



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Walsall College of Arts and Technology

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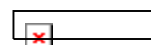
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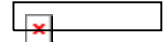
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Basic information about the college

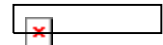


Name of college:	Walsall College of Arts and Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Rosemary Gray OBE
Address of college:	St Paul's Street Walsall WS1 1XN
Telephone number:	01922 657 000
Fax number:	01922 657 083
Chair of governors:	Anthony Taylor
Unique reference number:	130483
Name of reporting inspector:	Philip Pullen HMI
Date of inspection:	19-23 May 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

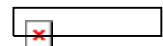


Walsall College of Arts and Technology is a general further education (FE) college located in the centre of Walsall. It operates from four sites within fifteen minutes walking distance of each other: St Paul's Street campus, where the majority of the provision is located; Green Lane, a newly converted construction and crafts centre; the Broadway Centre for management and business courses; and the Shelley Centre, where performing arts, media, music and leather crafts are delivered. An increasing number of courses are also delivered at over 40 community venues. The borough of Walsall has a population of 263,000. Parts of the borough are designated Health Action Zone areas and one ward in the borough benefits from New Deal for Communities. Walsall is rated as 34th out of 354 on the index of multiple deprivation for England and Wales. Approximately 13.6% of the borough's population are from minority ethnic groups. This compares with a national rate of 8.7%. In 2002, the proportion of school leavers in Walsall achieving five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications at grade C or above was 42.3%, compared with the national average of 51.5%.

The college provides courses in all of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) 14 areas of learning. In 2001/02, the college enrolled 12,761 students, of which, some 76% were aged 19 or over. Of the 3,074 full-time students, 64% were aged 16 to 18. Enrolments are highest on information and communications technology (ICT), business administration, management and professional studies, health, social care and public services, and foundation programmes. The college has approximately 230 work-based learners. The main areas of work-based learning, in terms of trainee numbers, are construction and hairdressing.

The college's mission states that: 'we aim to promote equality, excellence and sustainability in education and training so that all learners achieve success and are thus empowered to contribute to the local, regional and national economy.'

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be satisfactory. Pass and retention rates are broadly in line with national averages, except for below average pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1 and 2. The college has been highly successful in attracting students traditionally under-represented in FE. The quality of education and training is outstanding in health, social care and childcare, and good in hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual arts, literacy and numeracy and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality is satisfactory in business, hospitality and catering, performing arts and media, humanities, and English and modern foreign languages. In construction, engineering and ICT, the quality of education and training is unsatisfactory. The work-based learning provision in construction is satisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- strong strategic leadership to promote widening participation
- outstanding promotion of equal opportunities
- wide range of provision meeting the needs of employers and the local community
- outstanding support for students with barriers to learning
- strong partnership and community relations
- outstanding provision in health, social care and childcare.

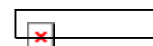
What should be improved

- pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 and level 2 courses
- poor teaching in some curriculum areas
- use of challenging targets to improve students' achievements
- inadequate take up of additional learning support in literacy and numeracy
- the consistency of tutorial provision
- inconsistent application of quality systems to bring about improvement in teaching and learning

- unsatisfactory provision in construction, engineering and ICT.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

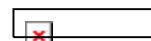


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Unsatisfactory. There is much poor teaching. Pass and retention rates are unsatisfactory on many courses. Curriculum management is poor. Links with employers are good. Work-based learning is satisfactory. There are excellent facilities at the Green Lane campus.
Engineering	Unsatisfactory. There is poor teaching of theory. Pass rates are high on electrical, electronics and national certificate courses but low on motor vehicle and mechanical engineering courses. There are low and declining retention rates on many courses. Attendance and punctuality in lessons are poor.
Business	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on most level 3 courses. There is good teaching on management and professional courses. However, in many lessons, there is insufficient challenge to students. Learning resources are good. There is inadequate monitoring to ensure consistency of assessment practice.
Information and communications technology	Unsatisfactory. Much teaching is unsatisfactory. There are poor retention and pass rates on full-time courses. Pass rates are high on short information technology (IT) courses for adults. There is good support for students with disabilities. Quality assurance processes are ineffective.
Hospitality and catering	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on most courses. Retention rates are low and declining. There is an insufficient emphasis on learning in lessons. Assessment procedures are robust. Specialist resources to support learning are good.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. There are high and improving retention rates on hairdressing courses. Pass and retention rates on most beauty therapy courses are poor. Teaching is good in practical lessons. There are excellent links with hairdressing employers and good commercial environments in both hairdressing and beauty therapy.
Health, social care and childcare	Outstanding. Teaching is good and meets the needs of individual students. Pass and retention rates are very high. There is outstanding support for students. The provision effectively widens participation.
Performing arts and media	Satisfactory. There is good development of students' practical skills

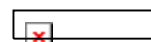
	in lessons. Retention rates are high on entry and level 2 courses, but low on the national diploma in performing arts. Effective use is made of external partnerships to enrich learning. Students' attendance and punctuality are poor.
Visual arts	Good. There is much good teaching. Pass rates are high on many courses and students' work is of a high standard. Retention rates are low on Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation courses. There is rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on GCE Advanced-level (A-level) psychology and sociology and GCSE psychology courses. The retention rate is poor on the access to HE course. A good variety of teaching methods actively involve all learners. There is good progression for access to HE students.
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on modern foreign languages and first certificate in English courses. There are low pass rates for GCSE English language. Modern foreign languages teaching is effective and well planned. Curriculum management is ineffective.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. Achievements are good for students at pre-entry and entry level. Teaching and learning are very good in practical lessons. There are good curriculum management and very good community links. Teachers make insufficient use of individual learning plans to inform lesson planning.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Students are highly motivated and achieve well. There is much good teaching and effective widening participation from under-represented groups. Take up of learning support is low. There is ineffective use of individual learning plans.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers provide strong strategic leadership to ensure that the college plays a central part in the important local agendas of regeneration and community development. Productive partnerships have been established with a wide range of local agencies, employers and community organisations. Enrolments of part-time students are growing, especially for courses in community centres. Pass and retention rates are broadly in line with national averages except for below average achievement by students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1 and 2. Curriculum management varies widely in its effectiveness. Quality assurance procedures, including self-assessment, cover all aspects of the college's work but are not applied consistently or focused sufficiently on improving teaching and learning. Financial management is sound and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

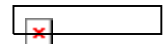
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Policies and practices

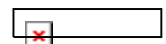
college show 55% of students are from areas with widening participation postcodes and 26% of students are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 13% in the local community. There are currently substantial numbers of deaf or deaf/blind students on discrete and integrated courses. A growing number of blind or visually impaired students also attend the college. There is very wide provision of learning opportunities in all curriculum areas, from entry level to higher education (HE). Community provision is very good with over 40 centres providing a range of courses. Overall, there are good working relationships with employers and curriculum areas have active advisory boards. There is excellent promotion of equal opportunities and effective monitoring of policies on race and gender, and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college has produced a detailed race equality policy and action plan and has made good progress in its implementation. Access to the main college buildings for students with restricted mobility is good. There has been good progress made in prioritising and implementing requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Discrimination Act (SENDDA).

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. There are well-managed and comprehensive support arrangements for students with particular difficulties or barriers to learning. Students with multiple or complex difficulties are enabled to learn and succeed at the college. Support for deaf students is outstanding. Childcare arrangements are good. Student services provides comprehensive advice and guidance, including help with careers, accommodation and finance. The college has a close and productive relationship with the Black Country Connexions partnership. There is close and effective monitoring of students' attendance. Initial assessment is prompt, but take up of additional support in literacy and numeracy is low. The quality of tutorials is inconsistent.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

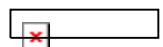
- friendly and productive atmosphere
- support from staff
- learning resources in the European Design Centre
- good advice

- choice of courses
- the fitness centre
- childcare facilities
- the excellent facilities at Green Lane campus.

What they feel could be improved

- poor parking facilities
- inadequate common/recreational space
- heavy doors for wheelchair users
- noise levels in European Design Centre and in some open areas
- slow computer network access
- poor resources at Shelley campus.

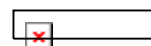
Other information



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

the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



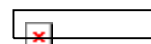
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	57	35	8
19+ and WBL*	61	30	9
Learning 16-18	54	38	8
19+ and WBL*	61	34	5

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Overall judgements about achievements and standards for the years 2000 and 2001 are based on aggregate information in the college performance report produced by Ofsted. This is derived from data supplied by the college in its individualised student return (ISR). Data for 2002 are derived from the college using its own software. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievements and standards of work on particular courses.

2. During the period 1998/99 to 2000/01, pass rates for GCE A-level students of all ages were significantly below the national average for colleges with a high widening participation factor. However, in 2001/02, pass rates for students taking the GCE A2 examination improved significantly. Overall pass rates for GCE AS students have been above the national average in 2000/01 and 2001/02. Retention rates for GCE AS and A2 courses are around the national average. At GCSE, the percentage of students gaining high grades at A to C shows a pattern of improvement and is above the national average. There are good retention rates on GCSE courses.

3. Overall pass rates for GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate levels are low and declining. Pass rates for GNVQ advanced courses are around the national average. Retention rates for GNVQ courses at all levels are around the national average, although in 2001/02 they improved significantly

at intermediate level. Overall pass rates on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 1 courses are slightly below the national average, whereas at levels 2 and 3 they are significantly below. Retention rates on NVQ courses at levels 1 and 2 are generally below the national average. At level 3, the overall retention rate is around the national average.

4. Pass rates for key skills are low but improving. In 2000/01, they were good in hairdressing but poor in all of the other areas of learning. The overall pass rate was 11%. In 2001/02, however, the overall pass rate improved significantly to 31%, with considerable improvements in the achievement of work-based learners.

5. Achievement of the work-based learning framework by learners is good overall. In the years 1999/2000 and 2000/01, pass rates were 65% and 59%, respectively. Pass rates are particularly good in construction and hairdressing. However, no work-based learners in engineering and few in business administration achieved a qualification in the three years to 2002. Both these areas have low numbers of work-based learners. The overall retention rate for work-based learners for the period between 1999/2000 and 2002/03 was 69%.

6. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory or better. Many students have high levels of motivation and work with confidence. There are particularly high standards of work in health, social care and childcare, and visual arts. In vocational areas, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, and engineering, students develop good practical skills. Most portfolios are well organised and well documented. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and are successful in achieving their learning goals. There are good levels of success for students who are returning to learning and for under-represented and disadvantaged members of the community. There is good progression to HE by health, social care and childcare, visual arts and access students.

7. Attendance at the lessons observed during the inspection was 70% overall, compared with a national average of 76% for all inspections carried out in general FE colleges in 2001/02. Attendance was lowest in humanities and English and modern foreign languages, and highest in hospitality and catering and in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attendance in some curriculum areas was significantly affected by the high number of external examinations taking place during the week of inspection.

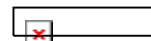
16 to 18 year olds

8. The overall retention rates for level 1 students aged 16 to 18 have been broadly around the national average for colleges with a high widening participation factor during the three-year period 1998/99 to 2000/01. However, in 2001/02, retention rates at this level declined to slightly below the national average. Pass rates for level 1 students have been steadily declining and, in 2001/02, were significantly below the national average. Retention rates for level 2 students have been consistently above the respective national averages and improved further in 2001/02. Pass rates for these students have remained below the national average throughout the period 1999/2000 to 2001/02. Overall retention and pass rates for level 3 students are around the national average.

