

Redbridge College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Business and administration](#)

[Computing and information technology](#)

[Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Visual arts, media and music](#)

[Sociology, psychology and law](#)

[English for speakers of other languages](#)

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

[Part D: College data](#)

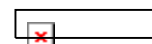
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

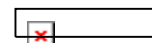
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

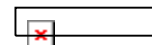


Name of college:	Redbridge College
Type of college:	General further education college
Principal:	Ruth Durbridge
Address of college:	Little Heath Romford Essex RM6 4XT
Telephone number:	020 8548 7400
Fax number:	020 8599 8224
Chair of governors:	Derek Mullett
Unique reference number:	130453
Name of reporting inspector:	Kenneth L Jones HMI
Dates of inspection:	19-23 May 2003

Part A: Summary



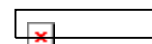
Information about the college



Redbridge College is a small further education (FE) college providing education and training for some 4,150 students. Only 60% of students are resident in the borough with the remainder coming from Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Essex, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. Approximately 65% of students at the college are from minority ethnic groups compared to 34% in the local population. Overall, some 60% of students at the college are considered to live in disadvantaged areas. Half the students at the college are following full-time courses and a third are aged 16 to 18. The educational achievements of school-leavers in the area are generally above the national average. Post-16 education opportunities in the area include a variety of models such as selective secondary schools, 11 to 18 non-selective schools and a sixth form college in a neighbouring borough. The average General Certificate of Secondary education (GCSE) points score of students aged 16 to 18 at entry to the college is significantly lower than the Local Education Authority (LEA) average. The college also provides courses for 125 pupils who are aged 14 to 16.

The mission of the college is 'to provide the best possible education and training in response to individuals' needs and the demands of employers'. To this end, the college works closely with a wide range of partners and is a major provider of education for deaf students and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The foundation area of learning accounted for some 38% of all enrolments in 2002/03 and the college provides courses in 9 of the 14 areas of learning. The amount of work-based training provided is low. Since the last inspection in 2001, there has been substantial growth in student numbers in foundation studies, information and communication technology (ICT), beauty therapy and in sports, leisure and travel. The college exceeded its full-time enrolment targets in 2001/02.

How effective is the college?



The college is mostly effective and has made progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the last inspection although there is still much to be achieved. The quality of teaching and the achievements of students are good in two of the ten areas inspected, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in only one.

Key strengths

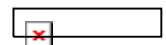
- good personal tutorial support for students
- links to widen participation in education and training
- provision and support for deaf and hearing-impaired students.

What should be improved

- the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in some curriculum areas
- the take up of literacy and numeracy support by students
- the provision of English language support for speakers of other languages
- group tutorials
- students' pass rates in examinations
- teaching accommodation
- students' punctuality and attendance.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



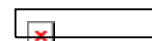
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Unsatisfactory. Progression to higher education (HE) from access courses is good, GCSE mathematics courses are effectively planned and there is good specialist accommodation and information technology (IT) facilities. Pass rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GSE AS) courses are poor and

	student work in science is of a low standard. Attendance and punctuality are poor and teaching does not take account of students' needs. The management of science courses is unsatisfactory.
Business and administration	Satisfactory. Administration and secretarial lessons are well taught, work experience is well planned and promotes students' learning. The assessment of students' work is particularly effective. Teaching accommodation is inappropriate for most lessons, students attendance in lessons is poor and there is insufficient development of students' key skills.
Computing and information technology	Satisfactory. There are good pass rates on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in ICT and good retention rates on the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) course. Work experience for students is effective. Pass rates on GCE ICT courses are poor and there is poor attendance on full-time courses. Resources for teaching and learning are poor.
Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. There are good retention rates on hospitality courses and good pass rates on hospitality and catering courses and the national diploma sports science. The standard of students' practical work is good and there is good use of ICT in hospitality and catering teaching to enhance learning. Retention and pass rates on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate in leisure and tourism course are poor and resources in hospitality, catering, leisure and tourism are poor. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are insufficiently developed and the development of students' key skills in sport, leisure and tourism is poor.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Retention and pass rates on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 beauty therapy courses are good and most NVQ level 1 and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) hairdressing students make good progress. Teaching and learning are effective and students on NVQ level 1 hairdressing courses are well supported. Retention rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing are poor and the accommodation used for some lessons is inappropriate. There is insufficient support for NVQ level 2 students.
Visual arts, media and music	Satisfactory. Students develop good technical and practical skills and student' achievements in music are good. Accommodation for music is good and effective use is made of professional links. Much of the teaching in art, design and media is not stimulating, with low pass rates on some courses. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
Sociology, psychology and law	Satisfactory. Much of the work produced by students is of a good standard and teaching is good in most subjects. Teachers are rigorous and constructive in their marking and assessment of students' work. Pass rates in many subjects are low and attendance and punctuality are poor. Some teaching is inappropriate for the level of students' prior attainment and learning support for law students is inadequate.
English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. There is a wide range of provision to meet students' needs with good individual support for students on special ESOL courses. Students' progression to FE and HE courses is good and there is good use of learning mentors to improve retention rates on ESOL courses. There is insufficient development of ESOL students' speaking and listening skills and accommodation is unsatisfactory. Arrangements for assessing the ESOL needs of students on vocational and academic courses are inadequate and the strategy for ESOL support is inadequate.

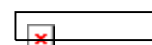
Provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities	Good. Students achieve a good standard of work in lessons and there is much good teaching and learning with effective use of learning support assistants. Students are well-motivated and enthusiastic, develop good literacy and numeracy skills and progress to FE, training and employment. Learning plans for individual students are not sufficiently detailed and there are poor retention rates on the vocational skills certificate courses. The range of courses is narrow with insufficient courses leading to accreditation.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. There are high standards of teaching and learning on the separate special programmes with good individual learning plans and review procedures. There is effective help for the students who receive support on vocational programmes. The range and scope of the special provision is restricted and teaching accommodation is unsuitable. An unsatisfactorily low proportion of students receive literacy and numeracy support.

How well is the college led and managed?



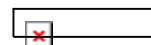
Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Governors provide effective oversight of and set a clear direction for the college. Communication with staff is good. The college has made progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection, but there is still much to do. The quality of curriculum management varies considerably. Management information and data on students are reliable. Strategies to improve student retention rates are showing signs of success, but it is too early to see the effect of strategies to improve pass rates. The quality of course reviews is variable and some are poor. Overall, self-assessment is mostly accurate. Teacher appraisal is linked to lesson observation and staff development. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, but the proportion of good or outstanding lessons is below the national average. The college has identified that students from some minority ethnic backgrounds do less well than all other students, but does not yet have a strategy to improve the opportunities of these students. Financial management is satisfactory and the college is beginning to provide value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



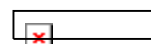
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college has a strong commitment to social inclusion, but many of the strategies for its implementation are at an early stage of development. Some 65% of students at the college are from minority ethnic groups compared with 34% in the local community. The college has an equal opportunities policy and action plan and the college is complying with the obligations placed on it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act (SENDDA) 2001. Data on the academic performance of different minority ethnic groups and economically disadvantaged groups are analysed thoroughly and staff are aware of the findings. Several effective links to widen participation have been established. Since the last inspection, the provision has been adjusted to provide greater opportunities for young students wishing to re-engage in education but, although community-based provision has grown, it is still small. The college provides satisfactory opportunities for students to develop literacy and numeracy, but does not ensure that students identified as requiring literacy and numeracy support take up the offer. There is good provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and all parts of the main campus are accessible to people with restricted mobility.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The support provided for students by the college is satisfactory. Arrangements for recruiting and enrolling students are clear. Information for prospective students is comprehensive, but the college does not provide promotional materials in community languages. While the administrative arrangements for enrolment are clear, many students are guided on to courses that are at too high a level for them to cope with. The college does not do enough to ensure that students identified as needing support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills receive it. The identification of students on mainstream courses whose first language is not English and who need specific language support has been slow to develop. The support provided for individual students is good, but the college's group tutorial system is at an early stage of development. Many group tutorials are used for coursework and attendance by students in tutorials is low. Welfare and other support services for students are good.

