedback they give students is detailed and constructive and shows them how they can improve their performance. Termly reports on students' progress are sent to employers and the parents of students aged 16 to 18.

62. Recently, the range of engineering courses has been narrowed and progression routes in engineering within the college have been reduced. An appropriate range of engineering courses leading to suitable qualifications is, however, still available to students. The programmes reflect students' aspirations and meet employers' needs. Employers attending the biannual advisory board meetings are asked to help choose programmes and optional units within those programmes. The replacement of GNVQ and AVCE courses by a new national diploma course with a narrower focus and more practical work was in response to the needs of employers and students.

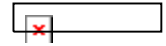
63. Work-based learners receive reviews of their progress every 12 weeks. In some instances, learners draw up an action plan during their review but this does not specify demanding targets for them to achieve. In other instances, the reviews are not carried out well, learners are not made aware of the extent of their progress and they do not draw up any action plan. The induction programme is thorough and staff check students' understanding of its content later in the programme. Health and safety and equal opportunity issues are covered during induction, but not in any depth. There are no workplace assessors and witness testimonies to students' acquisition of skills are not used. Some students are making slow progress.

Leadership and management

64. The leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. There have been significant changes in course provision and staffing but internal communication has improved and the staff feel

that their concerns are listened to positively. For the first time, all staff were involved in the self-assessment process but inspectors did not agree with some of the findings in the self-assessment report. Quality assurance procedures across schools are now standardised. Some key staff have received training in quality assurance. The management of work-based learning programmes is weak and there is insufficient co-ordination of off-the-job and on-the-job training.

Business administration



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses including key skills

- very carefully planned and well-taught lessons

- well-motivated and enthusiastic students

- excellent teaching and learning resources

- excellent support for students from teaching staff

- good management of the curriculum area.

Weaknesses

- low and declining numbers on many courses

- inadequate individual learning plans.

Scope of provision

65. The school of business administration offers four full-time programmes: ICT administrator at

entry level; office administrator at level 1; secretarial administrator at level 2; and diploma in administration at level 2. Courses lead to office skills or secretarial certificates. At the time of inspection, there was no full-time provision at level 3. Part-time provision includes keyboarding and word processing to level 3, audio transcription, mail merge and shorthand. There are some 40 full-time students and over 160 part-time enrolments. There are very few male students. Part-time courses are provided during both the day and evening.

Achievement and standards

66. There are very high pass rates on most courses, including full-time and key skills programmes. The standard of students' work is very high. Students demonstrate good study and work-related skills. The pass rates for key skills certification is well above the national average. The proportion of students who achieve high grades in business administration, word processing and text processing at level 2 is at, or above, the national average.

67. Students attend regularly and are punctual, and absences are followed up promptly. The retention rate is high and rising on most full-time courses and on the part-time shorthand transcription course. Strategies introduced in the current year to raise retention rates on some other courses are proving effective.

68. Many students progress to further study. All students who obtained an NVQ at level 1 in 2001/02 progressed to an NVQ level 2 office administration course, and a further four students joined the course from a one-year computer-assisted scheduling and planning course. One mature student had completed two years of full-time study and had achieved mostly distinction grades and a GCSE in English at grade A. The college awarded her the Penman Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement in 2001/02. She is now studying GCE AS English literature and shorthand.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ administration	1	No. of starts	31	16	14
		% retention	52	81	57
		% pass rate	44	92	100
Shorthand speed skills	1	No. of starts	49	7	16
		% retention	73	100	100
		% pass rate	25	86	94
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	36	24	14
		% retention	81	79	93
		% pass rate	38	100	77
Business administration	2	No. of starts	12	11	14
		% retention	100	82	100
		% pass rate	33	89	100
Word processing	2	No. of starts	132	127	90
		% retention	83	93	83
		% pass rate	89	75	79
Word processing	3	No. of starts	77	82	60
		% retention	82	84	72
		% pass rate	90	80	67

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

Quality of education and training

69. Lessons are carefully planned and taught well. Teaching is very good and some lessons are outstanding. Teachers employ a wide range of teaching methods and give students varied learning activities, some of which are very imaginative. There is particularly good use of ILT in lessons. In lessons, teachers ensure there is a good balance between theory and practical exercises. Teachers identify the preferred learning styles and needs of individual students and reflect these in their lesson plans. Relationships between staff and students are very good. Students are not afraid to seek help and also assist one another when appropriate. In lessons on word processing, highly effective use was made of multimedia facilities. Across all areas of the curriculum, students were encouraged to work to high professional standards.

70. Students are highly motivated and enthusiastic. They work purposefully and productively in lessons and are keen to progress in their work. They demonstrate good study skills and use ILT as a learning aid with confidence. They are set homework regularly. Students are punctual and their attendance record is good.

71. Teaching and learning resources are excellent. Well-equipped, spacious classrooms are also used as base rooms for full-time courses. They contain some excellent and stimulating display material, including students' work. Internally produced workbooks and learning materials are very good. There is excellent use of ILT in lessons. For example, teachers and students make powerpoint presentations and, in word processing lessons, good and stimulating use is made of overhead projectors linked to computers. Teachers are well qualified and all undertake staff development training.

72. Assessment is thorough, consistent and available to students on request. Homework is set regularly and marked and returned promptly. Teachers give students constructive feedback on their work and show them how to improve their performance. Teachers check students' spelling, grammar and punctuation and that work is up to industry standard. Internal verification processes are well planned, thorough and implemented by qualified staff. Work placements are relevant and are highly valued by the students. They enable students to be assessed in the workplace and gather evidence of the acquisition of work-based skills for their portfolios. Students are assessed regularly in the workplace and assessment reports are comprehensive. Students on NVQ courses are set targets and their progress towards reaching them is monitored rigorously. Students who are making slow progress are given help to meet deadlines and complete NVQ units. Recommendations in external verifiers' reports are acted upon promptly.

73. Between 2000 and 2002, numbers have declined on several courses. Full-time course programmes have been successfully restructured to enable students to gain qualifications to further their employability. Numbers and retention rates are currently being maintained. There is a lack of provision above level 2 to which full-time students may progress. This year, however, a course leading to a qualification in business administration at level 2 was introduced and it is planned to complement this with a level 3 course next year. The department has some good links with employers and schools.

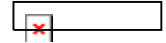
74. Support for students is excellent and students speak highly of the staff, their ready availability and the friendly atmosphere of the college. Induction programmes are comprehensive and students know how to access cross-college support services, such as counselling and financial advice, if needed. There are regular planned tutorials for all students at which their progress is carefully reviewed and their targets are set. Group tutorials are carefully planned and well structured.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are very good. Course programmes are carefully planned and well managed. There is a strong team ethos. Staff meet regularly to review and plan courses. They share

good practice and support one another. All full-time staff have recently been appraised and have had their lessons observed. Management information provided centrally by the college is regularly and carefully checked and used at both management level and by tutors to monitor students' performance and the effectiveness of courses. Targets are set for the department's courses. The course review process, however, is not thorough enough. Course review reports lack detail and do not show clearly whether targets have been met. Students have individual learning plans but there is no standard format for these. Some teachers do not record students' progress in enough detail.

Business and management



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCE AS accounting and business courses

- high retention and pass rates on the GCE A2 business

- thorough lesson planning

- good or better teaching on most courses

- effective support for students on full-time programmes.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ accounting courses at levels 3 and 4

- insufficiently demanding lessons for students on the AVCE business programme

- few part-time professional courses and business courses below level 3.

Scope of provision

76. The college offers a broad range of full-time business courses for students aged 16 to 18. Subjects include GCE AS accounting, business and economics and GCE A2 accounting and business. The college also offers GNVQ intermediate and AVCE business courses and plans to re-introduce a GNVQ business course at foundation level from 2003. The college offers a small programme of management and professional courses, including NVQ accounting at levels 2 to 4, computerised accounts and management courses leading to qualifications of the Institute of Management and the National Examining Body for Occupational Safety and Health. The range of business courses offered on a full-time or part-time basis below level 3 is small and the range of part-time professional courses is narrow. There is a good curriculum enrichment programme for full-time students. GNVQ intermediate and AVCE business students follow additional programmes of study and work towards text and word processing qualifications; full-time students participate in a wide range of organised visits and related activities. Approximately 250 students are currently enrolled on full-time business courses and almost all of these are aged 16 to 18. Approximately 150 adult students are presently enrolled on part-time management and professional courses. No work-based training is currently offered in this area.