Adult learners

9. Overall retention rates for students aged 19 and over were slightly above the national average on qualifications at levels 1 and 2 during the period 1999 to 2002. Over the same period, retention rates for level 3 students have remained slightly below the national average. Pass rates for level 1, 2 and 3 students are broadly at the national average, although they improved significantly at level 3, in 2001/02, to above the national average.

Quality of education and training



10. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 265 sessions. As Table 4 in Part D of the report shows, teaching was good or better in 59% of these, satisfactory in 33% and less than satisfactory in 8%. This compares with an average of 63%, 29%, and 9% respectively for all general FE and tertiary colleges inspected during 2001/02.

11. Teaching on level 2 and 3 courses was significantly better than on level 1 courses. Only 52% of level 1 lessons are good or better; 14% are less than satisfactory. The proportion of better teaching was higher in lessons for adult students than in lessons for students aged 16 to 18. Some 61% of the teaching for adult students was graded good or better and 9% was less than satisfactory, compared with 57% and 8%, respectively, for students aged 16 to 18. The best teaching was in visual arts, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and health, social care and childcare. The weakest teaching was in construction, ICT, engineering, and hospitality and catering.

12. Many lessons are well organised. Most teachers use the college's standard schemes of work and lesson plans to good effect. There is particularly good teaching in practical lessons. On vocational courses there is a clear emphasis on good professional practice and teachers use their up-to-date industrial knowledge to enliven lessons. Most teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject and enjoy a good relationship with students. One-to-one tuition and tutorial support are generally good.

13. In the better lessons, teachers set tasks that take account of students' individual learning needs. They use a range of techniques to involve students successfully in learning and extend their knowledge and understanding. There is good use of IT. Small-group work is also well used, with teachers closely monitoring, managing and supporting students' activity. On vocational courses, teachers make particularly good links between theory and practice.

14. In poorer lessons, teaching is unimaginative and dull, with an over-reliance on repetitive questioning and handouts. Teachers pay insufficient attention to the wide range of students' abilities and fail to challenge the more able students. In some lessons, learning outcomes are not clear and there is a lack of attention to individual needs. There are insufficient checks on learning. In a small number of lessons, classroom management is very poor, with students not challenged for lateness and disruptive behaviour.

15. The planning, co-ordination and delivery of key skills are generally satisfactory in work-based learning but less effective in college-based programmes. In most areas of work-based learning, such as construction and hairdressing, key skills are integrated well with vocational aspects of training and delivered effectively but, in others, slow progress in achieving key skills has hindered the achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks. In health, social care and childcare, key skills are well integrated with the content of vocational studies and pass rates are good. The management and planning of key skills in the college's GCE A-level programme are weak. GCE A-level students do not see the value or relevance of key skills and many do not attend key skills lessons.

16. Accommodation across college sites is satisfactory. Buildings are kept clean, well maintained and secure. There are ample displays of students' work around the college to celebrate achievements and to create a welcoming atmosphere. With the exception of areas within the Shelley and Broadway sites, the college provides an accessible and inclusive environment, particularly for wheelchair users and visually impaired learners. A large number of community venues also provide good accessible accommodation for students.

17. Much specialist equipment is of a very high standard, including equipment used for the provision in construction at the Green Lane campus, and for engineering, hospitality and catering and hairdressing and beauty therapy. However, some specialist learning environments are less than satisfactory, including those for motor vehicle studies, where there are no modern vehicles to work on, and ICT, where computers are slow and accommodation is uncomfortably warm and noisy.

18. Access to computers across the college for staff and students is good. The college has invested

heavily to provide over 1,700 networked workstations. Despite the availability of equipment and software, the use of IT in lessons is limited in many curriculum areas. Where it is used, for example, in health, social care and childcare, visual arts and with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, students benefit greatly and are able to develop appropriate technical and key skills. The European Design Centre, which forms the main learning and resource centre at the St Paul's Street campus, is well organised and has a good provision of computers, book stock and journals. Library staff are attentive and provide a good overall service. In addition to text-based resources and links to other web sites, teachers are beginning to add sophisticated interactive learning materials to the college's intranet. These are yet to impact on the majority of teachers and students, although a minority of curriculum areas do have some good quality learning materials available for students' use.

19. Most staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Many have valuable recent professional and commercial experience. In construction, however, few staff have teaching or higher level vocational qualifications.

20. The quality of the procedures for the assessment and monitoring of learning is inconsistent. In visual arts, teachers provide helpful commentary to ensure students fully understand how they are assessed and why they have received their grade. Similarly, in English, written feedback contains language that is easy to understand and makes students aware of their progress. For other students, however, comments written by teachers on their work are too brief and careless mistakes are left uncorrected. In most areas, insufficient use is made by teachers of value added data to set targets and monitor students' progress. Many students' individual learning plans are incomplete or contain only brief comments. Specific and measurable short-term targets are rarely set or shared effectively with subject teachers. Assessment practice in work-based learning is good in hairdressing and beauty therapy and electrical engineering, where there is good tracking of students' progress, but poor in construction, where trainees are not regularly observed by assessors. In some course teams, such as construction, engineering and ICT, internal verification procedures do not bring about improvements in assessment practices. College managers respond quickly to external verifier and awarding body reports on assessment standards, but do not routinely monitor or review internal systems with a view to continuous improvement.

21. Parents and employers are kept well informed of students' progress through termly reports and effective personal contact with tutors and other staff. Parent consultation evenings are held tri-annually for the parents of full-time students, and are well supported by parents. In addition, all areas celebrate students' achievements through award evenings well supported by employers, parents and sponsors.

22. The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding and policies and practices effectively widen participation. The enrolment pattern in 2001/02 demonstrates the college's considerable success in recruiting from groups under-represented in FE. Students from minority ethnic groups, for example, constitute 26% of enrolments, compared with 13% of the local population. Around 55% of students come from widening participation postcode areas. The 'achieving together' provision offers learning opportunities for disaffected and disengaged young people aged 14 to 19. There are increasing numbers of students attending access to HE courses.

23. The college offers a wide range of courses, including those at over 40 community venues and employers' premises. Courses are offered in all 14 areas of learning and students can study from entry level to level 4. All curriculum areas offer a comprehensive range of courses providing good progression routes. The college has good working relationships and partnerships with local HE institutions to ensure a range of progression opportunities. There is good and productive liaison with schools. The increased flexibility project has 270 young people aged 14 to 16 studying part time at the college.

24. Overall, there are very good working relationships and responses to employers' needs. All curriculum areas have active advisory boards with a strong employer presence. Partnerships with employers are particularly strong and productive in hairdressing and beauty therapy, construction and engineering. The college company, Broadway Training, offers tailored training to local industry and has delivered training to over 500 employees in 2002/03. Employers regularly attend

stakeholder meetings and many employers are enthusiastic supporters of the college. In a small minority of curriculum areas, such as visual arts and ICT, there are insufficient links with employers and industry and students have inadequate access to work experience and insufficient opportunity to learn in an industrial or professional environment.

25. An extensive range of community provision offers very good learning opportunities to varied groups in the local community. Outreach provision has grown, from 738 students in 2001/02, to 2,686 in 2002/03. Over 65% of students in this area are from minority ethnic groups and 70% are women.

26. There are well-managed and comprehensive support arrangements for students with particular difficulties or barriers to learning. Students with multiple and complex learning difficulties are enabled to study and succeed at the college. Provision for deaf students is outstanding. There are 85 deaf students at the college including 4 deaf blind students and 15 deaf adult students with additional needs. All these students are very well supported in discrete and integrated provision. There is also a growing provision for blind and visually impaired students.

27. Student services is located in new accommodation that provides a pleasant and welcoming environment. It contains a wide range of materials and confidential interview rooms. Advice and guidance staff are readily available and provide services for students requiring help with course choices, accommodation, careers and finance. Impartial guidance and advice are provided by the college and any student making several choices is automatically offered a guidance interview before their admissions interview. Marketing materials are well designed and readily available in community languages. Braille instructions are provided on the cover of the prospectus, which is also available on audio tape.

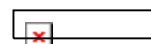
28. Attendance is monitored through register teams, who enter register data electronically on a daily basis. The college has also targeted support and monitoring at poorly performing curriculum areas and has recently appointed two full-time staff to support and monitor adults on part-time courses. In some curriculum areas, attendance has been improved through this targeted support. Nearly 1,000 students are in receipt of education maintenance allowances and their attendance is monitored weekly through Student Services.

29. There is effective support for personal issues. Childcare is provided by a college nursery and childcare costs are paid by the college. A very active health shop provides advice and counselling to staff and students. There is a close and productive relationship with the Black Country Connexions partnership, which has two members of staff located in the college.

30. Students undergo an initial screening promptly and the results are fed back to personal tutors identifying additional needs in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of the results achieved by students receiving additional support show a significant improvement in pass and retention rates, but the take-up of discrete additional support in literacy and numeracy is low. In 2001/02, 41% of students identified as needing additional support in literacy took up the support offered; only 22% took up support in numeracy.

31. The quality of tutorial provision is inconsistent and insufficiently monitored. There is a recommended tutorial programme with an essential core, but details are left to individual tutors. In health, social care and childcare, students receive very good and effective tutorial support but, in several other areas, tutorials have significant weaknesses. Connexions progress reviews are used in tutorials but students' progress is not closely monitored using relevant targets in several curriculum areas. The college has recently appointed a tutor mentor to develop good practice in tutorials.

Leadership and management



32. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has a clear strategic focus on inclusiveness and on widening participation, supported through a range of local partnerships. Enrolments are growing significantly on part-time programmes, especially those in community centres such as on-line learning centres and faith centres. Broadly, the performance of the college in terms of pass rates has been stable over the last three years and has been close to the relevant national averages. However, pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 1 and level 2 are low, and at level 1 they are declining. The college has achieved significant growth in LSC funded provision and has also been successful in attracting funding from other sources to help finance capital schemes. There are comprehensive policies for most aspects of the college's operation, but their application in the curriculum areas is inconsistent and does not uniformly secure the intended improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The grades awarded for teaching have slightly declined since the last inspection.

33. There is an effective strategic planning process that includes many staff, managers and governors. The plans of strategic partners and Government priorities are carefully taken into account when managers consider priorities and targets such as enrolments, improvements in students' achievement and issues relating to equality of opportunity. The resulting strategic plan, together with the college mission, is well understood and supported by staff.

34. Curriculum management varies widely in its effectiveness. Where it is good, for example, in hairdressing and beauty therapy, health, social care and childcare, and visual arts, the college systems for planning and quality improvement are generally applied well, with a strong focus on improving teaching and learning. Management of programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective in developing links with partner organisations to effectively meet the individual needs of students. Curriculum management is unsatisfactory in significant aspects of provision in construction, engineering and ICT. In these areas, there is inadequate attention given to raising the standards of teaching and learning and to improving students' achievement. Where improvement targets are set, frequently the tracking and monitoring of the outcomes required are ineffective. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Management of work-based learning is satisfactory. Communication between the work-based learning unit and curriculum areas within the college are good. Equality of opportunity is carefully monitored and there are effective quality assurance procedures. Good practice in the assessment of work-based learners on hairdressing programmes has been recently used as a model to develop similar standards for construction programmes.

35. Governors provide committed and effective leadership for the college and support college management well. They bring a wide range of community and business contacts that benefit the college in a number of ways. One of the governors is a nominated parent governor. The corporation's quality performance committee is the focal point of the quality system; it rigorously reviews all aspects of the college's educational performance and regularly reports to the full corporation. A governor links scheme attaches individual governors to particular areas of the college's work. Governors also chair the 13 curriculum advisory boards. There is a good governor training programme. The corporation holds an annual residential conference and a training day. Both events are attended by external speakers. Governors have received training on the Race Relations Amendment Act and its implications for FE. They have received reports and held seminars on the implications of the SENDDA.