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

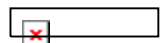
- approachable teachers
- being treated as adults
- support provided by staff
- availability of computers in the learning resources centre.

What they feel could be improved

- availability and price of food in the canteen and the intimidating behaviour of some students in the canteen
- lack of a student common room

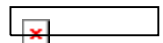
- the behaviour of some students
- availability of computers in classrooms
- large classes at the start of the academic year
- poor quality of some teaching rooms
- poor toilet facilities
- changes to timetables
- changes in the staffing of courses.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	56	35	9
19+ and WBL*	63	30	7
Learning 16-18	55	36	9
19+ and WBL*	63	30	7

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, college achievements are satisfactory and improving. In 2002, some 1,800 students were expected to complete qualifications requiring one or more years of study. Of these 41% were aged 16 to 18 and 40% of students of all ages were following advanced courses.

2. The retention rate of students overall has improved since the last inspection. College data for 2002 and college data on student retention rates to date at the time of the inspection, indicate that the retention rate of students aged 16 to 18 on full-time, foundation level qualifications has improved and are at the national average for colleges of a similar type. The retention rates of adult students on the same qualifications are above the national average. On intermediate level courses, the retention rate of students aged 16 to 18 continues to be just below the national average and are not showing significant improvement. Adult student retention rates on the same courses have improved and are at the national average. Retention rates of both young people and adult students on advanced courses have improved and are above or at the national averages for the two age groups.

3. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced courses have been consistently below the national average and declined slightly during the three years prior to the inspection. Pass rates for adults on the same courses have been above the national average, but only just in 2002. Pass rates are consistently above the national average for both age groups on full-time, intermediate courses but have declined for students aged 16 to 18 while remaining good and improving for adults. For foundation level courses, pass rates are at the national average for all age groups and in 2002, rates for students aged 16 to 18 showed significant improvement on the previous year.

4. Students' achievements overall are satisfactory in most areas, but are unsatisfactory in science and mathematics and good in hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality, literacy and numeracy. Most students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

5. The standards of students' work in biology and chemistry are low and pass rates in GCE AS examinations in science and mathematics are unsatisfactory. Few students in this area, other than those on access to HE courses, progress to HE. In business and administration, students develop good levels of oral communication and are better at expressing their views orally than in writing. Many students display good powers of analysis and reasoned argument. Most students in computing

and IT show a good understanding of basic concepts and can use computers with confidence. The majority of students in hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism are motivated, enthusiastic about their work and develop good practical skills. Hair and beauty therapy students make good progress in their work and most students achieve commercial standards in their practical work. The standard of students' work in music is good but in art and design, although some students produce work of a high standard, too much students' work lacks energy and creativity. Most students in sociology and psychology have a good basic understanding of their subjects and many develop good critical and evaluative skills. Law students have insufficient understanding of legal concepts and are not able to use the language of law appropriately. Students who are speakers of other languages make good progress and achieve challenging targets in English. Students who receive literacy and numeracy support produce work at appropriate levels. The portfolios of work produced by students who have learning difficulties and disabilities are of a high standard and they achieve a good standard of work during lessons.

6. The college does not have systematic mechanisms for analysing the progress made by students in relation to their prior attainment, although the college had started to apply such methods to GCE students the year prior to the inspection. Data for that year indicate that the qualifications at entry of students on GCE AS qualifications were significantly lower than the national average and students make no better than satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Opportunities for students to progress to advanced level qualifications within the college are limited and students' progression from GCE to HE are low.

7. The attendance rate for students in lessons is low at 72% and there is particularly low attendance in science and mathematics, business and administration, and psychology, sociology and law. Students are often late for lessons across most of the areas inspected.

16 to 18 year olds

8. Student retention rates for GCE AS qualifications are just below the national average but pass rates are poor. The attainments of many of the students enrolled on to these courses at age 16 are below the national average for the qualification. At the time of the inspection, the college was in the process of changing its entry criteria for the September 2003 intake. Progression rates from GCE AS to the full GCE A-level qualification are low, but retention rates are high and most of the students who progress pass. The percentage of students gaining A to C grades in both GCE AS and GCE Advanced-level (A-level) examinations is below the national average, but is in line with the mostly low attainment levels of students at enrolment.

9. Retention and pass rates on advanced level GNVQ and the AVCE courses improved significantly the year prior to the inspection and are well above the national average. Students perform well on national diploma courses; retention rates are at the national average and pass rates are good. Pass and retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 on GCSE courses have improved steadily over the three years prior to the inspection and are at the national average. Retention rates on GNVQ intermediate courses have been consistently at the national average, but pass rates improved significantly in 2002 and are good. First diploma courses also have good pass rates and satisfactory retention rates. Retention rates on foundation level GNVQ courses are at the national average but, although pass rates improved in 2002, they remain below the national average.

10. The college has significant numbers of young people following NVQ at level 2 but the enrolment of students aged 16 to 18 to NVQ qualifications at levels 1 and 3 are low. Overall, retention rates on NVQ courses are satisfactory and pass rates are satisfactory or better.

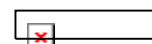
11. Pass rates in key skills are poor. During the year of the inspection, the college was being more selective in the students entered for key skills, literacy and numeracy qualifications. The college was implementing new arrangements for co-ordinating and managing key skills at the time of the inspection, but these changes had not yet had an impact on students' pass rates.

Adult learners

12. Some 3,500 adults enrol on courses requiring short periods of study. The numbers of enrolments increased four fold in 2002 and most adults perform well on these courses. Many students follow short courses of different duration in IT.

13. Approximately 25% of the college's GCE AS and A-level students are adults and overall, they perform better than students aged 16 to 18. Retention rates are at the national average and pass rates and the achievement of A to C grades are high. Adults also perform better than students aged 16 to 18 on GCSE courses with good pass rates and satisfactory retention rates. The numbers of adults on GNVQ and AVCE courses are comparatively low and their achievements reflect the national average with some good achievement particularly at intermediate level. Some 200 adults enrol on NVQ courses. At all NVQ levels, retention rates are at or above the national average and pass rates are consistently at, or well above, national averages. Pass rates on access to HE courses are consistently high with satisfactory retention rates. On other full-time courses at intermediate level, pass rates for the 150 enrolments have improved during the two years prior to the inspection, retention rates are just below the national average with high pass rates. Some 100 adults enrol on these courses at foundation level. Retention rates fell to well below the national average in 2002 but, of the students who were retained, pass rates were high. Similarly, at advanced level, below average retention rates of the 150 students who joined the courses declined further in 2002 and pass rates were poor.

Quality of education and training



14. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 146 lessons. They judged that teaching is good or better in 59% of lessons, satisfactory in 33% and less than satisfactory in 8%. This represents a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The level of unsatisfactory teaching is just below the national average observed in general FE colleges during inspections in 2001/02. The level of good or better teaching, although having much improved, continues to be lower than the average level of 63% for general FE colleges. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in 7 of the 10 curriculum areas inspected and there is much unsatisfactory teaching in science. Where teaching groups are composed of adults or mostly adults, the quality of teaching is higher with 63% of lessons being good or better. Teaching is most effective at foundation level where 72% of the lessons observed were good or better and least effective at advanced level where only 52% of lessons are good or better and 11% are less than satisfactory.