Achievement and standards

77. Retention and pass rates are high on GCE AS accounting and business courses and on the GCE A2 business course. Pass rates on the GCE AS accounting course are significantly above the national average, and on all three courses, the proportion of students achieving high grades is above the national average. An analysis of value-added data indicates that, in 2002, students on these courses achieved a higher grade than predicted for them, given their prior attainment. Pass rates are high on the GNVQ intermediate business course but low on the AVCE business single and double award course. The retention rate is outstanding on the course leading to the certificate in introductory management. Pass rates have declined on NVQ accounting courses at levels 3 and 4, and are significantly below the national average. Retention and pass rates have also declined on the level 2 course, although they are close to the national average. Retention and pass rates on other management and professional courses are satisfactory. Attendance is very good. The standard of students' written work is high on most courses. Portfolios of work are carefully organised and well presented. Students make good progress in acquiring a breadth of knowledge and furthering their personal and study skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE accounting	2	No. of starts	17	19	17
		% retention	59	21	88
		% pass rate	80	100	67
NVQ accounting foundation (one year)	2	No. of starts	42	36	17
		% retention	69	72	76
		% pass rate	28	85	69
Introductory award at certificate level	2	No. of starts	51	15	23
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	12	40	83
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	15	12	10
		% retention	80	83	70
		% pass rate	50	90	100
GCE AS accounting	3	No. of starts	**	39	37
		% retention	**	90	81
		% pass rate	**	86	83

GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	**	134	102
		% retention	**	84	92
		% pass rate	**	91	80
GCE A-level / A2 business *	3	No. of starts	93	141	65
		% retention	71	67	98
		% pass rate	92	96	100
GNVQ advanced business (two year)	3	No. of starts	57	35	**
		% retention	68	71	**
		% pass rate	86	72	**
AVCE business (one year)	3	No. of starts	**	35	28
		% retention	**	80	86
		% pass rate	**	50	54
NVQ accounting intermediate (one year)	3	No. of starts	40	34	14
		% retention	83	82	86
		% pass rate	13	57	8
NVQ accounting technicians (one year)	4	No. of starts	25	24	11
		% retention	84	92	100
		% pass rate	71	41	27

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

* GCE A-level two-year courses in 2000 and 2001, one-year A2 course in 2002

** course not available

Quality of education and training

78. Lesson planning is thorough. Lessons are well structured and linked to schemes of work and make clear reference to learning outcomes. Exemplary practice was seen on information technology (IT) key skills and GCE A2 business courses. Teaching is good or better on most courses. Teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching and learning approaches, and set activities in a practical business context. In a management lesson on organisational structure and culture, the teacher gave a professional and informative presentation, which served as the basis for a wide-ranging discussion on management styles in business. The group responded confidently to the issues raised and everyone had something to say. In a GCE A2 business lesson on economics, the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm, coupled with some excellent handouts, enabled students to make good progress in developing their understanding of the economic planning cycle.

79. Effective academic support is given to students on full-time programmes. Teachers give good one-to-one support in lessons and workshops and monitor students' progress closely. In some lessons on the AVCE business course, the teachers do not give the students sufficiently demanding work and they do not challenge them to explore complex concepts and use their skills to the full. Students aged 16 to 18 who are studying on full-time business programmes are diligent, confident in what they are doing and work productively together. Adult students on management and professional programmes work enthusiastically, are absorbed in their studies and draw effectively on their own knowledge and work experience in lessons.

80. Assessment procedures on business, management and professional courses are clear and thorough. Assessment is used effectively as a means of monitoring students' progress. Teachers give students good feedback on their work and tell them what they need to do in order to improve it.

Insufficient use is made of individual learning plans when setting students their learning goals. Students on full-time courses have regular reviews and parents are informed of progress and any areas of concern. Assessment tasks in key skills workshops are not sufficiently linked to relevant business topics.

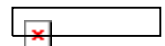
81. Good initial guidance and support are given to students on full-time and part-time programmes. There is effective tutorial support. Full-time students meet their tutors regularly in groups and individually. Part-time management and professional students receive effective support from class tutors. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Careers education and pastoral care are good.

82. Teachers on management and professional programmes are highly qualified and have relevant vocational experience. Teachers on full-time business courses are appropriately qualified. Several members of staff have recently joined the college and have brought with them relevant vocational experience. Classrooms at Belle Vue are well appointed and provide a good learning environment for students on management and professional programmes. Classrooms in the sixth form centre are well equipped and have attractive wall displays and other resources. They provide a welcoming learning environment for students aged 16 to 18 on full-time business programmes. IT equipment for business students across the college is good, and students have easy access to IT facilities. Teachers on full-time courses have developed an extensive range of learning materials for use in class. The range of learning materials in the learning resource centres is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

83. The leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Heads of school provide clear leadership and programmes are well organised and ably managed at course level. Some course review and self-assessment reports lack detail or are not evaluative enough, and there is insufficient analysis of the college management data on students' achievements. There are now systematic procedures for quality assurance. Some staff are not yet using these, however, and do not monitor and evaluate provision rigorously enough. There is insufficient planning of the business curriculum across the three schools responsible for business courses.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- thorough and effective internal verification procedures

- wide range of courses and progression routes

- good inclusive learning practices in IT workshops.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on City and Guilds 7261 course

- insufficient technical support

- little teaching of key skills as an integral part of lessons

- insufficient links with industry

- inappropriate computing facilities for the courses.

Scope of provision

84. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in ICT and computing at various levels, ranging from basic computer literacy to HE courses. There are almost 1,200 students on courses. Of these, about 800 are adult students, most of whom are studying part time; the rest are full-time students aged 16 to 18. There are full-time courses leading to GNVQs at foundation and intermediate levels and a vocational GCE A level. GCE AS and A-level computing courses also form part of the full-time GCE A-level provision. Part-time provision includes computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), desktop publishing, Internet courses, programming courses in various languages and an access to HE course.

Achievement and standards

85. Pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate and the AVCE course have been above the national average for the three years from 1999/2000 to 2001/02. Pass rates on CLAIT, European computer driving licence (ECDL) and integrated business technology (IBT) level 2 courses have also been above the national average during the same period. Pass rates on the City and Guilds 7261 certificate course in computer applications at every level, however, have been low.

86. Retention rates on most courses are satisfactory. There are high retention rates on the GNVQ foundation and the IBT level 3 courses. The retention rates for the City and Guilds 7261 certificate in computer applications and ECDL courses have been low and, in 2001/02, retention on the latter fell 30% below the national average.

87. In most lessons, students show a good understanding of basic concepts and can use the college computer system with confidence. Adult students learn to use technology during evening classes and acquire skills in the use of word processors, spreadsheets, databases, electronic communication and the Internet.

88. The average attendance rate for lessons inspected was high, at 83%, and students were punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	135	176	83
		% retention	73	89	90
		% pass rate	80	79	96
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	30	30	36
		% retention	93	87	89
		% pass rate	46	85	78
City and Guilds 7261 certificate in computer application	2	No. of starts	83	81	31
		% retention	68	41	55
		% pass rate	27	47	59
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	50	51	48
		% retention	74	88	83
		% pass rate	65	93	83
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	*	52	54
		% retention	*	86	78
		% pass rate	*	74	74
GCE AS computing / IT	3	No. of starts	*	215	233
		% retention	*	84	70
		% pass rate	*	82	67

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

* course not available

Quality of education and training

89. The best lessons are planned well and, in these, teachers give the students structured and demanding learning activities that help them to extend their vocational knowledge and skills. Schemes of work are comprehensive but some lesson plans lack reference to key skills. Most teaching of computing and IT is good, and the teaching team is enthusiastic. In many practical sessions and in workshops, students use well-written workbooks that contain clear specifications for tasks. During these sessions, teachers pay particular attention to the needs of individual students and offer helpful advice when required. Tutors accurately record the progress of the students and provide them with timely and helpful feedback. Most students are able to work on their own confidently and are skilled in operating a variety of computer software and in using the Internet. The relationship between tutors and students is very good.