36. The college has comprehensive systems designed to integrate the planning and quality assurance processes. These systems help the college to target its resources on some specific college-wide improvement targets. For example, key skills achievements improved significantly in 2001/02, as a result of a variety of interventions. However, there is inconsistent practice in the effective use of the quality assurance processes across the college. In most curriculum areas, there is an insufficient focus on improving teaching and learning. Even where curriculum teams hold regular meetings, there is little recording and monitoring of improvement action points arising from these meetings.

37. The college's self-assessment process engages many staff teams, together with managers and governors. However, the self-assessment reports produced by several curriculum area teams are

insufficiently self-critical and some overstate the quality of the achievements made by students. Most reports lack rigour and breadth in their judgements on leadership and management.

38. The college has a well-established lesson observation scheme that is able to identify general teaching and learning development needs. However, despite some external validation, the observation grades awarded by the college were significantly higher than the grades awarded by inspectors. Many curriculum managers perceive the lesson observation system to be of limited value. In most cases, observations are carried out by staff who, while trained for the task, do not normally come from the curriculum area they are observing and are not perceived as having the appropriate specialist knowledge to make valid judgements.

39. The principal and senior managers have shown strong and effective leadership in placing the college at the heart of the regeneration and community development agendas in the Walsall Metropolitan Borough and the Black Country. Very effective partnerships have been developed with the local council, the company managing the council's education service and a variety of local organisations such as the chamber of commerce, the local strategic partnership and the lifelong learning alliance. The college is widely recognised as an effective and collaborative partner and has been particularly successful in establishing a range of provision in community venues, such as local libraries, a women's centre and several faith centres, including a Greek orthodox church and a mosque.

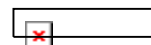
40. The college's promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding. There are effective policies and processes, which conform to current legislation but in many respects go much further. Awareness and respect for cultural diversity are embedded throughout the college and its provision in many community centres. Monitoring of college performance in terms of equality of opportunity is regular and thorough. Students and staff are encouraged to engage in activities that promote equality and understanding of related issues, for example, students have produced material to promote the Commission for Black Staff in FE. The college has produced a detailed race equality policy and action plan, and has made good progress in its implementation. Three senior managers are active members of the Walsall Strategic Race Equality Partnership. The college has undertaken an extensive review to ensure that it would fulfil its obligations under the SENDDA. Five working parties were set up, each charged with reviewing a particular aspect of the college, such as physical access and access to support and information. As a result of the review, action plans were produced to address potential areas of concern.

41. A broad range of relevant and reliable management information is produced in easily understood formats for managers and governors. Curriculum managers usually produce data for their staff teams in a simplified format, as part of the regular provision of information at meetings. However, some teachers do not readily use the information as a planning tool and have little ownership of the data.

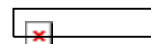
42. Staff development is good and closely aligned to college and individual needs. It includes a range of additional courses and activities to enable staff to continue their professional development. For example, one teacher from the achieving together programme joined teachers from Birmingham schools on a visit to Gambia to further develop the curriculum on global citizenship for disaffected learners. All new teachers are required to complete recognised teaching qualifications and are supported in doing so. The college falls short of its target of carrying out an annual appraisal for all full-time teachers. In 2001/02 only 54% of eligible staff were appraised. During the current year, 71% of staff have been appraised, although a shortfall is still anticipated.

43. Financial management of the college is sound. There are tight and effective budgetary controls. Budget holders receive good support from the college's finance team. However, there is no course costing process to assist financial management. The college has prioritised positive investment policies in capital accommodation projects such as the purchase and development of the Green Lane site, and in capital equipment developments in order to achieve the objectives of widening participation. Considering the satisfactory overall level of students' achievement, the high levels of social and educational inclusion and the successful levels of support given to students with a wide range of learning needs, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

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

Strengths

- excellent facilities at the Green Lane campus
- good employer links.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention and pass rates
- poor teaching
- inadequate support for learners
- unsatisfactory access to IT resources on the St Paul's Street campus
- poor curriculum management.

Scope of provision

44. The college offers a broad range of construction courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. These include courses in carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, signwork,

brickwork, electrical installation, gas and plumbing. Modern apprenticeships are offered in partnership with local industry and the college's own managing agency. At the time of inspection, there were around 1,750 students enrolled on construction courses, of whom, 55% were aged 19 and over. There were 91 foundation modern apprentices and 19 advanced modern apprentices enrolled on construction related programmes. The area also attracts around 60 pupils from 12 local schools on to the Increased Flexibility Programme, a programme of study designed to give them an insight into a number of trades within construction.

Achievement and standards

45. There are unsatisfactory retention and pass rates on many courses. Pass rates on the City and Guilds 2360 -08 part 2 electrical installation course are low and below national averages. There are falling pass rates on the level 1 City and Guilds 6091 painting and decorating one-year course. The number of enrolments and the retention and pass rates are all falling on the NVQ bricklaying course. Pass rates on the GNVQ advanced built environment course, which was changed to AVCE built environment in 2002, have fallen from 100% in 1999/2000 to 67% in 2001/02. On average, just over half of the students who begin this course are retained.

46. Pass rates for modern apprentices, on completion of their frameworks, are good in painting and decorating, and carpentry and joinery, and are improving in bricklaying. However, in plumbing, they are poor. The retention rate for plumbing advanced modern apprentices is also very poor.

47. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory, both within their portfolios and in the practical exercises they undertake. Some portfolio work is of a high standard and is skilfully presented. Two female students gained recognition of their achievement in external painting and decorating competitions. Not all students are sufficiently aware of health and safety requirements such as risk assessment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds basic painting and decorating	1	No. of starts	45	53	63
		% retention	84	92	73
		% pass rate	87	77	66
NVQ wood occupations (one year)	2	No. of starts	38	19	*
		% retention	74	84	*
		% pass rate	70	80	*
City and Guilds 2360-08 electrical installation part 2 (one year)	2	No. of starts	49	52	40
		% retention	98	98	100
		% pass rate	60	31	36
NVQ bricklaying (two year)	2	No. of starts	69	33	16
		% retention	70	61	56
		% pass rate	100	64	0
NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing) (two year)	2	No. of starts	41	43	44
		% retention	83	77	52
		% pass rate	20	76	86
NVQ signmaking (two year)	2	No. of starts	35	26	26
		% retention	74	50	77
		% pass rate	88	92	83

National certificate in building services (two year)	3	No. of starts	18	15	20
		% retention	61	67	50
		% pass rate	50	33	75

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

Quality of education and training

48. The quality of teaching is poor. There is very little effective use of schemes of work and lesson plans. Where these are available, they are superficial and do not contain relevant information that would aid lesson delivery. For example, students' preferred learning styles are not identified. Lessons do not always start on time and many students arrive late. Classroom management is poor, with inappropriate behaviour left unchallenged. Unimaginative use of learning packages contributes to theory lessons being dull and uninspiring. Key skills are not effectively integrated into the vocational content of courses and are not perceived as relevant by students. However, in work-based learning, key skills provision is more effective and helps to support the completion of the modern apprenticeship framework.

49. Work-based assessment is effective in painting and decorating and in carpentry and joinery, but there is a lack of regular assessment, reviews and general support for bricklaying and plumbing trainees. On-site assessment is too often reliant upon retrospective assessment of trainees' completed work, with very little use of evidence gained through direct observations. There is no systematic approach to internal verification.

50. There is inadequate tutorial support for both full-time and part-time students. Individual learning plans are not effectively used across the area and the guidance contained in the college tutor information pack is not universally adhered to. There is no system in place to ensure that literacy and numeracy screening test results are available to tutors within an acceptable period of time. Satisfactory individual learning plans, in outline form, are available for modern apprentices and there is a well-organised trainee documentation tracking system. The reviews for painting and decorating work-based learners are good and include action plans for areas of improvement. Work-based learners do not have a personal tutor and there is no system in place to ensure that they all receive the tutorial support that they may require.

51. Employer links are strong and are used to generate additional resources for all students. In painting and decorating, an advisory group meets on a regular basis to discuss developments in the curriculum and review the progress of students. Employers of modern apprentices spoke highly of the college and the achievement of their trainees.

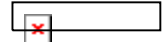
52. Facilities at the Green Lane campus are excellent. This environment stimulates and encourages learning and promotes access for under-represented groups. The level of equipment and work-space allows learners to develop practical competences to industrial standards. The facilities for painting and decorating are particularly good, with an extensive number of well-designed cubicles that provide opportunities for the development of a range of practical skills. There is an excellent IT room on this campus, although it is not adequately ventilated. Domestic facilities for staff and students are also excellent on this site. Learning is restricted on the St Paul's Street campus by the lack of access to good IT resources within classrooms. In brickwork, plumbing and gas, few teachers have a formal teaching qualification.

Leadership and management

53. Overall management of the curriculum area is poor. There are no effective strategies in place to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment report lacks detail, is not self-critical and does not analyse the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are not fully aware of the

student achievement data related to their courses. Information obtained from the college's lesson observation scheme is not used to inform staff development. Staff appraisals are not systematically carried out across the area.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on electrical, electronics and national certificate courses
- good resources
- good links with industry.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on motor vehicle and mechanical engineering courses
- poor theory teaching
- poor attendance and punctuality
- unsatisfactory curriculum management.

Scope of provision

54. A wide range of full-time and part-time courses is offered in mechanical, electrical, electronic and motor vehicle engineering. Courses are well designed to meet the needs of industry and students, and have clear progression routes from levels 1 to 4. There are 339 students aged 16 to 18 and 501 adult students enrolled on engineering courses. There is considerable flexibility in learning opportunities for employed students, both in terms of location and the timing of courses. Work-based learning forms a small part of the provision, with 23 motor vehicle and mechanical engineering trainees. Courses are also provided for approximately 60 pupils from local schools.

Achievement and standards

55. Pass rates on motor vehicle and mechanical engineering courses are low. The majority are significantly below national averages. In 2002, less than a quarter of students who completed the City and Guilds 2280 mechanical production course gained the qualification. During the period 1999 to 2002, the pass rate for the City and Guilds 3830 repair and servicing of road vehicles course was less than 15%. However, pass rates on the national certificate in engineering and City and Guilds electronics and electrical maintenance courses are well above national averages. Retention rates on a significant number of courses are low and declining. The first work-based learners started in 1997, and few trainees have completed the modern apprenticeship framework.

56. Students demonstrate good practical skills. For example, a group of level 3 full-time motor vehicle students individually worked on gearbox disassembly tasks. They were able to locate faulty parts and explain why they were faulty. Full-time students on the City and Guilds level 1 electronics servicing course carry out electronics construction tasks to a good commercial standard. Attendance and punctuality are poor. In two lessons, students arrived up to 45 minutes late, which had a disruptive effect on teaching and learning. The 64% average attendance at lessons during the inspection was typical of the attendance pattern for the whole of the period January to May.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 3830 repair and servicing of road vehicles	1	No. of starts	44	40	*
		% retention	91	78	*
		% pass rate	46	3	*
City and Guilds 2280 mechanical production competencies	2	No. of starts	29	*	30
		% retention	**	*	70
		% pass rate	38	*	24
City and Guilds 2320 electrical and electronic craft competencies	2	No. of starts	81	43	31
		% retention	**	86	100
		% pass rate	96	89	97
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	165	83	67
		% retention	**	70	61
		% pass rate	94	88	83
City and Guilds 3830 repair and servicing of road vehicles	3	No. of starts	40	30	27
		% retention	**	97	100
		% pass rate	14	7	8

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

57. Much teaching is poorly planned. Schemes of work contain little more than topic headings and give no indication of how students will learn and be assessed. In many theory lessons teaching is unimaginative. Teachers spend too much time talking and students' activity is reduced to copying notes from overhead projection transparencies. Poor class management contributes to the lack of learning in some lessons. Interruptions by students' mobile phones sometimes distract the learning

process. In the better lessons, the pace, challenge and variety of activities provide effective learning. In a good lesson on computer maintenance, for example, there was an effective discussion on the importance of earthing, followed by a demonstration by a technician on the correct connection to a plug. Students then carried out this activity, which was carefully checked by the teacher. The lesson ended with a calculation of the protective fuse size and a summary of important points.