15. The best teaching is in hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality, music, psychology and sociology and in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the best lessons, students approach tasks with enthusiasm and teachers plan carefully to accommodate all the learning needs of the students in the class. In these lessons, teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and they use their knowledge and their industrial and commercial experience well to develop activities that motivate students. In music, for example, teachers treat students as fellow performers and make frequent references to professional practice. In the most effective lessons, teachers explain the purpose of the lessons clearly and their students understand what is expected of them. Teachers select activities carefully and provide sufficient variety to retain the interest of students in their work. Practical activities are used well to support the teaching of theory but teachers do not use computers sufficiently in their teaching. In many lessons, students contribute well to discussions and students often share their own experiences of work. The activities set by teachers in practical lessons often provide realistic work-related experiences, which students enjoy. Many of the lessons observed, although not unsatisfactory, were uninspiring and did not motivate students fully or develop their full creative potential.

16. In the weaker lessons, teachers failed to address the full learning needs of all the students in their classes. This is particularly so in lessons for students on advanced courses where the prior attainment of many of the students is often low. In these lessons, teachers do not ensure that students understand the relevance of the work they are involved in to the requirements of their

courses. Poor attendance and punctuality affects adversely students' learning and students are often unable to relate the work they are involved with to previous lessons. Attendance and punctuality are particularly poor in science and mathematics, business and administration and psychology, sociology and law. Students with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons. Some students receive effective help from teachers to develop literacy and numeracy skills, but the take-up of the support offered to students by the college is low. Lessons taught by full-time teachers are marginally more effective than those taught by their part-time colleagues.

17. Most teachers are academically well qualified and many have vocational expertise appropriate to the courses they teach. The college has experienced difficulties in recruiting teachers and managers in some areas. Effective use is made of fractional and sessional teachers who bring current industrial and commercial experience to areas such as the performing and visual arts. Some 85% of teachers hold a teaching or training qualification. Teachers who are not qualified are working towards gaining a qualification within two years of taking up post. The professional development of teachers is linked to lesson observation, appraisal and strategic curriculum development. They are provided with good opportunities to upgrade and develop their skills. The college has a sound strategy for developing the use of ILT and champions have been appointed to all curriculum areas to support the implementation of the strategy.

18. Since the last inspection, the managers have placed considerable emphasis on improving the appearance and decorative order of the college. Most students work in a clean, well-decorated and safe working environment. There have been notable improvements in the hair and beauty salons, music, science laboratories and in the learning resource centre. There are good facilities for sport including a large sports field, sports hall and fitness room, although changing facilities are inadequate. Teaching accommodation has been zoned for use by different curriculum areas, but some areas still lack clear subject identity and there are few displays of students' work. Specialist resources and accommodation in several areas are poor. In ICT and business and administration the use of ILT resources to enhance learning is not well established. Accommodation is frequently cramped and inappropriately organised in these areas with students having insufficient space in which to work. In hospitality and catering, leisure and tourism, specialist equipment and accommodation do not provide the realistic working environments the curriculum requires. Some of the rooms used for teaching literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) are unsuitable. The college has developed an accommodation strategy for addressing these weaknesses and, at the time of the inspection, had secured funding for implementing the first part of the strategy.

19. The college has invested in ICT equipment since the last inspection. Teachers have good access to computers and there is one computer for every four students. However, the computer rooms used for teaching ICT business and business administration courses are poorly set out. Although the college has purchased data projectors and interactive whiteboards, these are little used in teaching. The college has been slow in developing its intranet. The learning resources centre is well equipped with ICT equipment including scanning and colour printing facilities. It provides a good range of books, videos and periodicals for loan and reference. Many teachers liaise with library staff to ensure that learning resources are up to date, sufficient and available for students' assignments. Records indicate good loan rates.

20. Students' performance is assessed regularly, in line with the college's procedures for marking homework and assignments. In most areas, students are given clear instructions and marking criteria. In visual and performing arts, however, teachers are not consistent in the way they record the marks awarded and internally verify the accuracy of assessment. In most areas, teachers mark work carefully, return it to students promptly and include helpful comments on how they can improve their performance. In some areas, however, teachers fail to note and correct errors in students' spelling and grammar. The marks or grades awarded to students are recorded systematically. A new system was introduced in the college in 2002 to check the consistency and validity of marking of students' work. This internal verification of marking work includes teachers checking each other's marks and grades. Compliance with the system is audited and helpful recommendations made where breaches in the system, or shortfalls in following procedures, have been identified. The college has yet to devise the means to evaluate the extent to which the recommendations are acted upon. The collation and analysis of comments from awarding body external verifiers are not

effective.

21. The college has an established system for monitoring students' progress, which is implemented during tutorials. Students' personal tutors encourage them to conduct their own assessment, for example, of their rate of attendance and their punctuality at lessons, completion of homework, their involvement in lessons and their written work. Teachers are required to complete a summary form regularly on students' performance for tutors to collate and use during individual tutorials. The rate of completion of the forms varies across the college. Tutors and students devise improvement action plans to help students progress. The majority are helpful to students, but some action plans are insufficiently detailed and are of little use to students. The college sends the parents of students aged 16 to 18 regular reports on students' progress. The college does not set minimum target grades for students based on their GCSE points scores.

22. Since the last inspection, the college has reduced the range of courses that it provides and was in the process of re-structuring provision at the time of the inspection. The college is carefully assessing the needs of employers and the local community and the form and level of provision it is best able to offer. Provision in health and social care and engineering, and several vocational courses at advanced level have been discontinued. The breadth of the curriculum and progression opportunities vary considerably across different areas of learning and students have few opportunities to progress to advanced level qualifications within the college. There are clear routes for progression from foundation to advanced levels in hairdressing, beauty therapy, ICT, business administration and ESOL. However, the range of courses in science, mathematics and the humanities is narrow. There are insufficient accredited courses in literacy, numeracy, ESOL or for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Community-based provision is developing, but is only provided at five local centres. The range of the provision is limited to courses in ESOL, literacy, numeracy, administration and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Work experience opportunities are well organised in hairdressing, beauty therapy, business administration and ICT in partnership with a local placement agency. An enrichment programme is available for all students.

23. Managers have made extensive efforts to develop provision in collaboration with local educational partnerships to widen participation in education and training. For example, the college works with the local educational authority to provide courses for 70 students from three local boroughs through the 'Education Otherwise Scheme' and the college provides a theatre programme for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. In September 2003, a Pupil Referral Unit for 27 pupils will be established on the main college site. There are effective partnerships with local universities through access to HE programmes in nursing, science and the humanities. The college also provides contemporary popular music programmes for 150 students through an access to music partnership. Programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy are provided on a modular basis and flexible timetabling allows students with childcare commitments to follow courses.

24. The college has well-organised arrangements for student recruitment and enrolment. However, the college does not yet provide promotional materials in large print, pictorially, on tape, in languages other than English, or in Braille, in order to meet the linguistic and other needs of potential students in the locality. There are open evenings and 'taster' days for prospective students to find out about the college's provision. Students applying to the college are interviewed by teachers of subjects or courses in which students have expressed interest. Those who remain undecided about which course to pursue are offered an interview with college or Connexions staff. While the administrative arrangements for enrolment are clear, many students are placed on courses that are at too high a level for them to cope with. The college had plans to improve this at the time of the inspection.