90. Some computer rooms are decorated with attractive posters, examples of students' work and well-displayed information sheets, but others are drab. The corridors are dull and many contain empty display cabinets. Students are unable to use some important industrial standard software on the college's IT system. They do not go out on industrial visits to observe the use of IT in the workplace. Staff have a good range of technical skills and a good knowledge of their subject. They use ILT to good effect but data projectors are not always available to them in the classroom. There is insufficient technical support. The school of computing has access to a technician for 50% of his time but has around 300 workstations and associated peripheral devices at the college main site and elsewhere. Equipment for use by staff is quite old. Reference texts are only available from the library

and cannot be borrowed for long. Teachers have resorted to buying their own textbooks when trying to learn a new computing topic or preparing teaching materials.

91. Procedures for internal verification are thorough. These are followed rigorously and are effective. Most teachers mark students' work promptly and provide thorough and constructive feedback to the students on how they can improve their performance. A variety of methods is used to record work completed and the progress made in each lesson. Some tutors involve the students in assessment of their own work, but the results of this are not held centrally. Assessment practices meet all the awarding body requirements and students are aware of the standards required to achieve a pass, merit or distinction.

92. There is a good range of courses and progression routes for full-time and part-time students. Students studying in outreach sites are bussed into college to use the Internet, if this is not available in their centre. Links with industry are insufficient. The key skills programme is poorly organised, with little liaison between the subject teachers and the key skills staff. The key skills assignments students are set have little relationship to their main course of study and students do not find them relevant. Attendance at key skills classes is poor and pass rates are very low.

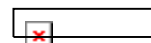
93. There are good inclusive learning practices in the IT workshop. The IT workshop caters for a range of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many have mobility problems, hearing difficulties or visual impairments. Additional equipment and special software have been installed, as required. Students value the time tutors give to help them out of scheduled teaching time. Part-time students appreciate the good induction they receive but would welcome more opportunities to sample courses that are new to them.

94. The additional support needs of full-time students are identified during induction but not all students who have been identified as needing support actually receive it. Individual tutorials are effective and appreciated by students, but they do not value group tutorials.

Leadership and management

95. The management of the curriculum area is good. The quality of the provision is monitored carefully and conscientiously, and a programme of teaching observations and a staff appraisal system are in place. Weaknesses have been identified through the self-assessment process and considerable improvements have been made. Fewer part-time and more full-time staff have been employed, with the aim of bringing more stability to course teams and strengthening the planning and monitoring of courses. In one school, staff have been able to update their professional knowledge and skills through work experience with two large employers. In another school, however, staff have had to stand in for absent colleagues on frequent occasions and have little opportunity to further their own professional development. Financial support is available for teachers to undertake further study in their own time.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on some courses

- excellent physical resources for sports and leisure

- effective use of good teaching and learning materials

- good foundation course in hospitality.

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate teaching styles and strategies

- narrow range of learning activities for students in small classes

- inadequate initial assessment and guidance

- some poor health and safety practice in hospitality.

Scope of provision

96. The college offers a wide range of courses in hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, from foundation to advanced level, and students can progress to some higher level courses within the college. Courses include AVCE, GNVQ, NVQ, City and Guilds and those leading to other qualifications. Many students work in the college's realistic work environments, which include production kitchens, restaurant, travel shop, fitness suite and training facilities. Currently, there are 242 full-time and 362 part-time students on courses. Responsibility for the provision is divided between the school of hospitality and tourism and the school of sport, recreation and public services. Both schools are within the faculty of health, care and services. A large range of short courses and enrichment activities are offered.

Achievement and standards

97. Pass rates are very high on GCE AS sports, games and recreation and GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism courses. The pass rates for the NVQ level 2 travel services course have been well above the national average for the last three years. Most pass rates for hospitality and catering courses are satisfactory or high. However, there are several courses in sports and in catering with severely declining pass rates, which are well below the national average. Reasons for the decline in students' achievements have been identified and remedial action has been taken. Retention rates are low on some courses. Initiatives have been launched to raise retention rates and these are proving effective.

98. Students demonstrate good practical skills on the foundation course in hospitality and catering. However, some students on other catering courses lack confidence and are unsure what they have to do to be successful. Most students display a good understanding of industrial and commercial standards. Through their written work and the content of their portfolios, most students show that

they have extensive knowledge of their vocational area. In their practical activities, they demonstrate that they have good interpersonal skills and understand the importance of being courteous and considerate towards others. Students take part regularly in competition and team events and their success in these is acknowledged and widely celebrated. Many students on sports studies courses are acquiring good technical and teamwork skills. Sports students work with local school children to help them develop their technical skills and abilities in different sports. The attendance rate during the inspection was high and above the national average.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ catering and hospitality	1	No. of starts	8	11	31
		% retention	88	82	77
		% pass rate	100	78	70
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	30	23	23
		% retention	69	74	87
		% pass rate	85	76	90
Northern Council for Further Education resort representatives	2	No. of starts	29	36	12
		% retention	97	60	75
		% pass rate	29	62	100
Community sports leader award	2	No. of starts	76	87	45
		% retention	85	81	93
		% pass rate	0	74	49
City and Guilds 6951 progression award in sport and leisure	2	No. of starts	18	19	25
		% retention	84	78	84
		% pass rate	63	100	29
NVQ travel services	2	No. of starts	26	34	19
		% retention	69	82	79
		% pass rate	89	89	100
GCE AS sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	*	56	28
		% retention	*	88	68
		% pass rate	*	98	100

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

* course not available

Quality of education and training

99. Most teaching is good. There is effective use of good teaching and learning materials, including a wide range of computer software applications. Schemes of work are detailed. Lesson plans set out clear aims and objectives and many specify the teaching methods to be used. Some lesson plans do not address the learning needs of individual students even though these have been identified and recorded.

100. Good use is made of well-designed handouts, which give the students useful information. In some cases, the tasks students carry out in connection with the handouts enables them to produce

evidence of their acquisition of key skills. Students are encouraged to use the wide range of learning materials available to them in the college's learning resource centres. Students have good access to IT facilities and use these in the presentation of assignments. Good use is made of photographic evidence within portfolios. Lessons on the hospitality foundation course are planned well and taught effectively. Students on the course are highly motivated and are able to plan their own learning. Additional learning support is available to those who need it. Students in the course group are receiving instruction in basic sign language to enable them to communicate more effectively with a member of the class who has a hearing impairment. On some courses, there is poor classroom management. For example, in a few instances, the teacher allowed students to chat amongst themselves and did not check that they all had something worthwhile to do. On occasions, the teacher did not accord the students proper respect and used over-familiar terms when addressing them. In some lessons, insufficient demands were made of the students.

101. Some classrooms are well equipped, bright and stimulating, while others are mediocre and uninspiring. The simulated workplace environments are realistic and, in these, students are able to acquire and demonstrate the competences they need in order to obtain their qualifications. The resources to support the learning in sport are excellent and include a new modern sports hall and fitness suite. Other college students use these facilities for enrichment activities. There are poor changing and showering facilities in catering for staff and students.

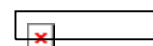
102. There is poor initial assessment and inadequate pre-course guidance for some students. Some students have been placed inappropriately on a course that is too easy for them. Other students, however, find their course too difficult and lack the industrial knowledge and experience and the necessary communication skills to be successful on it. Some classes are small and do not contain enough students to enable the teacher to organise some activities, such as structured discussion and debate and effective group work.