58. Assessment practices are inconsistent. A well-planned system of assessments is carried out on the national certificate, City and Guilds 2320 and motor vehicle level 1 courses, but on other courses assessment lacks rigour, with poor feedback to students and inconsistent internal verification.

59. The department has good industrial links, including a strong advisory committee. An exclusive training programme is provided for the electricity supply industry. The curriculum for this course has been successfully adjusted to meet the specific needs of the industry.

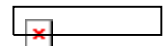
60. Effective additional learning support is provided by a small team of motor vehicle teachers who ensure that students receive this support within a suitable vocational context. Tutorial support is inconsistent. National certificate students are closely monitored for attendance, course achievement and learner support. A similar approach is practised with respect to the first-year students on the motor vehicle course, where there has been a marked improvement in retention rate. There are often no structured reviews of progress or target setting. Students on the electricity supply industry training programme are provided with good e-mail and telephone access to staff.

61. Teachers are well qualified, with appropriate vocational, assessor and teaching qualifications. Some have updated their industrial experience through staff development opportunities. Specialist resources are good. They include a plastic moulding and a vacuum casting facility, computer numerical control (CNC) machines, robots, an industrial grade co-ordinate measuring machine and both prototype and commercial grade rapid prototyping equipment. Students have excellent access to computers and to industry-standard engineering software. Some classrooms require refurbishment and are unsuitable for teaching theory. There is a poor stock of modern training vehicles.

Leadership and management

62. Overall leadership and management of the curriculum area are unsatisfactory. Self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous and managers significantly over-estimate students' achievements. There are no effective strategies to improve poor teaching. Where good practice exists, for example, in successful curriculum development and the introduction of new courses to improve retention and pass rates, this is not shared across the curriculum area.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most level 3 courses

- good teaching on management and professional courses

- effective use of students' work experience to aid learning
- good learning resources.

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge in many lessons
- inadequate monitoring to ensure consistency of assessment practice
- narrow range of business provision at levels 1 and 2 and GCE A level.

Scope of provision

63. The college has broad provision of full-time and part-time courses, ranging from retail and distribution courses at foundation level to higher level management programmes. Approximately two-thirds of the students enrolled on business courses are over the age of 19. Progression routes in accounts are offered at levels 2 to 4, with book-keeping available from levels 1 to 3. General and career-specific secretarial programmes, for example, for students wishing to work within the legal sector, are also offered. A range of bespoke management training for employers is provided through the college's own company, Broadway Training. Whilst level 1 and 2 courses are available in retail and secretarial studies, there is no general business provision at foundation or intermediate level and the GCE A-level business provision is relatively small.

Achievement and standards

64. There is a mixed pattern of achievement on business courses. Most level 3 courses have high pass rates. For example, both the certificate in personnel practice and the NVQ level 3 accountancy programme have pass rates above the national average. In 2001/02, the certificate in management course had a pass rate of 100%. At GCE A level, retention and pass rates are high but the number of students taking the examination has dropped significantly. Pass and retention rates on the AVCE business course are low. Retention rates on the certificate in personnel practice declined significantly in 2001/02, to below the national average. Retention rates for text processing courses are high but pass rates are significantly below the national average. Pass and retention rates on NVQ level 2 business administration courses are around the national average. There are improving retention rates on the NVQ level 2 accounting course but pass rates fell significantly in 2001/02, to below the national average.

65. Overall, the standard of students' work is satisfactory. Students' assignments are well evidenced with primary and secondary research. In business and administration, attainment is generally good, with most students producing business documents to a professional standard. Students are generally good at applying what they have learned to business contexts and are able to interpret business data well. GCE A-level students display a sound knowledge and understanding of concepts but, in some cases, their definition of business terms is imprecise.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Text processing part 1	1	No. of starts	125	90	70
		% retention	93	81	89
		% pass rate	61	77	55
NVQ business administration	2	No. of starts	97	24	**
		% retention	76	***	**
		% pass rate	55	56	**
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	26	19	**
		% retention	54	72	**
		% pass rate	79	92	**
GNVQ advanced business / AVCE business *	3	No. of starts	76	73	60
		% retention	***	69	65
		% pass rate	76	72	48
Certificate in supervisory management	3	No. of starts	36	21	21
		% retention	85	75	86
		% pass rate	86	93	89
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	29	39	30
		% retention	86	92	67
		% pass rate	95	97	95

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

* GNVQ advance business course changed to AVCE business in 2002

** less than 15 starters were enrolled

*** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

66. Teaching on professional and management courses is good. Lessons are well planned. Teachers make effective use of case studies and current business data to enliven discussion. There is generally careful use of questioning to help test students' understanding. Where applicable, students' work experience is used very effectively to aid learning. For example, management students are encouraged to illustrate their understanding of quality assurance concepts with initiatives being undertaken at their place of work. Where students have part-time employment, they are able to make effective use of this to provide illustrative examples in both lessons and in their assignment work. However, in other areas of business teaching, there are few strategies to encourage debate; teachers talk too much and there is insufficient involvement of students in lessons. Many lessons fail to challenge the more able students.

67. Students' work is regularly and accurately assessed on all courses. However, the lack of monitoring of assessed work sometimes leads to inconsistency in the quality of assessment between teachers. Whilst there are a few good examples of assessed work, in too many cases very little guidance is given to help students to improve their work. Grammar and punctuation are not always corrected.

68. There is little use of enrichment within the business curriculum. The part award in business is not used to enrich other curriculum areas of the college and there are few enrichment activities within

GCE A-level programmes. Few full-time students combine AVCE programmes with GCE AS.

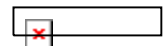
69. Students receive a satisfactory induction programme that includes an introduction to the subjects they are studying. Appropriate support is provided for students with additional learning needs. However, there is inadequate monitoring of students who do not take up this support. Tutorial support is generally good. Students meet regularly with their tutors and in many cases e-mail support is provided for those students who get behind as the result of absence. There is good guidance for those students wishing to progress to HE.

70. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Apart from those teaching GCE A-level courses, most teachers have recent industrial experience. Learning resources are good. Classrooms are spacious and comfortable and have furniture that can be adapted to suit a range of teaching styles. There is a wide range of up-to-date textbooks and journals, powerpoint projectors, video recorders and specialist computer software.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Roles and responsibilities of managers and teachers are clear and well documented. There is effective communication between the curriculum co-ordinators to ensure coherence between different student groups undertaking the same course and between different areas of the business curriculum. There is good implementation of the college's equal opportunities policy. For example, the support materials on secretarial courses were redesigned to promote non-stereotypical views of the course and potential careers options. Course reviews are evaluative, with clear action plans, however, in some, cases there is insufficient focus on improving the teaching and learning. Examination results are regularly analysed but not always in sufficient detail. Target setting and monitoring within the curriculum areas are underdeveloped.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on short IT courses for adults
- good support to integrate students with disabilities into ICT programmes
- broad provision that effectively widens participation.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on full-time courses

- unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient exposure to realistic working practices for students
- inadequate IT resources on the main site
- ineffective use of quality assurance processes to improve teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

72. The college makes broad provision in ICT. Full-time courses include the GNVQ foundation and first and national diplomas. Part-time provision includes start IT, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), CLAIT Plus and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) courses. Part-time courses are delivered at the college's main site and at several community-based outreach centres. About 75% of students are enrolled on part-time courses. The short ICT courses, in particular, are used to engage a wide variety of non-traditional and hard-to-reach students. For example, courses are taught in mosques, a Sikh temple, a women's centre and local community centres. There are clear progression routes for both full-time and part time students from level 1 to level 4. However, there is a lack of specialist ICT or computing courses. Approximately 1,000 students study courses in ICT. Some 82% of full-time students are aged 16 to 18, whilst 93% of part-time students are aged 19 and over.

Achievement and standards

73. Retention and pass rates on most full-time courses are poor and below national averages. For example, in 2001/02, the GNVQ intermediate pass rate was 33% below the national average. Whilst GNVQ foundation retention and pass rates have improved, they are still below national averages. The retention and pass rates for integrated business technology level 2 (IBTII) and for short IT courses for adults, however, are generally high and above national averages.

74. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory. Students have a good understanding of practical computing skills. They gain appropriate and relevant knowledge and are able to apply it well in written assignments. There are good achievements of adult students, some of whom are returning to study after several years. For example, a student aged 77 learnt how to use spreadsheets and had designed a spreadsheet for her personal accounts. Another was using e-mail to contact relatives abroad.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	**	20	27
		% retention	**	58	67
		% pass rate	**	27	53

CLAIT (one year)	1	No. of starts	631	358	279
		% retention	78	86	81
		% pass rate	65	68	60
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	45	81	56
		% retention	56	78	78
		% pass rate	35	15	23
IBT (one year)	2	No. of starts	154	155	137
		% retention	71	80	73
		% pass rate	94	92	91
GNVQ advanced ICT / AVCE ICT *	3	No. of starts	34	53	54
		% retention	***	68	63
		% pass rate	90	57	53
IBT (one year)	3	No. of starts	35	35	51
		% retention	78	68	84
		% pass rate	74	68	60

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

* GNVQ advanced ICT course changed to AVCE ICT in 2002

** course did not run

*** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

75. Too much teaching is dull and does not sufficiently challenge students to learn. Teachers often set tasks without ensuring that the necessary preparatory work had been completed. There are insufficient checks on learning. In one workshop session, two students had no contact with the teacher throughout the session and made little progress. However, teachers in community learning centres are very effective in helping students to gain confidence and students make good progress in developing their ICT skills. For example, in one start IT lesson at a Gujarati centre, the bilingual teacher had prepared additional support materials to meet the particular needs of students whose first language was not English, and had provided practice questions for one student who was preparing for an examination. Effective demonstrations are made to small groups of students to explain key concepts and there is good support for students who choose to work on their own. There are limited opportunities for full-time students to undertake work experience and few other opportunities for students to experience the world of work. For example, there are no ICT-related guest speakers or visits to industry.

76. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Students are aware of the standards required to achieve particular grades and teachers give clear, constructive feedback to enable students to improve. There are regular focus groups, where teachers discuss students' progress and determine actions for those at risk of failing. Internal verification takes place but actions resulting from feedback to assessors are not always followed up.

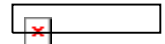
77. Support for students is good. Students with a wide range of disabilities, including hearing impairment and specialist learning needs, are very well supported. Full-time students receive two tutorials per week, one academic and one pastoral. In pastoral tutorials, students work on their progress files, which help them develop a range of employment related skills. They also meet teachers individually to undertake six-weekly reviews to set targets and review progress. These targets, however, are often not measurable or specific.

78. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Few, however, have undergone recent industrial training. The learning resource centre contains a large number of appropriate books and periodicals, which are regularly updated. The computing rooms on the college's main campus are generally fit for purpose but are hot and, at times, uncomfortable. There are few data projectors available. Access to the computer network is generally slow and unreliable. Log-on times can vary between 15 to 45 minutes.