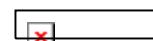
25. Induction for the vast majority of full-time students is satisfactory. The arrangements for students who join a course later in the term are not always effective and the college is producing a video recording containing the information students need to help those who enrol late. All full-time students undertake a test to identify their levels of literacy and numeracy skills. In 2002, the test was not undertaken sufficiently early to enable tutors to discuss the results during the first individual tutorial session with students. At the time of the inspection, some students did not know what the results of the test were. From September 2003, the test will be applied earlier. Almost all the learning support

tutors are suitably qualified and the remainder are working towards qualifications. Learning support tutors give effective support to some groups of students in lessons and to those who attend support sessions. However, not enough is done to ensure that individuals needing help receive it. At the time of the inspection, only 13% of students identified as needing additional learning support were actually receiving help. This weakness was identified at the last inspection. The identification of students on mainstream courses who need specific language support because English is not their first language has been slow to develop. At the time of the inspection, only eight students were receiving specific help. Inspectors identified many students whose progress in lessons was hampered by insufficient understanding of English, or under-developed literacy or numeracy skills, and who were not receiving appropriate support. The college plans to improve the provision for these students from September 2003.

26. Welfare and other support services for students are good. The information centre and careers centre operated in partnership with the Connexions service, and learning mentors are helpful for students. Learning mentors, who are temporary appointments, assist tutors, among other things, to monitor students' attendance and identify those 'at risk'. Some staff are unclear about the respective roles of learning mentors and learning support tutors. There is a wide range of welfare, health, financial and counselling services, which are well used by students. Support for students with physical or sensory impairment, or with identified specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, is very good. The college provides prayer rooms for female and male students that are used for individual or collective worship. The students' union is active and there are two student representatives on the college's corporation board.

27. All full-time students have a personal tutor and students value highly the attention they receive from them. Teachers of part-time students are also their tutors and inform students of the support services available to them. The college also has a group tutorial system. At the time of the inspection, the college had recently reviewed its tutorial practices and provided a comprehensive tutorial handbook for tutors' use. It includes a list of pastoral topics from which tutors may choose to use during group tutorials. Tutorials are observed as part of the college's quality assurance system, but there is insufficient monitoring of the extent to which pastoral topics are covered and the effectiveness of group tutorials. There is insufficient dissemination of good practice. Many group tutorials are devoted to coursework. The college does not monitor centrally and report attendance at group tutorials and there is no means for establishing readily the rate of attendance at them. The attendance rate at group tutorials observed by inspectors during the inspection was low, at 69%.

Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Senior managers, staff and governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the college's mission. The college has made progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the last inspection, although there is still much to be achieved.

29. Following the last inspection the college reviewed its curriculum and decided to increase the number of courses more suited to the needs of the local community. It introduced or developed courses such as ESOL courses and courses for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, basic skills and entry-level vocational courses. It stopped offering engineering, health and social care and a range of advanced level courses. Since the summer of 2001, 33 teachers have left the college, including several senior managers. The current principal was appointed in November 2001 and two of the four senior managers in 2002.

30. The college has begun to address the poor retention rate of students and the indications for 2002/03 are that there will be a considerable improvement in the number of students retained on foundation and advanced level courses and a small improvement on intermediate courses. A new quality assurance system has been introduced and, equal opportunities monitoring, the quality of

accommodation and responding to the views of students have all improved. There is uneven curriculum management; a number of key middle and junior management posts were unfilled at the time of the inspection. Students' attendance at lessons is poor.

31. The college has effective and committed governors. The corporation meets once a term. Meetings of five of the seven corporation sub-committees precede this meeting. The remuneration and search committees meet less frequently. The college's strategic plan for 2000/03 was suspended following the last inspection when it was replaced by the post-inspection action plan. The corporation has now approved a new summary strategic plan for 2003/06. The strategic plan is a summary of 11 strategies and plans including the three-year financial forecast, property strategy, value for money strategy and curriculum development plan for 2003/04. There was considerable consultation and discussion with staff and outside organisations concerning proposals included in the strategic plan such as the proposal to develop a pupil referral unit for young people aged between 14 and 16 who have been excluded from school.

32. Governors take a close interest in the work of the college and the performance of students. Some governors are linked to one of the six schools and attend course reviews of quality and programme area and school team meetings. The planning and performance committee of the corporation is responsible for overseeing the college's quality assurance system and for setting and monitoring students' retention and pass rate targets. Governors are also knowledgeable of the financial health of the college.

33. The college has a clear and well-understood management structure. There is a programme of formal meetings for managers and staff at all levels. Communication throughout the college is good. Senior managers are approachable and teachers are informed about college issues. Senior managers have implemented considerable change during the 18 months prior to the inspection. The results of much of this change have not yet led to a marked improvement in students' achievement. In two curriculum areas, there have been delays in appointing a head of school and a programme area leader because of the lack of suitable applicants.

34. The quality of curriculum management varies considerably. Two of the ten curriculum areas inspected are well managed, two are unsatisfactory and the remainder satisfactory. In the well-managed areas, staff work well together to develop the curriculum and produce good teaching and learning materials. Managers and teachers have worked well together to address many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection, and to implement new quality assurance procedures. They are committed to achieving high standards. In the two unsatisfactory areas, the long-term manager and teacher vacancies have had a detrimental effect on students' learning and progress. In mathematics and science, many teaching course files are incomplete, course reviews are poor and there is little or no monitoring of student achievement, punctuality or attendance. In visual and performing arts and media, little progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and courses are poorly planned and co-ordinated. In most curriculum areas, managers and teachers are making satisfactory progress. In some areas, course reviews are good and are leading to improvement in student retention and pass rates, but in others they are not. The provision for literacy and numeracy across the college is not responsive to students' needs and lacks effective planning and monitoring.

35. The college developed its quality assurance system to increase its focus on annual course review and self-assessment in the summer of 2002. The quality assurance cycle is well explained in the curriculum quality assurance handbook given to teachers, but the first end of year reviews carried out in the summer of 2002 were of variable quality. Some were very good, but the quality of too many contained poorly completed documentation resulting in poor and ineffective reviews. The quality of most subsequent reviews has improved. Course and programme area reviews form the basis of self-assessment reports for the different college schools. These in turn inform the college's self-assessment report. The quality of four curriculum areas have improved by one grade and one by two grades since the last inspection, but two have remained the same and one has fallen. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The proportion of good or better teaching rose from 43% to 59%, while the proportion of poor teaching fell from 24% in 2001 to 8% in 2003. The proportion of satisfactory lessons remained the same.

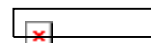
36. To improve the quality of teaching and students' learning, the college introduced a lesson observation scheme following the last inspection which is linked to appraisal and staff development. Trained lesson observers observe all full-time and most part-time teachers at least once a year. The lesson observation grade profile conducted by the college has shown improvement in the proportion of good or better lessons since the last inspection. As part of the selection procedure, prospective teachers are required to teach a specimen lesson which is observed by members of the college lesson observation team. Once appointed, a new teacher is observed teaching in each of their first three terms. Those appointed without a teaching qualification are required to attend a qualification programme and existing teachers who are not qualified are encouraged to become trained. Three advanced teaching practitioners have completed training and four more were nearing the end of their training at the time of the inspection. Three training days on teaching and learning have been attended by all full-time and most part-time teachers since the summer of 2002. Part-time teachers are paid to attend training.

37. The college has an equal opportunities committee that meets monthly and is chaired by the principal. Membership of the committee includes directors, managers, teachers, support and administrative staff and two students. The college produced a new equal opportunities policy in 2001 and a revised policy along with a new race equality policy was scheduled as an agenda item for the June meeting of the corporation at the time of the inspection. A race equality action plan has been produced which includes targets and timescales for publicising the policy to staff, students and the general public. The college has already achieved its target to collect and analyse race and ethnicity data including analysis of the academic performance of students from different ethnic groups. It has identified that young African-Caribbean male and Bangladeshi students perform less well than all other groups, but had not developed a strategy to address the differences at the time of the inspection. College publicity brochures portray students from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds, but the titles given to one course, NVQ level 1 catering and hospitality (SEN), is inappropriate. Reference to the college's equal opportunities policy is made during student induction and an equal opportunities statement is published in the college prospectus. There is little systematic monitoring to ensure the promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum.