103. Various trips and visits are arranged for the students to complement their course and help them to develop personal and social skills. Assignment and projects are well designed around these events. There are numerous stimulating photographic displays in classrooms and corridors. Students receive helpful financial support for the trips and for uniforms and equipment needed for their courses.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Managers work hard to raise standards and are establishing systems for target setting and quality assurance. There is good and open communication in and between the schools. Recently, there have been many staff changes in the schools and these have been managed well. There has been insufficient risk assessment of the simulated workplace environments. For example, students on hospitality courses wear inappropriate footwear, which is not in accordance with good health and safety practice. Most staff contributed to the self-assessment process. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses cited in the self-assessment report. Some weaknesses have been rectified but the inspectors found others the college had not identified.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ beauty therapy courses

- good teaching of practical skills
- good facilities
- effective induction of work-based learners
- good feedback for students on their assessed work.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on some courses
- inadequate initial assessment
- insufficient differentiation of learning tasks to match individual students' abilities
- insufficient and inadequate internal verification
- lack of rigour in quality assurance processes.

Scope of provision

105. The college offers a broad range of courses leading to NVQs in hairdressing and beauty therapy at levels 1 to 3. The range of complementary therapies and related courses includes those in reflexology, aromatherapy and Indian head massage. Of the 654 students enrolled, 60% are over the age of 19. There are 22 work-based learners on hairdressing courses and 11 on beauty therapy courses. The college also works in partnership with a local school to offer taster programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy for pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

106. Between 1999 and 2002, retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 3 course in beauty therapy were high. During the same period, the pass rates on the NVQ level 1 course in hairdressing and the

Indian head massage course were also high, but the retention rates on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course and the pass rates on the NVQ level 3 hairdressing were both low.

107. Of the nine foundation modern apprentices in beauty therapy who have left or completed their programme, five met all the requirements of their apprenticeship framework and four have left with no qualifications. Of the eight foundation modern apprentices in hairdressing who have left or completed the programme, seven left with no qualifications, none met all the requirements of their apprenticeship framework and one obtained an NVQ at level 2. Of the five advanced modern apprentices in hairdressing who have completed or left their course, four achieved no qualifications and one obtained an NVQ at level 3.

108. Students' levels of attainment were satisfactory across all courses. Students on the reflexology course achieved a high level of attainment and demonstrated the ability to think for themselves. All students had good practical skills. The students have achieved successes in both regional and national competitions. The attendance rate at lessons, during inspection week, was 78% and students were punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	1	No. of starts	63	64	63
		% retention	73	69	79
		% pass rate	91	100	94
Indian head massage (short)	2	No. of starts	15	26	33
		% retention	87	85	88
		% pass rate	*	*	*
NVQ beauty therapy (two year)	2	No. of starts	20	24	20
		% retention	35	67	75
		% pass rate	86	100	100
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	29	38	27
		% retention	72	58	44
		% pass rate	80	95	100
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	29	28	32
		% retention	83	96	91
		% pass rate	87	89	86
NVQ hairdressing	3	No. of starts	13	11	15
		% retention	15	64	60
		% pass rate	100	57	63

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

* data unavailable

Quality of education and training

109. Much of the teaching is effective. In all lessons, teachers set clear objectives and help students acquire a range of practical skills. The learning materials in theory lessons are too easy for some students. Insufficient use is made of ICT in lessons. The college's intranet is not used enough as a

means of making learning materials accessible to students.

110. Teachers are suitably qualified and have relevant commercial expertise. They benefit from staff development activities. Their training needs are identified through the lesson observation process and during their appraisal interview. Facilities are good and reflect industry requirements. Students have ready access to the Internet.

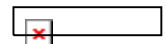
111. Students' work is assessed fairly and accurately in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body. Recording of assessment is rigorous. Students develop their portfolios satisfactorily. Teachers give students good feedback on their work. In their written feedback, they provide the students with useful guidance on how they can improve their assignment work. All full-time students have a work placement in their respective industry. Students are well supported by staff. There is little target setting in tutorials, in individual learning plans and in course reviews. The quality assurance and internal verification processes lack rigour.

112. Work-based provision in this area is relatively new to the college. There is satisfactory off-the-job training at the college. All teachers prepare their lessons well and produce good handouts for work-based learners. Most students are making good progress and are developing appropriate practical skills. In a few instances, however, the teacher does not make enough demands of the students or challenge them to give of their best and use all their skills to the full. Assessors have been appointed for the work-based learning programmes. Changes have been made to the way key skills are taught. Work-based learning programmes have improved. Trainees are well supported and closely monitored by tutors and assessors. Their induction is effective and well organised. Students attend regularly and are punctual for lessons. The close monitoring of students' attendance and punctuality is appreciated by employers. All students undergo initial assessment. Many students identified as needing support choose not to take it up.

Leadership and management

113. The team leader and some teaching staff have been appointed recently. There is a clear focus on ways of improving teaching and helping students to learn more effectively. Hairdressing and beauty therapy tutors meet regularly to standardise their working procedures and share good practice. They have formed 'quality forums' to address the weaknesses identified in their self-assessment report. Work-based learning is co-ordinated through a central unit and there are good communications between the unit and the curriculum staff.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- good teaching on courses for adult students

- good learning resources

- good management of workplace practices

- high retention rates on BTEC and GNVQ intermediate courses.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18
- low retention rates on GNVQ advanced/AVCE health and social care course
- low pass rates on CACHE and GNVQ intermediate health and social care courses
- insufficient feedback to students to inform them of their progress
- insufficient monitoring of course teams' implementation of quality assurance.

Scope of provision

114. There are approximately 340 students aged 16 to 18 and around 200 adult students on courses within this area. There are over 350 full-time and around 180 part-time students. Courses are available at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced level. The college also offers some HE courses. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses, including health and social care courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Childcare provision includes Council for Awards in Childcare and Education (CACHE) courses at certificate and diploma level. The college also offers entry and foundation level courses and those leading to NVQs in early years care and education, and care. Both full-time and part-time health courses are offered to adult learners.

Achievement and standards

115. Retention rates are high on the Business and Technician Council (BTEC) national diploma in childhood studies and GNVQ intermediate health and social care courses. The retention rate on the BTEC national diploma in childhood studies rose by 14% in 2000/01 and has remained well above the national average in 2001/02. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate health and social care has been consistently high and above the national average since 1999/2000 but the pass rate on this course has fallen over the last three years to well below the national average in 2001/02. The retention rate fell on the GNVQ advanced in health and social care from 81% in 1999, to 52% in 2001 but the retention rate on the AVCE double award rose to 73% in 2002. The pass rates on these courses have remained around the national average. The retention rate on the AVCE single award is low. There are also low pass rates on both the certificate in childcare and education and the NVQ level 3 guidance courses. In 2001/02, these pass rates rose significantly, by 51% and 23%, respectively, but were still below the national average.

116. Much work on some courses, including the diploma in childcare and education, is referred on

first submission and is subsequently awarded a pass mark on resubmission. Attendance during the inspection was good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	18	25	37
		% retention	78	84	78
		% pass rate	93	24	75
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	30	47	46
		% retention	83	81	83
		% pass rate	80	63	47
GNVQ advanced / AVCE (double award) health and social care *	3	No. of starts	27	28	36
		% retention	81	52	73
		% pass rate	95	79	73
National diploma in childhood studies	3	No. of starts	33	22	23
		% retention	76	90	91
		% pass rate	92	n/a	94
NVQ guidance	3	No. of starts	6	12	13
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	0	0	23

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

* GNVQ advanced course changed to AVCE (double award) in 2002

Quality of education and training

117. There is good teaching on courses for adult learners. Teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods to meet the learning needs of the students. Students are encouraged to draw on their own experience and teachers use a range of techniques to inspire and support students in their learning. In these lessons, students learn effectively and their attainment is good or better. Teachers set the students challenging tasks and have high expectations of them. On courses for students aged 16 to 18, however, there is some unsatisfactory teaching. Classroom management is poor in some lessons. Students are allowed to talk to each other while the teacher is issuing instructions; they thereby display a lack of respect for each other, by talking whilst others are trying to make a positive contribution to the lesson. Some teaching is dull and uninspiring, and students have to copy from overhead projector slides for long periods of time. One group of students was made to work through an activity that they had already completed in another lesson. The students brought this fact to the teacher's attention but were told to complete the activity again without being told why.