Leadership and management

79. Overall leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Regular, minuted team meetings take place, but actions identified are not tracked to completion. Quality assurance procedures are not implemented effectively. The college's lesson observation scheme is not used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Equal opportunities policies are effectively implemented to address the needs of minority ethnic groups. For example, the college has recruited teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- robust assessment procedures
- effective personal support for students
- good resources to enhance learning.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates
- insufficient emphasis on learning in lessons
- poor provision of key skills

- inadequate additional learning support arrangements.

Scope of provision

80. The college offers a range of courses in hospitality and catering that effectively meets the needs of school leavers and individuals employed in the local hospitality industry. NVQs from level 1 to 3 are offered in food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service. A full-time national diploma in hospitality supervision course provides good progression opportunities to employment and HE. There is significant and successful collaboration with employers to provide training for their employees. NVQs are delivered in the workplace in hospitals, hotels and through the large Ethnic Catering Initiative, which serves and supports the needs of local ethnic catering businesses. A large number of short courses are also provided in food hygiene and for the licensed trade. At the time of the inspection, there was a total of 66 full-time and 66 part-time students enrolled on NVQs and the national diploma. Since September 2002, over 300 short course enrolments had been registered.

Achievement and standards

81. Pass rates on most courses have been broadly constant over the past three years and are at or above the national average. However, there is an unsatisfactory pattern of retention rates. For example, there has been a downward trend over the past three years in the retention rates of students on three of the four major NVQ programmes. By 2002, approximately 30% of students were failing to complete the one-year NVQ level 1 and 2 food preparation programmes. In addition, 40% of national diploma students failed to complete their two-year course finishing in 2002.

82. Students achieve appropriate levels of practical skills. They behave maturely in lessons, develop confidence in operational tasks in cookery and food service, and demonstrate sound practice in handling food commodities and kitchen equipment. National diploma students have good understanding of the principles underlying catering food operations but some of their beverage service skills are underdeveloped. Mature students on part-time food preparation courses demonstrate good knowledge of food commodities and the characteristics of menu items. Attendance rates are good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ catering and hospitality (preparing and serving food)	1	No. of starts	57	44	26
		% retention	86	66	69
		% pass rate	74	69	89
NVQ catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking)	2	No. of starts	15	38	47
		% retention	93	97	74
		% pass rate	100	59	77
NVQ catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking)	3	No. of starts	12	*	19
		% retention	92	*	74
		% pass rate	60	*	85

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

Quality of education and training

83. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In good lessons, teaching is thoroughly planned and learning objectives are shared with students. Teachers successfully use a range of activities, for example, carefully directed questioning and group tasks, to ensure students are fully involved throughout the lesson. In practical lessons, students are introduced to the principles of good organisation, timekeeping and clean working practice. However, teachers planning practical craft lessons rarely identify the learning outcomes they want students to achieve. Consequently, learning opportunities are often lost and the learning needs of individual students are not addressed carefully enough. In both theory and practical lessons, teachers often make insufficient checks on students' learning, particularly at the end of the lesson. There are no effective arrangements for students to gain key skills. A plan to introduce an integrated programme of key skills during the current year has not been implemented.

84. Assessment is regular, well managed and helps students to gain a clear picture of their progress. There is a good framework for the assessment of NVQ programmes. Common documentation is used to successfully guide sampling levels, assessment processes and internal verification.

85. Arrangements for additional learning support are inadequate. The initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills is undertaken early in the academic year but there is a delay, sometimes of several months, before support is started. There is low take-up of learning support by those students identified as needing it.

86. Personal support for students is good. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is highly effective. Students speak well of the accessibility and responsiveness of their tutors. Tutors successfully use the Connexions Progress File as a vehicle to enable students' self-development and careers skills. However, the arrangements to help all students achieve their full potential are insufficiently managed. While staff have regular team meetings to review the progress of each student and prompt, and full action is taken to work with under-performing students, progress reviews with other students often do not start until well into the year and are not frequent.

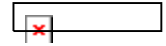
87. There are productive relationships with local employers. An active advisory board constructively contributes to curriculum development. The group has representatives from local hotels and restaurants and from health organisations, and meets four times a year. Students' success is celebrated at popular awards ceremonies, which are also well attended by employer representatives.

88. Teachers are well qualified and draw on their extensive industrial knowledge and experience to provide students with a range of technical information and practical understanding of catering and its contexts. Classrooms have good displays and provide a stimulating learning environment. There are very good specialist kitchen and restaurant resources, which provide students with a good model of professional practice and facilities management. Kitchens are spacious, well equipped and hygienically maintained. However, students have no access in operational areas to computer applications that are now commonly found in the industry.

Leadership and management

89. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good management of staff, operations and student programmes. Students' courses and timetables are well organised. The kitchen and restaurant operational areas are well managed. Staff appraisal is well implemented and leads to productive staff development, with effective links to curriculum development. Good use is made of the weeks set aside for professional development in the summer. The management of the self-assessment process is hampered by inaccuracies in the evidence base. The annual self-assessment cycle is undertaken diligently but uses evidence that overstates retention rates and the quality of teaching and learning. Actions to overcome key weaknesses are not sufficiently well identified.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high and improving pass and retention rates on hairdressing courses
- good teaching in practical lessons
- excellent links with employers in hairdressing
- very good commercial environments for both hairdressing and beauty therapy
- effective monitoring of students' progress.
- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor pass and retention rates on beauty programmes
- hairdressing students not always placed on appropriate level of key skills course
- insufficient access to computers in theory lessons.

Scope of provision

90. The college offers a wide range of qualifications in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Full-time and part-time courses are available in hairdressing from foundation level to level 3. A range of beauty therapy, holistic and sports therapy courses is offered at levels 2 and 3. There is currently no

level 1 provision in beauty therapy for full-time students. There is growing provision for local schools. Full-time students have an extensive enrichment programme to complement their courses. Beauty therapy students are offered additional qualifications such as nail art. Hairdressing students are given the opportunity to undertake African Caribbean and men's hairdressing. At the time of inspection, there were 323 full-time and 577 part-time hairdressing and beauty therapy students. In addition, around 40 work-based learners were working towards an NVQ in hairdressing. Enrolments on some holistic and complementary therapy programmes are declining.

Achievement and standards

91. Pass and retention rates are high on all hairdressing courses. Pass rates on the NVQ level 1 hairdressing course have been well above national averages during the three-year period 2000 to 2002. Students move quickly through their programmes of study and progress well. There are good key skills achievements in ICT. The beauty specialist diploma has a very good pass rate of 93%, with the retention rate outstanding at 100%. However, pass and retention rates on full-time level 2 beauty therapy courses are well below national averages.

92. Students are well motivated and develop good practical skills. They maintain and update their assessment records and evidence portfolios well. Hairdressing students work well together as a team and produced high-fashion cuts with confidence. Holistic therapy students demonstrate a high professional standard. One student carried out a treatment using crystals as an alternate therapy. The student had clear understanding of the treatment and explained the benefits to the client professionally.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	74	87	88
		% retention	84	72	76
		% pass rate	96	91	97
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	33	24	54
		% retention	18*	59	89
		% pass rate	83	85	77
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	51	51	51
		% retention	72	75	67
		% pass rate	65	88	61
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	3	No. of starts	12	27	33
		% retention	58	58	79
		% pass rate	91	88	88
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	44	33	28
		% retention	55	78	61
		% pass rate	86	95	61
Beauty specialist diploma	3	No. of starts	16	15	15
		% retention	94	80	100
		% pass rate	93	67	93

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

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

93. Most teaching is good or better. There is very good teaching in practical lessons on both hairdressing and beauty therapy courses, providing students with high levels of motivation to succeed. In the hairdressing salons, highly trained and experienced teachers ensure that commercial standards are high. Level 3 students are encouraged to run the salon as a business and are given financial targets to achieve. In the best theory lessons, teachers use imaginative methods to gain students' interests and meet their individual learning needs. For example, in one level 3 hairdressing lesson, students were encouraged to research various aspects of health and safety in small groups. They were challenged and inspired by an enthusiastic teacher who provided good support for the weaker students to enable them to explore research techniques. In the few less successful lessons, students are not always engaged in effective learning. In one sports therapy practical lesson, the teacher did not provide students with any structured learning when there was a shortage of clients. Students hung around the reception area while the teacher thought of activities for them to do.

94. Assessment is well managed and carefully monitored. Students are set clear targets for assessment and these are checked and updated on a regular basis. There is a comprehensive internal verification process, in place in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. The process of standardising assessment practice is rigorous and fully compliant with awarding body requirements. However, sports therapy students' written and practical assessment are not effectively managed and teaching staff do not share good assessment practice.

95. There are outstanding partnerships with a national hairdressing company, commercial product supplier and many local employers. Staff and students benefit from the training and promotional events provided through these links. In hairdressing, a large local employer works with subject specialists to develop commercial practice to a high standard. The hairdressing section has Centre of Excellence status with the sector skills council.

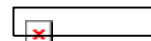
96. Initial assessment for additional learning needs is inconsistent. In beauty therapy, not all students receive a diagnostic test whilst, in hairdressing, initial assessment provided for all full-time students does not result in all students being placed at the appropriate level for key skills support. Students with hearing impairments are well supported by specialist staff. Language support is also provided for students when English is their second language.

97. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. At the time of inspection, one hairdressing teacher has just been awarded a master colour artist certificate. There are excellent commercial salons for hairdressing and beauty therapy. In the hairdressing reception area, students develop their IT skills while, at the same time, completing their assessment and dealing with clients. However, in the beauty therapy salons, the computerised till is not fully operational and does not enable effective learning of up-to-date reception skills. There are some unsatisfactory classrooms for teaching theory-related subjects. There is a lack of computers for students to develop their knowledge of ICT and key skills during theory lessons. Library and learning resources are good. A comprehensive range of college-produced videos is available for students to use. Students also have good access to commercial journals.

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management are good. Programme managers in hairdressing and beauty therapy hold weekly team meetings and discuss quality and provision. Course teams are well informed. The commercial salons are well managed both in terms of business and income generation, and education and training environments. All teaching and support staff are involved in the course review and self-assessment process. However, there are no systems in place for teaching staff to share good practice, particularly in teaching and learning.

Health, social care and childcare



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

Strengths

- very high pass and retention rates
- very effective teaching which meets the needs of individual students
- outstanding support for students
- good progression to related employment and HE
- highly successful and innovative responses to local training needs and to widening participation
- good management of curriculum delivery.

Weaknesses

- insufficient access to computers for students on NVQ early years and care programmes and the CACHE award in caring for young children.

Scope of provision

99. An extensive range of full-time and part-time courses in health, social care and early years is delivered both within the college and in a number of community settings. Much of this provision effectively widens participation by groups traditionally under-represented in FE. Full-time provision in childcare includes the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) entry level certificate in preparation for childcare and the foundation award in caring for children. At level 2, the college offers the CACHE certificate in childcare and education, the first diploma in early years and an NVQ in early years care and education. Level 3 courses include the national diploma in early years, the CACHE diploma in childcare and education, and an NVQ in early years care and education. Provision in health and care includes GNVQ foundation health and social care, first diploma in care and NVQ level 2 care. Level 3 provision includes the AVCE in health and social care, the national diploma in health studies and an NVQ in care at level 3. Students also take a range of additional qualifications including first aid, manual handling and basic food hygiene. Of approximately 1,390 students enrolled, about 970 are part-time. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and most part-time students are over the age of 19.