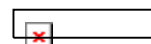
38. The quality and accuracy of the college's computerised management information is good. It is able to produce a variety of accurate reports for financial and curriculum planning and management. At the time of the inspection, the college had recently introduced a computerised register system that provides daily student absence reports for managers. Learning mentors use this information to follow up students who are absent.

39. Financial management is satisfactory. Operational plans are costed and budget holders receive regular reports on expenditure. The college has a value for money strategy and, on the basis of the improvements achieved since 2001, the college is beginning to provide value for money. It is developing a system to provide more information on the cost of courses to determine whether individual courses offer good value for money, but this is not yet fully operational.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- good progression from access to HE courses
- effective course planning for GCSE mathematics
- good specialist accommodation and IT facilities.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on GCE AS courses
- poor attendance and punctuality, especially on GCE A-level courses
- low standards of students' work in science
- failure of teaching to take adequate account of students' needs
- insufficient action to raise standards
- unsatisfactory management of science courses.

Scope of provision

40. The range of courses is narrow. The college offers access to HE courses in science, nursing and health as well as a pre-access course which meet local needs. Full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18 are limited to GCSE mathematics and GCE AS and A-level biology, chemistry and mathematics. GCSE courses in mathematics, human biology and chemistry and a course in GCE AS mathematics are provided in the evening. Some 300 students follow courses in mathematics and science of whom two thirds are aged 16 to 18. Well over half the students in the area attend college on a full-time basis. The college has identified the narrowness of the range of provision and, at the time of the inspection, had plans for introducing a vocational, environmentally based course at advanced level.

Achievement and standards

41. Students' achievements overall are unsatisfactory. Pass rates on access to science and nursing

courses are good and progression rates to HE are high. GCSE mathematics pass rates are above the national average for colleges of a similar type, but retention rates are poor. Pass rates on GCE AS courses are below national averages and chemistry students perform significantly worse than would be predicted on the basis of their previous qualifications. GCE A-level pass rates are in line with national averages, but very few students progress from GCE AS to A level. Progression from GCE A level to HE or employment is also very low. Students' attendance on access courses is good, but attendance on GCE sciences and mathematics courses is poor. Students' punctuality for lessons is also poor for many courses.

42. Mathematics students enjoy their work. GCE AS students can manipulate exponential functions and, at GCE A level, they can solve problems such as those involving the equation of a circle. The standards of students' work in biology and chemistry are low. For example, despite having access to the information, GCE AS biology students omitted reference to oxygenated blood when defining the aorta. Students failed to consider the influence of temperature on enzymes and consequently gained low marks for their coursework. GCE AS chemistry students can write simple electronic configurations, but few can interpret mass spectra. Similarly, GCE A-level chemistry students who did well in GCE AS examinations were not making good progress at the time of the inspection and their attendance in lessons is poor. They make basic errors such as drawing the ester functional group incorrectly. During the year of the inspection, the marks gained by access students for the chemistry component of their course have declined and in physiology, the work they produced on the structure and function of the heart is little better than that required for GCSE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	122	84	90
		% retention	75	79	60
		% pass rate	29	36	49
GCSE science/human biology	2	No. of starts	50	44	19
		% retention	70	64	58
		% pass rate	51	61	55
GCE AS biological sciences	3	No. of starts	*	27	44
		% retention	*	93	75
		% pass rate	*	40	45
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	26	34
		% retention	*	92	79
		% pass rate	*	42	22
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	21	64
		% retention	*	100	78
		% pass rate	*	38	28
Access to HE science	3	No. of starts	20	23	21
		% retention	80	78	67
		% pass rate	88	100	100
Access to HE nursing and health studies	3	No. of starts	20	21	36
		% retention	60	100	75
		% pass rate	100	95	78

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

** course not running*

Quality of education and training

43. Overall, the standards of teaching and learning in science and mathematics are unsatisfactory. Mathematics teaching is satisfactory, but much science teaching is unsatisfactory. Although the mathematical level of some students is below the college requirement for GCSE mathematics, effective course planning and creation of a two-year course has resulted in improved module results during the year of the inspection. In good mathematics lessons, the use of computers is well integrated, for example, in introduction of the trapezium rule. In another effective mathematics lesson, students were provided with interesting background historical information that helped enliven the lesson and well-thought out exercises to consolidate their understanding of Pythagoras's theorem.

44. Much of the teaching in science is dull and uninspiring. For example, students are not given sufficient opportunity to work independently or in groups to develop their skills and their understanding of different subjects. Teachers do not intervene sufficiently during lessons to resolve students' problems. Teachers present factual information without sufficient illustrative experiments or use of models such as use of a model of the heart when describing its function. Chemistry teaching is weak; some teachers are not sufficiently familiar with awarding body requirements and do not focus sufficiently on key concepts. Teachers do not always check that students have grasped the key points of lessons. Overall, lessons are ineffectively planned. Although the purpose of individual lessons are defined in terms of learning objectives for the students, teachers do not give sufficient attention as to how students will achieve these. When planning lessons, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to how they will check that students are learning and have grasped key concepts. They do not make effective use of the lesson time available. For example, in a GCE A-level chemistry revision lesson, excessive time spent on revising GCE AS material meant that the teacher did not check students' understanding of the chemistry of carboxylic acids and their understanding of condensation and polymerisation reactions was not consolidated. When planning lessons, teachers do not have sufficient regard for the range of abilities in their classes or the literacy and numeracy levels of many of their students or their level of competence in the English language. For example, access students' work on sewage treatment was hampered by their poor oral presentation skills and their study skills were insufficiently well developed for a challenging comprehension exercise on gene therapy.

45. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are unsatisfactory. Marking is carried out in line with awarding body guidelines and there is some constructive feedback and guidance for students following access and mathematics courses. However, there is considerable variation in the frequency and rigour of regular testing. Individual students are not set clear targets to help them improve the standard of their work and tutors receive insufficiently detailed information on their progress. The attendance and punctuality of individual GCE AS biology students have been related to their achievements as part of a pilot study, but this has not been extended to other groups. The development of courses and the assessment of the effectiveness of teaching are not sufficiently based on information gained through monitoring the performance of individual students and groups of students. The parents of students aged 16 to 18 do not receive reports on the progress of their children.

46. The quality of the guidance and support available to students is unsatisfactory. Some students are inappropriately placed on GCE AS courses and the range of support provided for individual students is inadequate. There is insufficient support, especially in science, for students entering with below average grades. The literacy, numeracy or ESOL needs of individual students are identified on entry, but few take up the support offered. Procedures for recognising and acting on poor attendance, punctuality and performance are not well developed, although there were signs of improvement at the time of the inspection. Most courses show a steady decline in attendance, punctuality and test completion, but clear strategies for addressing this decline at course level have not been developed.

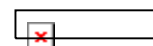
47. Resources are satisfactory, but some resources are not used effectively. Some mathematics lessons, for example, are over dependent on the use of computers and teachers have not had

sufficient training on the use of information and computer technology in teaching. At the time of the inspection, two laboratories had recently been refurbished and the learning resources areas for science and mathematics provide a pleasant working environment with good computer access. Both biology and mathematics teachers integrate the use of IT with their teaching, but little use is made of IT in chemistry teaching. Laboratory equipment and learning aids are appropriate for the courses offered. At the time of the inspection, recent staff changes, especially in chemistry, had disrupted the continuity of teaching. Teachers have neither received recent subject-specific professional development nor attended training days organised by awarding bodies.

Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection accommodation and equipment have been improved and students' access to IT is now good. The level of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced, but the management of science courses remains unsatisfactory. Staff changes have had an adverse effect on the overall leadership of the area and on the management of chemistry in particular. There is little monitoring of performance at course level and little use of data for predicting students' performance on the basis of their qualifications on enrolment. Course files are insufficiently detailed and mainly descriptive. New resources are not being used effectively by teachers to help learning due to lack of training.

Business and administration



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

Strengths

- good teaching in administration and secretarial lessons
- well-planned work experience
- effective assessment of students' work.

Weaknesses

- inappropriate teaching accommodation for most lessons
- poor attendance
- insufficient development of students' key skills.

Scope of provision

49. The college provides courses for full-time and part-time students at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in business, accounting and secretarial and administration. Business studies courses include foundation and intermediate GNVQ and GCE A and AS levels. Accounting is offered at GCE AS and A levels and the diploma in secretarial and administration is offered at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Evening provision includes GCE AS courses in business studies and accounts and competences for secretarial and administration in word processing and keyboarding. Some 365 students enrol on business and administration courses each year, of whom 87% attend college on a full-time basis. Most of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18. At the time of the inspection, the college was planning to introduce an advanced vocational course in business and an entry-level course in September 2003.

Achievement and standards

50. Students' achievements overall are satisfactory. Students develop good levels of oral communication and some GCE AS students are better at expressing their views orally than in writing. Many students display good powers of analysis and reasoned argument. A group of GNVQ foundation students, for example, carried out an effective analysis of their work placements. They considered in detail the expectations of working life including factors such as the length of working day, working with the general public and working as a member of a team. There was an interesting discussion on morality - one student had witnessed a colleague stealing money and the discussion centred on the morality of 'shopping a mate'. Students in practical lessons show a good level of skills and complete exercises confidently and efficiently. Students display good knowledge and understanding of their subjects.

51. Pass rates for GCE AS courses have improved since the last inspection, but are still below the national averages for colleges of a similar type. In-year results for 2003 indicate further improvement and pass rates for GCE AS students who progress to the full GCE A-level are high. Pass rates on secretarial and administration courses are high and college data for 2003 indicate that the performance of students on GNVQ courses has improved since the last inspection. College data for 2003 indicate that retention rates across the area are improving, although overall the retention rate remains below the national average for colleges of a similar type. Attendance at the lessons observed during the inspection was low, at 56%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ administration	1	No. of starts	20	24	14
		% retention	85	71	69
		% pass rate	94	94	100
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	*	23	21
		% retention	*	87	80
		% pass rate	*	20	56
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	25	17	23
		% retention	100	88	74
		% pass rate	64	60	76
GCE AS business studies	3	No. of starts	*	34	49
		% retention	*	82	69
		% pass rate	*	68	53

GCE AS accounts	3	No. of starts	*	30	60
		% retention	*	63	75
		% pass rate	*	74	33

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

52. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but although the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection there is still some unsatisfactory teaching. In the most effective lessons, teachers use a range of imaginative methods that motivate students across the ability range and maintain their interest in their work. In a GCE AS business studies revision lesson, for example, students showed a mature understanding of the impact and effectiveness of communications within a case study company. Students put forward well-reasoned arguments about the effect on morale within the parent organisation of agents working for the company on a worldwide basis. The teacher questioned the group carefully and ensured that all the students in the group had an opportunity to express their views. In a GNVQ foundation lesson, the teacher helped the students to review their work experience and its relationship to their course. This included a student describing action taken in response to a customer complaint and how that related to the coursework on consumer law. Where teaching is less successful, the purpose of the lessons is not clearly defined and teachers do not give sufficient attention to determining the extent to which all students in their classes are learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory lessons are poorly organised, students fail to see the relevance of the exercises they are asked to complete and become distracted and at worse, disruptive. All vocational students have two weeks work experience. This is well planned and executed; it is relevant to the aspirations of individual students and to their course. The placements are organised by the college centrally and personal tutors ensure that the experience meets the needs of individual students.

53. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable about their subjects, but the accommodation used for teaching is poor and in many cases not fit for purpose as was noted during the last inspection. Students are taught in a variety of rooms including laboratories. In one lesson, 18 students were being taught in a room with two ranks of 25 computers where the whiteboard was totally inaccessible to the teacher. There was no desk space for the students to take notes and, because of the height of the computers, they could not see the written work the teacher was producing on a flip chart. The accommodation prevented students working effectively in groups and affected the way they interacted with each other and the teacher. There is no model office or standard office equipment for students on the secretarial and administration courses for students to use routinely. In many lessons, the environment prevents effective learning and there is little display of students' work or relevant curriculum materials. Although the range of resources is limited, the quality of handouts is good and has improved since the last inspection. At the time of the inspection, the college was in the early stages of developing an intranet and although some teachers have been trained to make effective use of computers to enhance students' learning, the use of computers by teachers during lessons remains minimal as was noted during the last inspection. All teachers have easy access to computers.

54. The assessment of students' work by teachers is good. All students receive a full assessment schedule at the start of the year. All assignments follow a standard format and assignments are internally verified before they are issued. Students know when they are expected to return work and make every effort to submit their work on time. There are explicit sanctions for work handed in late. Work is carefully marked by teachers and returned within two weeks with constructive comments. Students' motivation and levels of achievement have improved. Personal tutors monitor students' progress. Students know how they are performing in general terms, but they are not given target grades to work towards. Tutors set personal targets for improving punctuality and the quality of students' coursework and students are becoming self-critical and skilful at evaluating their own progress. Parents receive helpful information in reports about the progress of students aged 16 to

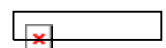
18.

55. Overall, the support students receive is good. Teachers are approachable and accessible both inside and outside the classroom and students appreciate the amount of time that teachers devote to them with both academic and personal matters. Learning mentors were introduced in January 2003 to monitor students 'at risk' and to ensure that they receive the additional support they need. Although the individual support provided for students by the college is good, group tutorials are not effective and do not provide an appropriate response to the diverse needs of students in the area. The entry requirements for full-time courses are not enforced with sufficient rigour, resulting in students commencing courses for which they are not appropriately qualified. The lack of vocational courses at advanced level limits students' choice so that some students are inappropriately advised to progress to GCE AS courses. There are no formal entry procedures for part-time students. All full-time students undergo initial assessment to identify additional support needs following enrolment but the take-up of the literacy and numeracy support offered is low. There is no in-class support either for literacy, numeracy or for ESOL.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Courses are effectively managed, although there is no explicit responsibility for course leadership within teaching teams. Much work has been carried out by teachers working with the programme area leader to improve the quality of course reviews and the assessment of students' work. This has led to improved retention rates during the year of the inspection and improved pass rates for students undertaking modules during the year. Communication between teachers is good and managers are accessible and ready to listen to teachers' views. The self-assessment report produced for the area is self-critical and the resulting action plan is realistic. Lessons are observed at least once a year by trained internal observers supported by external consultants. Action is taken to bring about improvement when lessons are found to be unsatisfactory. The grades allocated during the inspection were marginally lower than those allocated internally. Teachers and managers are appraised annually and are set targets. Termly reviews are held following appraisal, but the requirements of college procedures are not implemented rigorously. The poor quality of accommodation and the under use of computers in teaching and learning identified in the last inspection report have not been addressed adequately.

Computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on AVCE ICT
- good retention rates on CLAIT courses
- good work experience for students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on GCE ICT courses
- poor attendance on full-time courses
- inadequate resources for teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

57. The college provides a good range of full-time and part-time courses in computing and ICT at various levels ranging from basic computer literacy to advanced programmes. Full-time courses include GNVQ qualifications in ICT at foundation and intermediate levels, single and double AVCE courses in IT, and GCE AS and A-level courses in ICT. Part-time programmes include entry-level courses such as 'computing for the terrified' and 'basics' with progression opportunities to computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses. The college also provides courses on web page design, using the Internet, spreadsheets, databases and programming. All the courses are provided at the main college main site. There is no community-based provision. Most of the 300 full-time students who attend the college are aged 16 to 18 and most of the part-time students are adults.

Achievement and standards

58. Pass rates on full-time vocational courses in computing improved significantly in 2002 and are good for most courses. Pass rates on both the single and double award AVCE in ICT were well above the national averages for colleges of a similar type. In contrast, pass rates on the GCE AS and A-level ICT courses are poor. Retention rates on most vocational courses are satisfactory, but the retention rate on GNVQ foundation IT is declining and was below the national average in 2002. The retention rate on GCE AS ICT has declined to below the national average, but retention rates are good for those students who progress to the full GCE A level. There are good retention rates on part-time CLAIT course and pass rates are at the national average.

59. Most students show a good understanding of basic concepts and can use computers with confidence. Intermediate and advanced students on vocational courses are well motivated and supportive of each other. They work effectively in both class and workshop-based lessons and achieve a good level of technical and practical skills in computing. For example, one group of AVCE students developed their skills and derived a great deal of pleasure from correcting problems purposely created by the teacher on a laptop computer. Conversely, foundation students are not sufficiently focused on their work. They waste too much time during lessons, chat socially, surf the Internet and sometimes disrupt lessons with irrelevancies. Students' attendance in lessons is poor. During the week of the inspection almost a quarter of students were absent from lessons. A third of vocational students who complete their courses successfully, fail to proceed to another course or employment and the progression rates from GCE A-level courses to HE are low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	201	199	190
		% retention	97	94	95
		% pass rate	55	59	52

GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	15	39	53
		% retention	87	79	70
		% pass rate	54	29	62
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	19	33	54
		% retention	79	79	83
		% pass rate	60	46	60
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	*	24	35
		% retention	*	88	86
		% pass rate	*	76	60
AVCE ICT (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	17	14
		% retention	*	82	93
		% pass rate	*	86	85
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	9	54	81
		% retention	100	80	67
		% pass rate	33	40	39
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	28	20	12
		% retention	42	35	92
		% pass rate	80	71	36

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

* course not running

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

Quality of education and training

60. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In the best lessons, teachers provide demanding activities that have been carefully planned to meet the learning needs of all the students in their classes. In these lessons, teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods including quizzes and well-planned practical exercises to make learning interesting for their students. Teachers display sound technical knowledge and, where data projection equipment is available, use it well to focus students' attention on specific topics. In most lessons, however, teachers do not provide sufficient extension exercises for more able students and they do not make sufficient references to the differing learning needs of students in lesson planning documents. Teachers support less able students well during practical activities, spend time with individual students and make sure they have grasped basic concepts. Learning support assistants assist students with specific learning difficulties effectively during lessons. The college has developed good links with local employers and students are provided with good work experience opportunities. All vocational students have useful work experience opportunities. Some activities, such as an annual trip to a commercial enterprise in Vienna, are particularly effective.

61. Poor resources adversely affect teaching and learning in many lessons. There are insufficient data projectors or smart boards in computer classrooms. Many whiteboards are too small and others are inaccessible, being located behind banks of computers. Some computer rooms are overcrowded with computers, with insufficient space between workstations for students to place textbooks or work on non-computerised activities. One room is too long and narrow and students at one end of the room have difficulty reading the small whiteboard located at the other end. There are too few

peripheral devices for students to scan documents, print in colour or store large files for transportation elsewhere. The college intranet is inadequate for ICT teaching, although several teachers have developed their own websites for students to access in and out of the college. Half the teachers in the area are only qualified in computing to a low level. Many of these teachers have been on courses to improve their teaching and tutorial skills, but they are not provided with sufficient opportunities for developing their technical skills.

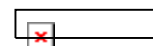
62. The assessment of students' work by teachers is satisfactory, although some teachers over grade coursework. Assignments are generally well designed, but a few fail to cover all the skills and knowledge required by the examining boards. Most teachers record the progress made by students accurately, correct spelling mistakes in written work and provide them with helpful feedback on their work. For the most part, coursework is quickly returned to students who are given opportunities to resubmit work with improvements, where appropriate. In a minority of instances, the time taken to return marked work is too long. Information on students' progress is recorded on centrally held files, but the parents of students aged 16 to 18 do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress and the information is not used by teachers to monitor the effectiveness of teaching methods or to develop individual learning programmes for students.

63. Students are well supported. All full-time students are assessed at the start of their course to determine their key skills levels and whether they need additional support with literacy, numeracy or English language if they are speakers of other languages. Additional lessons are arranged for students requiring literacy numeracy or language support. A learning mentor works with basic skills and ESOL tutors to support specific students during lessons, monitors students' attendance, punctuality and behaviour and generally helps with literacy and numeracy support. In addition, the learning mentor holds a weekly homework club. In many lessons in ICT, a signer supports students with hearing difficulties. Students have weekly group tutorials where administrative tasks and pastoral activities of general interest are undertaken. These group tutorials have little impact on students' learning. All full-time students are provided with a termly personal tutorial where progress and personal development are discussed. The teachers in the area, operate an open door policy and students may contact them at college personally or by e-mail if they need help. There is a college-wide enrichment programme, but the take-up by students is low.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, new appointments had recently been made to the teaching team and a new manager had taken responsibility for the area. Teachers and managers in the area are well motivated and action taken to rationalise the course provision, improve the quality of teaching and learning and support individual students are having an impact. There has been little development of community-based courses and insufficient opportunities are provided for teachers to raise their technical skills.

Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- good retention rates on hospitality courses
- good pass rates on national diploma sports science and hospitality and catering courses

- good use of ICT in hospitality and catering teaching to enhance learning
- good standard of students' practical work.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism courses
- poor resources in hospitality, catering, leisure and tourism
- poor development of students' key skills in sport, leisure and tourism
- insufficient development of students' literacy and numeracy skills.

Scope of provision

65. The college provides NVQ courses in food preparation and cooking at levels 1, 2 and 3 and food and drink service at levels 1 and 2 for full-time and part-time students. Further courses are offered as additional qualifications or as short courses in pastry, cake decorating, food hygiene and for students with a general interest in food preparation, cooking and service. Full-time provision in sport, leisure and travel includes Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first and national diplomas in sport and exercise science, GNVQ foundation and intermediate in leisure and tourism and AVCE in travel and tourism. These courses are also available to students who may wish to join the college's football academy which is open to both male and female students. A limited range of additional qualifications such as the community sports leaders award, Football Association junior managers award and the International Air Ticketing Association qualification are available for sports, leisure and tourism students. Some 330 students enrol on hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism courses annually, of whom 60% are aged 16 to 18 and approximately 50% follow full-time courses.

Achievement and standards

66. There are good pass rates on NVQ level 1 and 2 courses in food preparation and cooking. Pass rates on NVQ food and drink service courses are also good. Retention rates on hospitality and catering courses are good. Retention rates are above the national average on NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking and NVQ food and drink service. On the NVQ levels 1 and 2 food preparation and cooking and the BTEC national diploma in sports science courses pass rates are consistently high. In 2002, the retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism were poor. At the time of the inspection, there were indications that retention rates had improved significantly. The pass rate on the community sports leaders award is poor.