118. There is a wide range of good resources available to help students to learn effectively. These include textbooks for every member of the class and relevant specialist texts. Teachers make use of resources such as skeletons, models of eyes and interactive baby dolls to illustrate important points in lessons. Art and craft materials are readily available for students to use in practical activities, such as the making of story sacks and books to use with children. Handouts for use in the classroom are of a consistently high standard and are used appropriately.

119. Management of workplace practices is good. Well-qualified staff do all they can to help students when they are on their work placements. There is close liaison between the placement, the student,

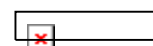
the liaison officer and the personal tutor to ensure that students are well supported and are able to link theoretical knowledge to practical experience effectively. Documentation for use on placement visits is detailed. It sets out clear targets for the students and specifies tasks, such as the observation and recording of particular work processes.

120. Some written feedback from teachers for students on their work does not explain clearly what they have to do to improve it. For example, when giving feedback to a student on an assignment, a teacher said that the work was weak in places but did not indicate which, or explain what needed to be done to improve it. Some students are unhappy with assessment feedback and the length of time some teachers take to mark their work.

Leadership and management

121. The leadership and management of the area are weak. Some courses are not managed well. Some staff do not carry out quality assurance rigorously enough. There is no monitoring of course teams' implementation of quality assurance procedures. Compiling and updating of course management files are consistently not stringent. Some management files are comprehensive and cover all the points on the file checklist whilst others are only partially completed. Some staff fail to monitor and record students' progress regularly. Course teams seldom share good practice. Some teams keep detailed student records that are centrally located and easily accessible, whereas the records of students on many of the courses are dispersed and difficult to access. The college has stipulated that individual students should have a progress review twice a term but, in practice, many do not. Some students have had one review in the six months since September. There is no monitoring of how often the students have reviews of their progress. The college has a policy that assignments should be marked and returned within two working weeks but staff in some course teams are taking over two months to grade and return work. There is inconsistency in the amount and quality of support new members of staff receive. Some new staff receive structured support and are set targets to achieve within clear timescales; their progress towards reaching these is monitored and clearly recorded. Other new staff, however, are given support informally and, although some are set targets, their progress towards reaching these is not reviewed systematically. Data handled within the department are often incompatible with that held on the central system. The self-assessment report did not include many of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates

- good resources and equipment

- much good teaching and good tutorial support for students

- very high standard of students' practical work

- good links with the community, industry and schools.

Weaknesses

- no bridging course to HE for part-time students
- low retention rates on some courses in performing arts and media.

Scope of provision

122. The college provides a wide range of art, design, performing arts, music and media courses, including part-time and full-time courses for school leavers and adults at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. There are around 650 students on extended courses of study in this area, of whom 10% are adults and the rest are aged 16 to 18. There are 350 students on short courses, of whom over 80% are adults. Some short courses are run at community venues and others take place at the college. Students can progress to an extensive range of HE courses within the faculty. There is, however, no bridging course to HE for part-time students.

Achievement and standards

123. Pass rates are high on many courses. In 2002, pass rates on seven out of the eight GCE A-level courses and on four GCE AS courses were 100%. The pass rates on GNVQ and AVCE art and design courses are well above the national average. Retention rates are low on a number of media and performing arts courses, including the BTEC first diploma in performing arts and the GNVQ advanced level media courses. Retention and pass rates on some part-time creative skills and GCSE art courses are low. Many full-time students progress to HE or appropriate employment.

124. The standard of students' practical work is very high on all courses across the provision. Most students' portfolios are of a high standard. Students have carried out some important work for the local community and have competed successfully in competitions. A media student who joined the college with low GCSE grades was awarded gold medals by the local LSC. Attendance at lessons during inspection week was slightly lower than average, and the late arrival of some students disrupted some classes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NCFE practical craft skills	1	No. of starts	****	45	94
		% retention	****	89	74
		% pass rate	****	93	43
BTEC first diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	28	29	24
		% retention	61	79	65
		% pass rate	53	87	80
GNVQ / AVCE art and	3	No. of starts	59	53	69

design *		% retention	80	89	79
		% pass rate	98	100	98
BTEC national diploma performing arts/drama	3	No. of starts	57	42	24
		% retention	74	57	70
		% pass rate	81	83	100
Diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	17	27	27
		% retention	82	89	93
		% pass rate	100	83	96
GCE AS art	3	No. of starts	****	79	160
		% retention	****	78	86
		% pass rate	****	98	83
GNVQ art and design	2	No. of starts	33	23	33
		% retention	88	86	71
		% pass rate	86	21**	86
GNVQ media	3	No. of starts	22	19	21
		% retention	95	74	48
		% pass rate	63	86	80
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	****	52	93
		% retention	****	92	86
		% pass rate	****	98	97
GCE A-level art ***	3	No. of starts	35	26	34
		% retention	37	73	97
		% pass rate	100	89	100

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

* GNVQ course changed to AVCE in 2002

** data unreliable

*** GCE A-level two-year courses in 2000 and 2001, one-year A2 course in 2002

**** course not available

Quality of education and training

125. The majority of teaching is good or better in both practical and theory lessons. Teachers know their subjects well and most plan their lessons carefully. Some teachers, however, spend a disproportionate amount of time on one activity and lose the interest and attention of some students. The better lessons have momentum, are lively and have a clear sense of purpose. In these, teachers demonstrate skills effectively, infect the students with their enthusiasm and give them achievable and challenging tasks, which many carry out well, producing work of a high standard. Students participate enthusiastically in lessons.

126. Teachers make demonstrations of skills an integral part of lessons and they capture and hold the students' interest. For example, the teacher gave an effective demonstration of ceramic techniques to a class of adults. Students' progress and attainment in a multimedia session were aided by the use of a digital projector to show them how to use animation techniques. In the better lessons, the teachers use skilful questioning techniques. In a lesson on the history of design and also a lesson on interior design, teachers asked the students carefully phrased questions to help

them develop their critical understanding and enter into argument and discussion with one another. The less successful practical sessions had not been planned properly and, in these, classroom management was weak. For example, some teachers spent a lot of time dealing with individual students whilst the rest of the class waited without being given anything worthwhile to do. A policy sets out action to be taken when students are late for lessons and many staff use this effectively. Some teachers, however, do not reprimand latecomers or ask them to explain their lack of punctuality. In some sessions, insufficient attention is paid to the seating layout, leaving some students with restricted sight lines.

127. The majority of teachers have teaching qualifications and hold relevant specialist higher qualifications. Many have recent commercial experience or take part in staff training to update their knowledge and skills. Almost 30% of the teaching staff are newly appointed. Technical support is sometimes stretched when demand is high.

128. There are well-equipped and well-maintained workshops for all courses. Corridors are bright, clean and adorned with examples of work from most courses. Studios are fit for purpose but the studio theatre has unsuitable floor covering for dance. Some art and design rooms are cluttered and cramped and have insufficient storage space. Room utilisation is efficient but it is sometimes difficult for students to gain access to workshops outside lessons. The learning resource area is well used by students and has an appropriate range of books, periodicals, CD-ROMS, slides, videos and computers giving access to the Internet.

129. Assessment, monitoring of students' progress, target-setting and action-planning are carried out well on the majority of courses. Work is marked accurately in accordance with awarding body guidelines and most students and the parents of those aged 16 to 18 receive regular and constructive feedback from tutors through reports and open evenings. Most assignments are designed and written well but often lack a clear and identifiable context. Instructions for students on how to carry out particular assignments are sometimes insufficiently detailed and no deadlines are given for the completion of work. There are insufficient checks on the quality of the assignment briefs and, in some instances, there is little internal verification of the marking of assignments. Full-time and part-time students are advised in writing by the tutors how they can improve their marks. Individual learning plans are developed for most students and many students are set target grades to achieve in their examinations.

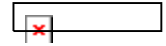
130. Many students undertake additional GCE or open college network courses alongside their main course. There are good curriculum enrichment activities, including visits and trips. Staff have established productive links with feeder schools and industry. A summer school is held. Pupils from local schools enrol on a GCSE programme. New students receive an initial assessment to identify their needs for additional learning support. Teachers do not take the results of initial assessment into account, however, when planning their lessons.