100. There are excellent and productive links between the college and local health, social and early years sectors. The college has responded swiftly and successfully to government initiatives and training needs in these sectors. Innovative curriculum developments have led to the introduction of new programmes, all of which have recruited well, include the registered care managers award, the certificate in community mental healthcare, CACHE childminders' awards and the CACHE certificate for teaching assistants. Many of these courses are delivered flexibly to meet the personal and shift work needs of students.

Achievement and standards

101. Pass rates are very high on most courses and consistently above average on the CACHE certificate in childcare and education and on all NVQ level 3 care and early years courses. In 2001/02, the pass rate on the national diploma in early years was 100%. Retention rates are high on most full-time and all part-time programmes. Effective action has been taken to improve the retention rate on the GNVQ foundation course to above the national average. There is very good progression by full-time students to higher level courses and to related employment. In 2001/02, 70% of GNVQ foundation students progressed to level 2 courses and 96% of AVCE students progressed to HE.

102. Students' work is of a very high standard. At all levels, NVQ portfolios are well organised and many are of exceptionally high quality. They contain a wide range of appropriate evidence to meet the assessment requirements. Most students make good use of ICT in the presentation of their work. In one lesson, entry level students used computers to produce attractive information cards depicting 'healthy snacks for expectant mothers'. Students on many courses make skilful use of the Internet as a key research tool in the preparation of assignments. For example, AVCE students were able to obtain up-to-date secondary data for their research projects on a range of vocationally related topics including the use of placebos in medical research, abortion and the education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation, health and social care	1	No. of starts	15	*	*
		% retention	47	*	*
		% pass rate	71	*	*
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	35	35	39
		% retention	57	83	90
		% pass rate	100	93	97
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	36	35	37
		% retention	75	77	92
		% pass rate	84	85	76
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	15	24	34
		% retention	80	75	82
		% pass rate	83	41	100

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

Quality of education and training

103. Teaching and learning are very effective in meeting the needs of individual students and

challenging them to reach their full potential. Schemes of work are detailed and very well focused. Lesson plans clearly identify the specific learning and support needs of students. Teachers use their vocational experience well to make links between theory and practice. For example, in a foundation level childcare lesson concerning the weaning of babies, after detailed class discussion about some case study material, students were asked to reply individually to a hypothetical letter from a concerned parent. This tested the students' knowledge and understanding in an interesting and effective way. In a GNVQ foundation lesson, there was sensitive and productive support for students with specific learning needs. Students worked in small groups, carefully supported by teachers and learning support assistants, to identify potential fire safety hazards in a range of settings. They listened carefully to each other and recorded notes on teacher-prepared handouts that allowed for short answers or extended writing according to individual ability. There is very good integration of ICT on most programmes enabling many students to develop their IT skills to a high level. Students on full-time courses enjoy an effective work experience programme covering a broad range of care settings. There are good working relationships with work placement providers.

104. Assessment procedures are good. Students' work is very carefully marked with clear guidance for improvement. The tracking of NVQ programmes is particularly well organised. The recording of progress and achievements is clear to students, assessors and internal verifiers and is used effectively as the basis for action planning and review.

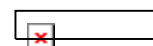
105. There is outstanding academic and pastoral support for students. Additional learning needs on full-time and part-time courses are carefully and successfully identified through an initial screening process and the support received is very effective. Signing support for profoundly deaf students is excellent. Regular, well-structured tutorials help to provide impressive personal and academic support for students. Their progress is regularly and systematically monitored and tutorial records are detailed and complete.

106. Teachers are well qualified and have extensive experience in a wide range of health, care and early years services. Classrooms are generally well suited to course delivery. Craft rooms are well resourced for practical vocational work. Students on NVQ early years and care programmes and on the foundation level caring for young children course have inadequate access to computers.

Leadership and management

107. Curriculum management is very good. Courses are very well organised, with imaginative and innovative development between course teams. Team meetings are regular, minutes are clear and agreed action is monitored carefully. The writing of the self-assessment report is a team activity. It is evaluative and is used effectively as a driver for progress in team meetings. There are well-planned opportunities for staff development and professional updating. For example, some teachers have recently updated and extended their professional practice through planned staff development activities including working with a travellers' support group, work shadowing in a primary school with a particular focus on the literacy and numeracy strategy and a placement in a mental health setting.

Performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on entry and level 2 courses

- good development of students' practical skills in lessons
- effective external partnerships to enrich learning
- wide range of provision.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on the national diploma in performing arts course
- poor punctuality and attendance
- inadequate accommodation and dated resources
- poor delivery of key skills.

Scope of provision

108. A wide and expanding range of courses is offered in performing arts and media. There are established vocational pathways in media, music and performing arts from level 2 to level 4. Entry level courses have been introduced to meet the demands of students with additional learning needs, although there is presently no level 1 provision. Supporting studies include drama enrichment, which has been popular across the college. GCE AS film studies, dance, music and theatre studies are also offered as additional qualifications to support students' main programmes of study. However, the take up of some of these additional qualifications is low. The curriculum profile is developing to meet specific local needs and to widen participation among people who might not otherwise consider taking part in education or the arts. Of particular note, is the disc jockey evening course, which has been introduced to meet the needs of adults in the community. At the time of inspection, there were 516 students enrolled on performing arts and media courses, 79% of whom were full time and aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

109. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate media and communication course improved significantly in 2001/02 to above the national average. In 2001/02, there was a 100% pass rate for GCE A-level film studies. However, there are declining pass rates on first diploma performing arts and GNVQ advanced and AVCE media and communication courses. Students who complete the national diploma in performing arts achieve satisfactorily, although retention rates for this course have been below the national average for the last two years. Retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate media

and communication and first diploma in performing arts courses are good and improving. There has been 100% retention rate on the entry level course for the past three years.

110. Students are confident in their approach to practical work and successfully tackle a wide variety of material of different periods and styles. They collaborate effectively with one another during group work. Music students conscientiously use their instrumental lessons to maximise and refine their technical skills. In a bass guitar lesson, students were practising complicated rhythmic phrases, paying particular attention to detail. Students perform well in relation to their prior education and achievements. Many progress to related arts courses in HE and to employment. A pattern of poor attendance and punctuality impacts significantly on learning. Development of group projects, scheduled assessments and planned delivery of the curriculum is continually being affected.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate media and communication	2	No. of starts	*	18	20
		% retention	*	76	90
		% pass rate	*	54	78
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	41	32	38
		% retention	86	88	92
		% pass rate	87	79	72
GNVQ advanced media and communication	3	No. of starts	16	38	28
		% retention	100	68	64
		% pass rate	88	76	72
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	75	70	57
		% retention	78	66	57
		% pass rate	76	83	83

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

Quality of education and training

111. Most teaching is satisfactory, whilst some is good or better. In the better lessons, learning objectives are clear, teachers ask appropriate questions to promote students' understanding and provoke lively discussion. Once students have acquired the necessary basic skills they are given more freedom and challenged to explore their own ideas creatively and raise the standard of their work. In a music technology lesson, the tutor carefully nurtured individual creativity as students composed innovative sound tracks. In less effective lessons learning activities lack structure and clarity and students become disengaged. There is little evidence of detailed cross-referencing of key skills within core programmes and opportunities are lost for gathering evidence and embedding this within the curriculum. Students enrolled on music courses have been without key skills lessons for some of the year.

112. Teachers use an appropriate range of methods to assess students' performance. In lessons, clear verbal guidance helps students improve their performance and technical skills. Students are also encouraged to complete peer assessments. Written feedback on assignments is informative but sometimes lacks detail. The scheduling of some assignments is not well planned and co-ordinated.

113. Teachers are sensitive to the varying needs of students and provide appropriate help in

lessons, tutorials and on an informal basis. Initial assessments are administered but follow-up support and monitoring are poor. Individual learning plans lack specific targets to inform learning. Students on performing arts courses have regular tutorials, but formal tutorial support is less consistent in other subject areas, such as music and media.

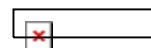
114. There are good partnership arrangements with the community and external organisations that lead to worthwhile learning experiences. Teachers take performance art into areas of deprivation through the 'basic skills through the arts' project. Media students have their own radio station and have been involved in KIC (kids in communications) FM, which broadcasts to the West Midlands area. Other activities include promotional videos, touring performing arts projects and music gigs.

115. Teachers are well qualified. Some are able to use their experience as practising artists to motivate students and introduce them to up-to-date industrial knowledge. Specialist accommodation and resources are inadequate. Much specialist equipment is no longer in keeping with industry standards. For example, there are no digital cameras in media. Access to some specialist studios and the refectory is through the main performance space, which is disruptive for lessons and productions. There is no soundproofing throughout the building and the ventilation in the media studio is noisy. Some rooms are in a poor decorative state and are not conducive to learning.

Leadership and management

116. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Most provision is coordinated efficiently. There are effective informal communication and good working relationships between staff. Mid-term reviews and self-assessment reports pay insufficient attention to analysing student achievement data and there is a lack of detailed action planning to bring about improvement. The lesson observation scheme does not inform staff development and curriculum management.

Visual arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- much good teaching
- high standard of students' work
- rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress
- good range of course provision.

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on AVCE, GCE AS and GNVQ foundation courses
- low pass rates on AVCE and GNVQ intermediate courses
- underdeveloped links with employers.

Scope of provision

117. An extensive range of courses is delivered in visual arts from entry level to level 3. Entry level courses in creative independence and creative art and leather provide good progression routes to level 1 programmes. There are courses at levels 1 and 2 in creative skills including embroidery, millinery, upholstery, interior design, fashion, soft furnishings and art and design. Level 3 courses include: national diplomas in design, interior design, leather goods design, and fashion and clothing; GCE A-level fine art; an AVCE in art and design; and the diploma in foundation studies. The college also offers specialist full-time and part-time courses in leatherwork, including City and Guilds courses in saddlery and leather and fashion accessories. At the time of inspection, there were 327 full-time students, of whom 205 were aged 16 to 18, and 523 part-time students, of whom 120 are aged 16 to 18 years.

Achievement and standards

118. Pass rates are high on many courses. Most level 1 and 2 courses, with the exception of GNVQ intermediate art and design, are above the relevant national averages. Pass rates on the national diploma in design and GCE AS and A-level courses are also significantly above national averages. In 2001/02, the pass rate for the national diploma in design (graphics) was 100%. In 2001/02, 55% of students completing GCE A-level courses achieved grades A or B. Over a third of completing students on the diploma in foundation studies also achieved high grade passes. Pass rates on AVCE art and design, however, were below the national average in 2001/02.

119. Retention rates on most entry, level 1 and level 2 courses are high and above national averages, although they are low on the GNVQ foundation course. There are high retention rates on national diploma in design and diploma in foundation studies courses, but on the AVCE art and design and GCE AS fine art courses retention rates are below the national average. There is good progression to HE from national diploma in graphics and diploma in foundation studies courses.

120. Students produce work of a very high standard. They develop good practical skills across a wide range of materials and techniques and apply these confidently. National diploma in graphics students produce high-quality art work on 'live' briefs set by external clients, such as local theatre companies. Designs produced by fashion students display originality, are very well planned and are made to a high standard. Students are able to use specialist equipment and resources confidently and effectively. In one diploma in foundation studies lesson, students used visual resources to give a comprehensive and impressive presentation on artists they had researched. They were able to

analyse and discuss advanced conceptual issues about the work of Escher and Sol de Witt.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation art and design	1	No. of starts	19	*	16
		% retention	56	*	56
		% pass rate	70	*	89
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	18	25	23
		% retention	86	84	91
		% pass rate	83	67	63
GCE AS fine art	3	No. of starts	29	44	*
		% retention	100	91	*
		% pass rate	70	98	*
AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	49	32	41
		% retention	74	74	65
		% pass rate	67	55	72
Diploma in foundation studies, art and design	3	No. of starts	45	39	50
		% retention	87	84	88
		% pass rate	97	94	84

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

Quality of education and training

121. Much teaching is good or very good. Lessons are well planned and have clearly specified learning objectives matched to the needs of individual students. Teachers are enthusiastic and challenging in their approach and use a range of techniques to successfully involve students in the learning process and extend their knowledge and understanding. There is particularly good one-to-one tuition in saddlery. In one lesson, students were given individual targets for bridle and harness work. The teacher offered good levels of support including practical demonstration where necessary. There were regular checks on the progress made by each student, all of whom produced work of high quality. Teachers are good at encouraging students to evaluate their own work. For example, in one lesson, students were encouraged to analyse critically the quality of their GCE AS portfolio. Key skills are taught through assignment work and discrete lessons, but lesson plans do not identify key skills learning outcomes sufficiently.

122. The quality and accuracy of the assessment process are very good. Assignment briefs are well written and reflect good professional practice. Accompanying project booklets give clear guidance on assessment criteria. Students receive regular feedback on their progress. Teachers set clear targets that help students to improve their work and monitor them well through assessment booklets and course tracking grids. There are good arrangements for internal verification.

123. Students with hearing impairments and other disabilities receive good levels of specialist learning support on all courses. Initial interviews and initial assessment diagnose potential literacy and numeracy requirements well. Students receive regular tutorial support. Personal tutors keep good records of the progress of their tutees. Regular liaison with parents engenders trust and effective working partnerships to tackle attendance and punctuality issues.

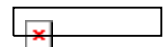
124. Provision in visual arts is enhanced by a wide range of community partnerships. These include effective work with the New Art Gallery Walsall and involvement in the 'basic skills through art' project. However, there are limited opportunities for students on vocational courses to engage with the visual arts industry. For example, there are few opportunities for work experience or course links with employers.

125. Teachers are well qualified and suitably experienced. However, there are insufficient opportunities for staff to update skills in their specialist areas through contact with employers or commercial practice. Students have good access to ICT resources and industry-standard software for design. Accommodation is generally good, but some studios are in need of refurbishment; they are often crowded, which prevents students from working effectively. The European Design Centre provides a large range of art and design texts, journals, slides, CD-ROMs and videos.

Leadership and management

126. Leadership and management are good. Course leaders are well organised and committed to ensuring that courses meet the needs of their students. Course team meetings are held weekly and communication is effectively disseminated across teams. Course leaders carefully monitor the quality of teacher assessments within their team. The self-assessment report has clear and realistic targets for retention and pass rates and effectively drives the area development plan. The report and action taken are reviewed twice a year. Students' and other stakeholders' views are not sufficiently used to inform curriculum area planning. The college's lesson observation scheme does not inform staff development adequately.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates for GCE A-level psychology and sociology and GCSE psychology
- good variety of teaching methods that actively involve all learners
- effective widening participation strategies that enhance progression opportunities for adults.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on access to HE courses
- weak initial assessment

- unsatisfactory use of target-setting tutorials for GCE A-level students.

Scope of provision

127. The college offers full-time courses in sociology, psychology, law, geography and history at GCE AS and A2. GCSE provision is offered in history, psychology and sociology. Humanities subjects also form a substantial part of the access to HE course. At the time of inspection, there were around 250 students enrolled on GCE A-level courses and 27 on GCSE courses. The majority of students on these courses are aged 16 to 18. The access to HE programme attracts over 200 students, all of whom are aged 19 and over.

Achievement and standards

128. Retention and pass rates for GCE A-level psychology and sociology and GCSE psychology are good and above national averages. Pass and retention rates on GCE AS sociology declined between 2001 and 2002 and are below the national average. Retention rates in GCE AS history and law have exceeded national averages for the last two years. Pass rates for both subjects are around the national average. The pass rate for GCE A-level law improved significantly in 2001/02 to above the national average. The number of access students who leave the course early is too high. In 2001/02, 38% of students withdrew from the course before completion.

129. Students are well motivated and most work industriously. The performance of GCE A-level students in relation to their prior achievement at GCSE is at least satisfactory. Adult students generally fulfil their potential. Geography students have the ability to interpret statistical concepts well; on field trips they gather data effectively and are able to interpret it in the light of theoretical approaches. Psychology and sociology students show good understanding of key concepts and research methods. Access students use source material very effectively. They handle class discussion and debate particularly well. Many are successful in gaining university places.

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	15	*	20
		% retention	67	*	70
		% pass rate	70	*	86
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	**	63	67
		% retention	**	61	75
		% pass rate	**	92	74
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	**	41	32
		% retention	**	72	66
		% pass rate	**	79	62
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	61	46	25
		% retention	***	54	92
		% pass rate	47	70	87
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	28	23	19
		% retention	71	39	100

		% pass rate	60	75	84
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	105	127	145
		% retention	70	***	62
		% pass rate	62	***	75

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

** course did not run

*** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

130. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In the best lessons, teachers make use of a wide variety of appropriate teaching methods that involve all learners. IT is used effectively to aid students' understanding in some lessons. In a GCE A-level history revision class about the Weimar Republic, a pair of students were asked to re-order a set of randomly organised passages on the computer to produce a coherent examination essay. The exercise helped students to identify the key points necessary for a good examination answer. In a GCE A-level law lesson, the teacher made very effective use of fictitious legal cases to illustrate the offences of conspiracy and criminal attempt. In one exercise, students were asked to read the facts of a fictitious case and to discuss whether the offences of conspiracy and criminal attempt were evident. Students responded enthusiastically to the activity and correctly identified the legal points, as well as the supporting case law and statute law. The activity led to a valuable discussion and revision of students' previous learning. In weaker lessons, there is insufficient variety of approach and teaching is not sufficiently demanding.

131. Assessment of students' work is generally satisfactory. Teachers write helpful comments on assignment frontsheets, but comments on students' work are insufficiently detailed and do not always tell students how they can improve. Marking and grading of work are accurate. Internal moderation of access to HE students' work meets awarding body requirements. There is little internal moderation of the assignment work of GCE A-level students.

132. Full time students aged 16 to 18 are offered opportunities to study appropriate key skills at level 2 or level 3. However, many students do not regard key skills as relevant to their main programme of study and attendance at key skills lessons is poor. Tutorials for GCE A-level students do not set challenging targets to help students improve and make progress in their studies. Targets are often vague and completion dates are rarely identified. Teachers of GCE A-level students are provided with information about their students' previous qualifications, but this information is not used systematically to improve performance. Tutorial attendance is unsatisfactory.

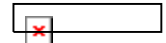
133. Initial assessment of students is weak. Procedures for interviewing and guiding GCE A-level students are incomplete. Students who apply in writing are offered interviews but students who enrol in person are not always formally interviewed before being accepted on the programme. Access to HE students are offered a place on the course following an interview and a short piece of writing. The interview notes and comments made on the students' writing exercise are insufficiently thorough. The college recognises that there is insufficient initial assessment of access students' numeracy or IT abilities and has redesigned the course. GCE A-level students undertake an initial assessment when they begin their studies. However, additional needs identified as a result of this process are not always acted upon.

134. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Some teaching rooms are equipped with computers and with interactive whiteboards. Access students have their own base room. The library is well stocked with an appropriate range of resources for humanities subjects.

Leadership and management

135. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between teachers is good. Staff are appraised annually, and training and development opportunities are good. Effective strategies for widening participation by adult students have been developed. Around 25% of students on the access programme are from minority ethnic backgrounds and over 75% live in areas of high deprivation. Self-assessment lacks rigour. Many strengths in the self-assessment report were overstated and weaknesses in the provision for students aged 16 to 18 were not identified. The college's lesson observation scheme is not used effectively to improve teaching and learning.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on modern foreign languages and first certificate in English courses
- well-planned, effective teaching within modern foreign languages
- good personal support for students
- wide range of provision
- good resources for modern foreign languages.

Weaknesses

- falling pass rates for GCSE English language
- insufficient use of target setting and value added data
- ineffective curriculum management.

Scope of provision

136. The college offers very wide provision in English and modern foreign languages. English provision includes GCSE English language and GCE AS and A-level English and communications. English is also a core subject in the access to HE courses. The provision in modern foreign languages covers European languages, Greek, Arabic and Punjabi. Courses are available from entry level to level 3. Most courses in foreign languages lead to Open College Network (OCN) qualifications. English as a foreign language (EFL) is also taught at levels 2 and 3. Enrolments are steadily increasing in modern foreign languages and EFL. There are 320 students studying languages and 100 studying EFL. However, enrolments on GCSE, GCE AS and GCE A-level English and communications courses have declined since 2001 and there are currently 100 students on these courses. Apart from on GCSE and GCE courses, the majority of students are aged 19 or over.

Achievement and standards

137. There is no consistent pattern of achievement by students across courses and subjects. In 2000/01 and 2001/02, pass rates for GCE AS French, German and communications were above the national average. There are high and improving pass rates on first certificate in English courses. Retention rates on GCSE French and English language courses are also high. However, both retention and pass rates for GCE AS English literature declined in 2000/01 and 2001/02 to below the national averages. Pass rates for GCSE English language are significantly below the national average.

138. Students are generally well motivated and enthusiastic. Many demonstrate good levels of attainment in their oral and written work. In English, students are able to write coherently and research independently. GCE AS communication skills students have a good grasp of concepts and are able to hold stimulating discussions using complex vocabulary. Access students demonstrate good skills in independent research and often produced exciting pieces of work that stimulate provocative discussion in lessons. The progress of GCE A-level French students in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE French	2	No. of starts	19	*	16
		% retention	63	*	25
		% pass rate	36	*	73
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	62	58	90
		% retention	85	86	90
		% pass rate	30	65	41
First certificate in English	2	No. of starts	16	18	28
		% retention	**	78	79
		% pass rate	36	71	90
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	***	36	19
		% retention	***	81	68
		% pass rate	***	90	77

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

* less than 15 starters were enrolled

** data unreliable

*** course did not run

Quality of education and training

139. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers have good working relationships with students. In the best modern foreign language lessons, extensive use of the language being taught enables students to develop above average speaking skills. In one well-structured Spanish lesson, the teacher used a logical sequence of activities and simple cue cards to ensure students gained ample practice in a variety of ways. A feature of many better lessons is activity in pairs and groups, closely monitored and managed by the teacher, in which students explore ideas, use complex concepts and practise their vocabulary. In an Italian lesson, the teacher planned a simple game and students practised vocabulary enthusiastically. In a GCSE English lesson, students applied the planning strategies they had developed to prepare practice examination answers on a newspaper article. Students were articulate and passionate about the issues they had identified. In the better EFL lessons, teachers skilfully manage lively discussions in which students defend their views using complex structures and vocabulary to persuade others. In the less successful lessons, students have limited opportunities to interact with each other and the development of their ideas and communication skills is inadequate. A significant number of lessons use repetitive questioning which does not extend or deepen students' learning. In English, there is an over-reliance on worksheets, which are not always used effectively to support or develop students' comprehension and appreciation of texts. In a small number of modern foreign language lessons, students' ability to use the language they are learning was limited by unimaginative teaching strategies and over-use of English.

140. Students receive regular written and oral feedback, often with helpful comments, which show students how to improve. The majority of formative assessment is thorough, regular, and valued by students. However, teachers do not set minimum target grades for students and there is no action-planning to support students' improvement.

141. There is insufficient formal initial assessment of students' basic and key skills needs. A minority of students do not have the literacy or communication skills to meet the demands of their course. There is insufficient take-up of the additional learning support available.