131. Students receive good and impartial advice. A tutorial system for both full-time and part-time students is effective and is appreciated by them. Students have high aspirations and they are given a great deal of help and good advice on progression to HE. On joining the college, full-time students' levels of attainment in key skills are identified. It is not possible, however, to fit key skills lessons into some full-time students' timetables. Lesson plans and assignment briefs make reference to ways in which students can develop their key skills. In practice, however, teachers seldom check systematically that students are furthering their key skills in the normal course of lessons.

Leadership and management

132. Leadership and management of the faculty are good. Self-assessment is carried out effectively and clear targets are set for students' performance. Resources are managed effectively. There is a lesson observation scheme and through this the training needs of staff are identified. Many management procedures are new and their effectiveness is yet to be evaluated. The faculty receives good support from governors.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many GCE A-level courses

- good acquisition of subject knowledge by students

- strong academic support for individual students

- successful progression within the college and to HE.

Weaknesses

- much undemanding and unimaginative teaching

- low retention rates on access to HE courses

- inadequate advice and guidance for adult students.

Scope of provision

133. GCE AS and A-level provision is extensive. Adult students are well served by pre-access and access to HE programmes in the humanities and social sciences. There are good progression routes from the women's studies programme through access courses to a humanities degree programme. At the time of inspection, approximately 100 students were studying on access courses and there were around 1,000 enrolments on GCE AS and A-level courses. Of current enrolments on level 3 courses, 90% are on GCE AS and A-level psychology, history, law, geography and sociology. There are almost 400 enrolments for GCE AS and A-level psychology, about 150 for GCE AS and A-level history and a further 150 approximately on GCE AS and A-level law. A small number of students study GCSE humanities subjects.

Achievement and standards

134. Levels of attainment in lessons are often high. Most students are well motivated. They display

sound knowledge and a developing understanding of their subjects. They use specialist terminology accurately. Students are good at linking new learning to previous topics. In a GCE AS psychology lesson, students communicated with confidence their understanding of complex physiological material about brain abnormalities and possible links to violent behaviour. Both adult students and those aged 16 to 18 can justify their explanations with confidence. History and politics students present well-reasoned arguments which indicate they have been able to think for themselves. In geography, students are developing their ability to interpret and explain graphical data. Law students make good reference to case law in their answers. In contrast, some sociology students do not plan their essays and fail to address the question. The personal projects of archaeology students are of poor quality. The work of a few students is spoilt by poor spelling and poor grammar.

135. Students do well in their GCE A-level examinations. In 2002, the pass rates for many GCE A-level subjects were high and the proportions of students who gained grade A or B were above the national average. Pass rates for most GCE AS subjects are above the national average but in the case of a few subjects, they are at or below it. Students on GCE A-level history and psychology courses gain high value added scores in terms of their overall achievement, by obtaining higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. Many students on GCE A-level sociology and classical civilisation courses, however, do not achieve any value added score at all. Very few full-time humanities students have obtained a key skills award at level 3.

136. Most retention rates for full-time students are satisfactory or better. Between 2000 and 2002, the retention rate on the two-year access to HE course was low, the pass rate was below the national average and only about one-third of the students gained any qualification. Many students, both adults and those aged 16 to 18, progress to HE. In 2002, almost half the students on the access to HE course progressed to degree courses offered by the college, the remainder choosing other HE institutions. A significant number of humanities students went on to study degrees related to their GCE A-level subjects. Five out of six humanities students who applied to the universities of Oxford or Cambridge in 2002 were successful in gaining places at one of them.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	53	43	13
		% retention	74	56	77
		% pass rate	23	38	40
GCE A-level psychology *	3	No. of starts	137	141	124
		% retention	65	72	92
		% pass rate	95	99	96
GCE A-level history *	3	No. of starts	103	116	72
		% retention	66	78	96
		% pass rate	97	85	97
GCE A-level geography *	3	No. of starts	74	83	51
		% retention	77	81	98
		% pass rate	82	57	98
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	**	192	260
		% retention	**	92	87
		% pass rate	**	87	78
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	**	100	88
		% retention	**	93	85

		% pass rate	**	70	80
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	**	60	68
		% retention	**	87	93
		% pass rate	**	87	67

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

* GCE A-level two-year courses in 2000 and 2001, one-year A2 course in 2002

** course not available

Quality of education and training

137. Almost all teaching is satisfactory or better. Staff make good use of their subject expertise to prepare well-devised handouts that help students to understand complex concepts. Teaching is closely linked to the requirements of examinations. In some lessons, the teacher uses resources in a stimulating way, employs a variety of appropriate teaching methods and excites and holds the students' interest. In discussion about concepts and issues, adult students are encouraged to widen the debate by drawing on their extensive experience in various fields. Teachers make sure everyone in the group understands the lesson by posing well-phrased questions which they then ask individual students to answer. In many lessons, however, teaching is uninspiring and teaching methods are dull and monotonous. Lesson plans do not clearly specify learning objectives or take sufficient account of students' differing abilities. In these poorer lessons, the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers talk for long periods of time and fail to provide challenging activities to help students to work effectively on their own or in collaboration with others. There is little effective group work or use of audio-visual aids or computers. Teachers fail to kindle any spirit of enquiry and do not encourage students to find things out for themselves.

138. Most teachers have relevant degrees and teaching qualifications. Newly appointed teachers who do not have a teaching qualification are given support by the college to enable them to obtain one. Whilst classrooms are well equipped and adequately furnished, their layout is not conducive to group work. External noise adversely affects teaching and learning in some classrooms. Students are provided with relevant textbooks and handouts. Some teachers and students make insufficient use of the available ILT and multi-media resources. Insufficient support is available for students using the IT facilities in the learning centre. Subject-based enrichment activities benefit students by giving their learning a wider dimension.

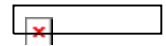
139. Students usually receive constructive comments on their written work, which is marked against relevant criteria. Internal verification of assessment on access courses is carried out appropriately. There is, however, no policy on assessment on GCE AS and A-level courses with the aim of ensuring that all staff work to the same assessment criteria, and marks and grading are not moderated. The system for monitoring students' progress is more effective in respect of full-time GCE A-level students than it is for adult and part-time students. Some tutors conduct very thorough reviews of students progress but those carried out by other tutors are barely adequate. Full-time students review their progress regularly with their subject teachers and personal tutors. They engage in action planning and are set target grades. Records for full-time students are well maintained but those for students on access courses are inadequate. Access students receive useful additional support if they have difficulties with written work. Arrangements for the initial assessment of adults on part-time courses, however, are inadequate.

140. Adult students do not receive sufficient advice and guidance to help them to choose the course that is right for them. Full-time students receive a great deal of help with their applications to HE but access course students receive insufficient guidance. Arrangements for the provision of careers advice and guidance do not meet the needs of access students or some younger students.

Leadership and management

141. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Operational management is sound and new managers are working to improve the procedures for quality assurance. Managers, however, have not yet successfully addressed the failure of some students on some GCE AS and A-level courses to gain positive value added scores and of a significant number of students on the access to HE course to obtain a qualification. Good support is given to new teachers. Insufficient priority, however, is given to improving the overall quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning in the humanities and few teachers have taken advantage of relevant staff development activities offered by the college. Staff seldom share teaching materials or good practice.

English



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses
- good progress monitoring and academic support for the individual student
- much good teaching
- wide range of subject enrichment activities
- good accommodation and learning resource materials
- high value added scores of students on GCE AS English courses.

Weaknesses

- poor examination results on GCSE courses
- insufficient use of ILT in lessons

- o inadequate arrangements for identifying and supporting students with specific learning needs.

Scope of provision

142. The college offers GCE AS and A-level English language, English language and literature, and English literature courses. There are re-sit courses in GCSE English language and GCSE English literature. Most courses take place in the daytime and there are also evening classes in GCSE English, and GCE AS and A-level English language and literature. There are currently some 89 students taking GCE AS and A-level English literature, 342 taking GCE AS and A-level English language and literature, and 132 taking GCE AS and A-level English language. There are about 228 students taking GCSE English courses.