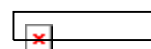
142. Personal support for students is good. Students appreciate the care and individual attention they receive from their teachers. There is particularly good support for students who are deaf. This includes the provision of note-taker and interpreter support in lessons to enable students' full participation and learning.

143. Most teachers are well qualified. Foreign language assistants contribute effectively to teaching and learning. Resources are good and include a newly created, well-resourced languages resource centre. Most accommodation in the area lacks subject identity, with only a few examples of wall displays containing students' work and stimulus material to support learning. Two classrooms have interactive whiteboards, which are used well to develop students' presentation skills.

Leadership and management

144. Overall curriculum management is ineffective. Although informal communication between staff is good, there is a lack of formal meetings involving all relevant staff. Individual teams work co-operatively, but there is inadequate sharing of good practice, resources and dissemination of ideas across these teams. There is insufficient analysis of data to inform planning and development of the area as a whole.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- high achievement for students at pre-entry and entry level
- very good teaching and learning
- good enrichment opportunities
- very good community links and response to community needs
- very good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient integration of literacy and numeracy at pre-entry and entry level
- insufficient use of individual learning plans to inform lesson planning
- some inappropriate classroom accommodation
- lack of rigour in self-assessment.

Scope of provision

145. The college offers a range of courses from pre-entry and entry level in skills for working life and life skills, as well as NVQ level 1 and 2 catering for adults and young people. Other provision includes preliminary cookery, food hygiene and floristry courses, school link and specialist work. There are some excellent community courses providing opportunities for under-represented groups to gain access to learning. These groups include students who have acquired brain injury, students from a wide range of ethnic background and deaf and hearing impaired students. Courses are available throughout the week and on Saturdays at the college and in community venues. At the time of the inspection, there were 101 full-time and 54 part-time students. Full-time students can choose to participate in some very good enrichment programmes and the wide range of vocational taster provision offered elsewhere in the college ensures that there are good opportunities for these students to progress to further courses. For example, students can participate in the Duke of

Edinburgh Award and have the opportunity to attend residential courses and develop musical skills.

Achievement and standards

146. The achievements of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. Courses are carefully matched to individuals' needs. Students make good progress and are successful in achieving their learning goals. Practical courses provide opportunities to train in a real working environment and enhance the learning experience, allowing students to develop employability skills. Pass rates on these courses have been high for the past three years and most students gain additional qualifications to support their main qualification. Students benefit from the development of personal skills that are integral to their programmes, and improvements in confidence are noteworthy. Some students have formed a group that performs signed dance and singing routines. A student with complex learning difficulties was able to use computer images effectively to show evidence of previous work in the creative arts and drama workshop. Regular celebrations of achievement are a highly prized part of the college experience.

Quality of education and training

147. Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, students are fully engaged in a variety of appropriate activities. They participate fully in learning tasks, concentrate hard, make mature responses and use ICT to support their learning. In a personal development skills lesson, students were using a variety of sources, including the Internet, to identify the cost of items to equip a bed-sitting room. The students were working to a pre-set budget and much good learning was observed in this lesson. In a communications lesson, the teacher used a range of materials and activities to engage the students and to check their understanding. The lesson was vibrant and students were developing their literacy skills. Students have access to the curriculum areas of hospitality and catering, carpentry and leatherwork to develop practical skills and techniques. In catering, these arrangements enable students to progress to nationally accredited vocational provision. The training kitchen provides a realistic work environment where meals are produced for sale in the college's coffee shop and sent out to the college nursery. A small minority of lessons are slow paced and dull. These lessons are poorly planned and unrelated to students' individual learning plans. The targets set for students are not specific enough and they are not shared properly with them. There is insufficient integration of literacy and numeracy and students with poor literacy skills are required to spend large amounts of time and effort on tasks that they do not understand or with outcomes they do not relate to.

148. Many students receive a degree of additional support in the classroom to try and meet their needs. However, a small number of the support staff reduce the opportunities for learning by completing tasks for students, rather than allowing them to complete at their own pace.

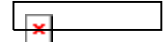
149. There is a core team of well-qualified and experienced staff. Teaching and support staff are enthusiastic and dedicated, and between them they have a range of specialist skills appropriate for the differing needs of their students. The lack of permanent support staff reduces the continuity and effectiveness of learner support. This also has an adverse effect on mentoring for new members of the team who lack expertise in teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching and learning sometimes take place in inappropriate classroom accommodation. These classrooms are uninspiring and do not have evidence of students' work on display. For example, students following a food hygiene course were being taught in a science laboratory. The room did not provide opportunity for practical demonstration of essential hygiene practices. In another instance, a large room was divided into four teaching areas using furniture and a flimsy sliding partition. This provided inadequate, noisy and disruptive teaching and learning environments.

Leadership and management

150. Leadership and management are good. The college strategy has been effectively managed to develop a range of pre-entry and entry level programmes that is responsive to and meets the needs of individual students. Managers have established effective links with a number of local secondary and special schools, which help students transfer easily from school to college. Staff work closely

with social services and local community organisations, including local faith groups, to provide and make provision for students in local community centres, Mencap residential centres and facilities for individuals with acquired brain injury. All staff are involved in the quality assurance of their courses and undertake annual course reviews and self-assessment. The self-assessment report, however, lacks rigour and does not identify key weaknesses that have a direct impact upon learning opportunities for students. Internal lesson observations are not used effectively to improve the performance of some teachers.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- highly motivated students who achieve well
- much good teaching
- effective widening participation from under-represented groups
- excellent dyslexia support
- successful implementation of new accreditation.

Weaknesses

- low take-up of additional support
- ineffective use of individual learning plans.

Scope of provision

151. The college offers a wide range of programmes in literacy and numeracy. The majority of the 950 students enrolled on primary literacy and numeracy courses are aged 19 and over. In addition, over 200 students attend literacy and numeracy courses at 12 community venues. Provision is

available throughout the week, on Saturdays and some Sundays. During the current year, the 'Walsall workers' European Social Fund programme has 176 employees attending literacy and numeracy courses on company premises. Literacy and numeracy lessons are also provided on the work-based learning gateway life skills programme for students aged 16 to 18. Additional support in literacy and numeracy is provided in the classroom, individually or to small groups of students undertaking key skills as part of their vocational course. Around 280 students receive additional support in literacy and numeracy.

152. There has been a significant widening of participation from under-represented groups. For example, recently arrived qualified nurses from Pakistan attend the literacy and language classes and an effective mentoring programme has been developed which trains literacy and numeracy students to act as a support to other students. Managers, teachers and support staff in the area closely reflect the population mix of Walsall.

Achievement and standards

153. Students on primary literacy and numeracy courses are highly motivated and achieve well. They are very positive about their studies and personal progress and are able to do things outside of college that they would not have been capable of doing prior to joining the course. This is particularly true in the case of recently arrived asylum seekers. Students improve their literacy, language and numeracy, particularly at entry level. There have been successful outcomes for most students who have undertaken the new national qualifications at entry level in literacy and numeracy. Students on primary literacy and numeracy courses progress to further studies or employment.

154. Pass rates on key skills communications and application of number courses are low, ranging from 10% to 28% at level 1, to 13% to 33% at level 2. However, new management arrangements for key skills delivery have been introduced and pass rates have improved significantly in some curriculum areas during the current year, notably in painting and decorating.

Quality of education and training

155. Most teaching is good or better. Teachers know their students well and prepare their lessons effectively to meet students' individual needs. They have good knowledge of the national curriculum framework for literacy and numeracy and use soundly devised lesson plans and schemes of work, which are mapped to the new curricula. Clear explanations, using carefully chosen language and step by step illustrations, help students to progress well. In one literacy lesson for night shift workers from a local factory, the teacher successfully used a range of learning activities to help sustain concentration and motivation. There was particularly good use of familiar but deliberately inaccurate picture captions to enable students to explore and correct English words in an enjoyable and effective way. In good numeracy lessons, students are encouraged to puzzle things out and talk through the solutions with each other and to assess their own learning.

156. There are well-documented procedures for the initial screening of all students. However, the use of individual learning plans is ineffective. They are not used to record learning undertaken, targets or future plans for individual progress. For example, in an additional support lesson, students who were making good progress were unable to record their success at the time as the learning plans were kept with their personal tutor and formally reviewed only once a term. Some vocational students who need additional literacy and numeracy support are not receiving it.

157. Students are well supported through their tutorials and through contact with committed and well-informed staff. There is excellent support for students with dyslexia. For example, a student who had not been previously diagnosed with dyslexia and had been disaffected with school, made good progress on her NVQ course when appropriate support was given as a result of proper diagnosis.

158. Resources for learning are good. Most lessons take place in a large learning resource area where additional resources are freely available to extend the learning when necessary. Students have good access to ICT within the centre and are developing IT skills alongside their literacy and numeracy skills. On occasion, some disruption of teaching and learning takes place within the very

busy learning area because of the noise of other classes, especially if a video is being used.

Leadership and management

159. Leadership and management within the literacy and numeracy curriculum area are good. Courses are well managed with regular team meetings. Strategies for improvement of literacy and numeracy support through the key skills or basic skills programmes have been introduced but, at the time of inspection, not all vocational areas were fully participating. Managers and teachers show a commitment to continuous professional development through participation in a number of national pilots and curriculum initiatives. Most staff have undertaken the national core curriculum training in literacy and numeracy, and there are well-developed, detailed plans for staff to undertake the professional qualifications for basic skills teachers.

Part D: College data

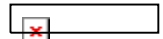
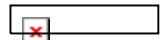


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2001/02

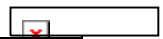


Level	16-18	19+
1	37	28
2	40	27
3	20	16
4/5	1	3
Other	2	25
Total	100	100 *

Source: provided by the college in 2003

* figures have been rounded, hence they may not total 100%

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	681	287	4
Land-based provision	8	41	0
Construction	499	941	6
Engineering, technology and manufacture	570	905	6

Business administration, management and professional	672	1,791	11
Information and communications technology	753	3,623	19
Retailing, customer service and transportation	56	24	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	391	706	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	332	575	4
Health, social care and public services	649	1,424	9
Visual and performing arts and media	819	893	7
Humanities	365	499	4
English, languages and communication	1,134	570	7
Foundation programmes	2,097	1,912	17
Total	9,026	14,191	100 *

Source: provided by the college in Spring 2003

* figures have been rounded, hence they may not total 100%

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	726	775	1,164	1,752	1,837	1,903
	Retention rate (%)	79	75	79	83	80	81
	National average (%)	77	78	79	74	77	80
	Pass rate (%)	63	67	58	62	68	58
	National average (%)	57	63	65	58	66	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,457	1,526	1,296	2,054	2,131	1,812
	Retention rate (%)	84	78	78	82	81	82
	National average (%)	73	74	74	75	77	78
	Pass rate (%)	66	64	61	64	69	64
	National average (%)	63	67	67	62	65	65
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,114	1,472	1,352	1,646	2,023	1,358

	Retention rate (%)	79	83	73	76	80	74
	National average (%)	75	75	74	76	78	77
	Pass rate (%)	74	73	69	66	69	67
	National average (%)	66	68	69	61	64	66
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	21	30	*	315	367	112
	Retention rate (%)	86	97	*	89	86	84
	National average (%)	78	77	*	83	84	83
	Pass rate (%)	79	88	*	65	81	62
	National average (%)	57	68	*	50	51	48

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1997/8-1998/9: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for 1999/2000: provided by the college in spring 2001.

** less than 15 starters were enrolled*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	60	31	9	103
Level 2 (intermediate)	56	39	5	64
Level 1 (foundation)	52	34	14	50
Other sessions	67	27	6	48
Totals	59	33	8	265