Achievement and standards

143. Many students do well on the GCE AS and A-level courses. Pass rates have risen on all GCE AS and A2 courses in English, in each of the last three years. The pass rate on all these courses is at, or near, 100% and the proportion of students who achieve high grades is above the national average. The retention rates are above the national averages on all the GCE AS and A-level courses. In GCSE, the retention rate has been above the national average for the last two years but the proportion of daytime and evening students who gain grade C or above has been declining and is below the national average. Students on GCE AS courses obtain higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results on entry. Most students produce work that is appropriate for the level of their course. The best coursework in English literature shows insight, imagination and awareness of style. In English language workshops and assignments, students use the appropriate technical terms effectively. For example, in a lesson about the implications of stereotype, students were able to discuss and reach conclusions about the connection between language and gender, using the vocabulary of linguistic analysis. The lessons observed were well attended and students were punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English language (one year)	2	No. of starts	145	246	175
		% retention	50	74	77
		% pass rate	81	44	41
GCE A-level English language *	3	No. of starts	49	31	34
		% retention	61	61	91
		% pass rate	76	84	100
GCE A-level English language and literature (two year)	3	No. of starts	184	208	103
		% retention	75	77	97
		% pass rate	90	91	99
GCE A-level English literature *	3	No. of starts	29	45	32
		% retention	59	82	97
		% pass rate	88	95	100
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	**	54	57
		% retention	**	89	95

		% pass rate	**	96	100
GCE AS English language and literature	3	No. of starts	**	189	192
		% retention	**	81	86
		% pass rate	**	92	98
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	**	57	53
		% retention	**	82	94
		% pass rate	**	91	98

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

* GCE A-level two-year courses in 2000 and 2001, one-year A2 course in 2002

** course not available

Quality of education and training

144. English is taught well overall. Lessons are planned and structured thoroughly, and students learn effectively. They have confidence in their teachers and make good progress. Work is set regularly and marked accurately. Assignments are marked rigorously to standards specified by the external awarding bodies. There are good arrangements whereby staff moderate and check one another's marking. External verifiers' reports confirm that assessment is accurate and that, at times, it is carried out excellently. Most teachers are very well qualified in their subject and have recognised teaching qualifications. Several have higher degrees. Several members of the teaching team are also examiners for awarding bodies.

145. Most students are enthusiastic about their courses, valuing the teaching and organisation of their programmes and the individual attention they receive. Teachers expect students to concentrate hard and to take part fully in individual and group activities. In the best lessons, students are absorbed in their learning tasks and are encouraged to develop the ability to study in depth and think things out perceptively for themselves. GCE A2 English literature students studying *Othello* had written amusing and perceptive accounts of Iago's visit to 'his' psychiatrist. Students writing on *Doctor Faustus* and *The Handmaid's Tale* showed impressive awareness of ethical and social context. The students word process much of their coursework, but there is little reference to ILT in schemes of work and lesson plans. In a minority of lessons, the work was too easy for some students and they gained little from it. Key skills lessons, which are separate from the main subjects, are generally not valued by students.

146. English is taught in pleasant, well-maintained classrooms with attractive displays and posters. There are very good learning materials, including handouts and booklets prepared by staff. There is very convenient access for students with restricted mobility in the sixth form centre. Library stock is satisfactory. Students benefit from a very full and active programme of enrichment activities to support their work on English courses. There are frequent theatre trips and visits to conferences and places of interest related to their courses of study.

147. Teachers mark students work against consistent and appropriate standards. They correct any errors of English and provide the students with helpful comments on how they may improve their work. The students' workload is managed effectively. Students are set target grades at the outset of their GCE A-level courses and their progress is reviewed regularly in one-to-one meetings with their subject teachers. Students value this feedback on their progress and the guidance their teachers give them. Findings from reviews of students' progress are collated. They form the basis of reports which are sent, in accordance with well-established college practice, to the parents of those students aged 16 to 18.

148. Teachers give excellent support to students in and out of lessons. Students feel confident that staff will help them at any time if they have any personal problems. Students on GCE A2 courses value the assistance they are given in tutorials with their applications to HE through the Universities

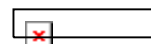
and College Admission Services (UCAS). Many students say, however, that some tutorials are not of much value to them and that the extent to which tutorials are useful depends largely on the initiative and skill of the tutors concerned. Many students progress to HE. Of those on GCE A-level courses in 2001/02, 68% went on to degree courses in HE.

149. There are inadequate arrangements for identifying and supporting students with specific learning needs. There is currently no alternative to the GCSE course that is suitable for students whose grade in GCSE English is below D.

Leadership and management

150. The curriculum area is well managed. Teachers work well together as a team to ensure that they co-ordinate their work. Regular staff meetings are held and these are minuted. Much of the day-to-day work, however, is carried out effectively through informal contact. Course reviews are detailed and constructive. They involve the students and lead to action to improve provision. There is supportive guidance for new or inexperienced members of staff. Course teams set realistic targets for retention and pass rates in accordance with college guidelines. Course management is effective, with a strong emphasis on planning and assessment. Communications between staff are effective and administration in the area is efficient. Staff share responsibilities and do all they can to help one another. Staff take pride in the courses on which they teach and want them to be as good as possible. They make every effort to ensure that their students succeed.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- much good teaching and effective learning
- high attendance and retention rates
- wide range of appropriate learning resources.

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of students' literacy and numeracy skills
- inadequate initial assessment

- poor planning for learning.

Scope of provision

151. The school offers a wide range of full-time and part-time programmes for school leavers and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are currently 113 full-time, 68 part-time and 2 pre-16 students attending a range of programmes. Programmes include lifeplan, preparation for work, independent living, workplan, vocational access, first and next steps, worksteps and link programmes with a special school, as well as a project to help pupils from local schools make the transition to college.

Achievement and standards

152. Students attend regularly and are punctual. Action on poor attendance is good. The retention rate is high on most courses. Students are set personal targets. With the help of their teacher, they monitor their progress towards reaching these in every lesson and they are set new targets regularly. The targets are challenging and the majority of students achieve them. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own performance. Achievements in some classes are evidenced either with a video or photographs. This evidence enables students to recognise their achievements. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are informed regularly about their child's progress and achievements.

153. Students are taught work-related skills to prepare them for employment. Their acquisition of such skills is neither monitored nor recorded by staff. Students are encouraged to write letters of application, visit employers and find out about different occupations. The students acquire job-related skills through work in the local community, such as garden maintenance. Progression routes within the section are good. The college offers level 1 programmes, but some of these are not appropriate for students.

Quality of education and training

154. Most teaching is good or better. Lessons are planned effectively and teachers take the individual needs of students into account. In some lessons, different ability groups are specifically brought together to work with each other. In one lesson, students were encouraged to display their talent at singing. Three acted as judges, one student recorded the performance using a video recorder, another loaded the music tape whilst the rest of the group either clapped, danced or used a musical instrument. The lesson was delivered with humour and the students responded very positively. In lessons, the teaching methods are suitably varied and enable the students to acquire new skills and knowledge. Most teachers demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they covered. Several of the lessons take place in the community. In one such lesson, the students had planned the activities previously. The students decided for themselves what they were going to do and how the work would be allocated between them. Some students painted a perimeter fence whilst others cleared weeds and rubbish to develop a vegetable garden. All the students were confident, took a keen interest in their work and knew what they were doing and why. Some schemes of work and lesson plans are not detailed enough.

155. There is a wide range of resources such as computers, scanners, tracker balls, printers, specialist software, an adjustable table, digital cameras, video players, television and digital video and CD players. The resources are used effectively. Their use by students in the classroom and for private study is recorded. Specialist equipment is available for woodwork and motor vehicle lessons and the provision has use of a motor vehicle and a woodwork area. A base room has been developed and is used effectively as a drop-in facility where students can use a wide range of resources. Risk assessments are carried out for programmes where there are significant health and safety implications. If appropriate, students are made aware of any health and safety risks at the start of the lesson.

156. Arrangements for the initial assessment of students are inadequate. Information about the student is gathered from parents, carers, external agencies and school reports, but this does not always give an accurate picture of the student's abilities. Pen portraits of the students are developed following a period of observation but these do not necessarily give an accurate picture of the students' abilities either. Individual learning plans do not specify any targets for the development of specific programme-related learning skills, such as the correct use of a paintbrush or a hammer. Students' work files contain a record of the learning activities carried out rather than what has been achieved by students themselves.

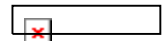
157. Students do not receive specific instruction in literacy or numeracy in separate lessons, or as an integral part of their course. Their progress in literacy and numeracy is not monitored or recorded. Students do not have specific targets for literacy or numeracy in their individual learning plans. In a cookery lesson, students were required to read instructions, weigh ingredients and time their cooking, but their teacher did not use these tasks as a context for helping the students develop and extend their literacy and numeracy skills.

158. The section has an effective work experience programme. Staff encourage employers who provide work placements to take students on as employees. Part of the work placement officer's role is to guide and to refer students to appropriate external agencies. Staff maintain effective links with these external agencies. Staff liaise with the special education needs co-ordinators at local schools to keep them well informed about options for pupils at the college. There has been a large increase in the number of full-time students aged 16 to 18 recruited to the college's programmes for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

159. The section is well managed and ably led. The programmes are planned and managed effectively with the aim of ensuring students have clear progression routes. Staff are aware of school's performance indicators and they strive to meet the targets related to them. One of the targets has been met through the appointment of a liaison officer. Core team and programme meetings are held regularly. There are also regular team meetings to discuss individual students' achievement and progress. Staff who cannot attend are sent a memo or the minutes of the meeting, or else they are updated verbally. Teams of teaching staff are involved in the development of the self-assessment report.

Literacy and numeracy



Overall provision in this area is **very poor (grade 5)**

Strengths

- successful initiatives to widen participation

- good personal support for students

- good accommodation for workshop provision.

Weaknesses

- much poor teaching

- inadequate initial assessment

- weak target setting and lack of systematic progress reviews

- inadequate monitoring of learning support provision

- very low uptake of learning support

- ineffective quality assurance procedures.

Scope of provision

160. Literacy and numeracy classes are offered in an open learning workshop on a roll-on, roll-off basis. Students are entitled to up to 10 hours tuition in the workshop. Most students receive at least four hours of tuition and many attend for their maximum entitlement. Some courses are given names such as English through computers or creative writing in order to attract additional students. There are 239 enrolments on literacy and 198 enrolments on numeracy courses. The college also offers family learning courses in partner primary schools where literacy and numeracy are taught to both children and their parents. There are 150 students on family learning programmes. There are also 208 students receiving literacy and/or numeracy support.

Achievement and standards

161. Students' attendance and punctuality rates vary considerably, and in some instances they are poor. The introduction of new national standards and accreditation makes it difficult to analyse pass rates for the three years to 2002. Staff were unable to provide inspectors with clear data on students' achievements. Retention rates are variable and some are low.

Quality of education and training

162. Much teaching is poor and students' learning needs are not always met adequately. There is much poor teaching of literacy and numeracy as additional learning support. In some lessons, the learning materials are too difficult for the students. The quality of some worksheets is poor and their context has no relevance for the students. During many sessions, students' work is not assessed and students are not always questioned or tested to find out how much they have learnt. Sometimes individual students are allowed to monopolise the teacher's attention, to the detriment of others. Many students make little progress.

163. Initial assessment of students is not carried out adequately and does not provide an accurate basis upon which to plan an appropriate programme of study. There is no immediate follow-up to initial assessment to provide students with the help they need. Following initial assessment, students are not encouraged to ask for additional learning support. Students are seldom set short-term and long-term targets. The targets that students are set are vague, and do not reflect their learning needs. In many instances, students are not even informed of these targets. Dates by which the targets must be reached are not specified.

164. Students do not receive systematic reviews of their progress regularly. Some do not receive any reviews at all. In many cases, the students' personal tutorials are being used as an inadequate substitute for progress reviews. The feedback students receive on their progress is often insufficient and lacking in detail and does not help them to plan ways of improving their performance. When reviewing students' progress, tutors seldom refer to students' individual learning plans or update these in the light of students' progress and achievements. It is difficult to assess 'distance travelled' by individual students. Students do not understand the review process and do not consider it important.

165. Additional learning support is available to students in various ways. In some instances, however, there is insufficient monitoring of the progress of students who receive additional support. Students who attend literacy and numeracy lessons do not always have their learning support needs and details of their progress recorded. There is no process for identifying the needs of family learning students for additional learning support. There is insufficient liaison between literacy and numeracy tutors and teachers of vocational subjects about students from these courses who receive additional learning support. For example, the literacy and numeracy tutors do not inform the vocational teachers regularly of what progress their students are making and whether they are punctual and have a good record of attendance. There is uncertainty regarding the responsibilities of the additional support co-ordinator. Of 1,585 students tested, 371 were identified as requiring learning support but only 208 students are receiving it. The take-up rate for additional learning support is low, at 56%.

166. There are some successful initiatives for widening participation. The mining project seeks to address the needs of a large number of unemployed miners. Family learning involves parents and other adults and takes place in a setting that is familiar to them and non-threatening. The foundation high school project seeks to raise awareness of a variety of learning opportunities. The open learning workshop provides a welcoming learning environment where students have access to many computers and ample working areas. In the workshops, there are displays of students' work and photographs celebrating students' achievements and successes. Provision in the workshop is arranged flexibly to meet students' needs, and caters for those who work irregular shift patterns.

Leadership and management

167. The leadership and management of the area are very weak. There is a lack of clear direction from management and the basic skills strategy has not yet been implemented. Procedures for quality assurance are ineffective. A standards verifier has been appointed to carry out lesson observations and all full-time staff have been observed but no training is planned to improve the quality of teaching. Experienced staff have been asked to act as mentors, where necessary, but no formal mentoring system has been established. Inspectors did not agree with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the process for the initial assessment of students and the use of individual learning plans constituted strengths of provision, but found both to be weaknesses. The self-assessment report recognised that the take-up by students of help with literacy and numeracy was low but failed to acknowledge that teaching on learning support programmes was poor and that there was inadequate monitoring of the progress of students receiving additional learning support. There are inadequate quality assurance arrangements for family learning. Members of the basic skills team do not always work together effectively. Minutes of meetings of the basic skills team do not state whether action agreed at the previous meeting has been carried out.

Part D: College data

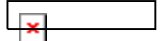
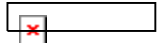


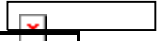
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18	19+
1	14	29
2	25	23
3	37	18
4/5	1	10
Other	23	20
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	2,587	607	11
Land-based provision	94	105	0
Construction	665	424	4
Engineering, technology and manufacture	2,727	852	12
Business administration, management and professional	947	1,939	10
Information and communication technology	2,058	1,810	13
Retailing, customer service and transportation	7	1	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	1,171	541	6
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	205	366	2
Health, social care and public services	757	740	5
Visual and performing arts and media	1,155	904	7
Humanities	2,458	1,250	12

English, languages and communication	2,400	359	9
Foundation programmes	1,443	1,200	9
Total	18,674	11,098	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	1,344	1,673	992	2,297	6,451	3,236
	Retention rate (%)	79	78	69	84	90	55
	National average (%)	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	44	58	74	34	67	69
	National average (%)	59	65	68	60	66	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	3,885	4,767	2,061	14,315	15,958	1,676
	Retention rate (%)	84	88	74	93	97	69
	National average (%)	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	34	32	74	19	39	71
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,610	2,505	4,778	4,433	3,348	1,236
	Retention rate (%)	79	75	78	90	85	73
	National average (%)	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	78	82	84	15	36	66
	National average (%)	72	74	76	62	66	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	66	14	0	637	217	74
	Retention rate (%)	98	43	*	90	59	88
	National average (%)	83	79	82	84	81	84

	Pass rate (%)	100	60	*	39	47	40
	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 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

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

** too few starters to provide data*

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)	61	35	4	118
Level 2 (intermediate)	60	26	14	65
Level 1 (foundation)	61	35	4	23
Other sessions	64	21	15	39
Totals	61	30	9	245

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