67. Most students are motivated and enthusiastic about their work and students in sport and in

catering develop good practical skills. In practical sports sessions, students demonstrate a high standard of commitment and skills development. This was demonstrated well during a sporting event where some 60 children from a local primary school took part in a wide variety of sporting activities. The event was well organised and the students displayed good coaching skills. Students on sport, travel and tourism courses have good research skills and analyse data effectively. Full-time students on hospitality and catering courses develop key skills such as teamwork, organisational skills and the extensive use of ICT through organising a major formal dinner. Students do not gain sufficient numbers of the additional qualifications that are necessary to secure employment in the area. Some additional qualifications were piloted during the year of the inspection for full implementation in September 2003. Students' key skills development in sport, leisure and tourism is poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ food preparation and cooking (1 year)	1	No. of starts	*	25	26
		% retention	*	79	81
		% pass rate	*	95	100
NVQ food preparation and cooking (2 year)	2	No. of starts	20	13	14
		% retention	65	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
BTEC first diploma in science (sports science)	2	No. of starts	10	24	29
		% retention	70	71	69
		% pass rate	0	88	75
NVQ food and drink service (2 year)	2	No. of starts	12	11	17
		% retention	75	100	65
		% pass rate	100	91	100
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	42	20	29
		% retention	74	70	55
		% pass rate	68	36	44
BTEC national diploma in science (sports studies)	3	No. of starts	*	17	21
		% retention	*	76	67
		% pass rate	*	85	100

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

68. Most teaching in the area is satisfactory or better, but there is also some unsatisfactory teaching. Students work productively and with a sense of purpose in most lessons. In the best lessons, students are set demanding tasks. For example, in a national diploma in sports and exercise science lesson, students were set a series of challenging tasks that enabled them to develop their knowledge and understanding of sports injuries. They were able to apply their understanding and develop rehabilitation programmes for different injuries effectively. In most lessons, the application of theory to practical situations is effective. In some lessons, teaching is unimaginative and poorly planned and the purpose of some of the tasks set is unclear. Students do not make satisfactory progress and they become bored and lose interest in their work. Where students are actively involved in their learning, they respond with enthusiasm and achieve good results. For example, in a

practical catering lesson, students were involved in identifying the factors which are key to high-quality pastry production. Schemes of work produced by teachers are generally comprehensive and most lesson plans take account of students' prior knowledge and learning. Teachers do not always explain the purpose of lessons to students and do not spend sufficient time determining the extent to which students are learning. In some theory lessons, students are not set sufficiently challenging work and more able students do not achieve sufficiently high levels of attainment, particularly in leisure travel and tourism.

69. Resources in the hospitality, food preparation and service areas are poor and do not reflect the range and standards found within the industry. Although the college has invested in a new electronic point of sales system and a convection oven, much of the equipment is out dated and the range of hand tools is poor. The training restaurant is not of industrial standard. Students are limited in both the type of service they can experience and the numbers of customers they can deal with. The college has recognised these weaknesses and was planning to rectify them at the time of the inspection. The development of a second food outlet has improved the opportunities for students by increasing the volume of food production and sales to a more acceptable level. Accommodation and equipment for sport are satisfactory and students benefit from onsite outdoor pitches. These facilities are used well to develop students' learning and practical skills. The college has developed a football academy which has good links with professional football clubs. The involvement of professional players and coaches motivate students to perform at their best. Accommodation and resources for travel courses are not of industrial standard and students do not gain vocationally relevant experiences. Some classrooms used for leisure, travel and tourism teaching are of poor quality. Students have good access to computers and in hospitality and catering computers are particularly well used by teachers to enhance learning and achievement and by students to present their work in a professional manner.

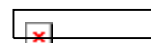
70. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory overall and is good in hospitality and catering. Assignments are well planned and the progress students make is carefully recorded and monitored in hospitality and catering. Students across the area are clear about the purpose of assessment and are given clear feedback about their progress. In hospitality and catering, teachers make good use of the information gained through assessment when planning lessons. Teachers do not give sufficient attention to correcting poor spelling and grammar when marking students' work. The literacy levels of many students in the area are low and impede their progress. Students do not take up the additional support offered by the college following initial assessment on enrolment.

71. Students are well supported. They are happy to approach their teachers and tutors when they have difficulties and the support they receive helps develop their self-confidence. Students from a wide range of different backgrounds work well together with a high degree of mutual respect and support. Procedures for monitoring attendance and following up absenteeism have been strengthened and there were signs of improving attendance at the time of the inspection.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams work well together. They review the curriculum on a regular basis and introduce new courses where appropriate. Quality assurance arrangements are understood by teachers and are implemented systematically. Managers and teachers draw up comprehensive action plans as a result of course reviews and set targets for improvement. Some of the targets are unrealistic. Retention and pass rates are monitored effectively at all levels and there is evidence of improved retention rates in 2003. Weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed and appropriate actions taken, but some improvements have yet to affect students' achievements.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on NVQ level 3 beauty therapy courses
- good progress made by most NVQ level 1 and ESOL hairdressing students
- much good teaching and learning
- good support for students on NVQ level 1 hairdressing courses.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing courses
- inappropriate accommodation for some lessons
- insufficient support for NVQ level 2 students.

Scope of provision

73. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy for some 800 students, 75% of whom follow beauty therapy programmes. Approximately 80% of students in the area are adults and 75% of students enrol on a part-time basis. Hairdressing and beauty therapy courses are offered at NVQ levels 2 and 3 and there is also NVQ level 1 provision in hairdressing. The college provides an extensive range of complementary therapy programmes, including reflexology, aromatherapy, cosmetic make-up, manicure and pedicure, body massage, Indian head massage, and Indian bridal make-up as well as courses in hairdressing on handling long hair, barbering and Afro/Caribbean styling. Many of the beauty therapy courses are provided on a modular basis and students can select modules to create a course appropriate to their needs and attend college at times that suit their personal circumstances. Courses are also offered during traditional holiday periods and provide practitioners with opportunities to update their skills.

Achievement and standards

74. Retention rates on NVQ level 3 beauty therapy courses are good and pass rates are well above the national average for colleges of a similar type. Retention rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing are poor and declining, although pass rates are improving. During the year of the inspection, students

across the area were making good progress. On the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course, for example, 40% of students had completed early and 67% of NVQ level 1 hairdressing students with ESOL completed early. All the students who joined the NVQ level 1 hairdressing course in September 2002 completed by December and progressed to the NVQ level 2 course.

75. The standard of attainment of most students is at, or above, that expected for their time on the course. Most students achieve commercial standards in their practical work and many attempt activities and develop skills that are of a higher level than the level required of their learning goals. For example, in a practical NVQ 2 hairdressing lesson, students used techniques that involved the application of several different colours to achieve highlight effects. Students worked with speed and confidence and were able to explain their choice of colours and the desired outcome.

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	15	10	48
		% retention	47	90	79
		% pass rate	14	89	71
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	73	74	56
		% retention	64	55	46
		% pass rate	70	46	92
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	108	39	41
		% retention	81	90	80
		% pass rate	92	83	73
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	64	18	18
		% retention	94	56	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Complementary therapies	3	No. of starts	*	57	65
		% retention	*	75	77
		% pass rate	*	95	84

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

76. Teaching and learning are good or better in most lessons and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers identify the learning needs of individual students, record them carefully and use the information when preparing lessons. Many students in hairdressing have additional learning needs or personal problems that affect their study, but the teaching methods adopted enable individual students to learn at their own pace. During lessons, students respond well to questions, show a good level of understanding of theory and are able to relate theory to practice. Teachers encourage students to relate theory to their own practical experiences and work experience. For example, students used the knowledge they gained from an anatomy and physiology lesson on the muscles of the face and neck to design a massage routine that would help tone those muscles.

77. Many students develop skills and basic knowledge at a faster rate than would normally be expected. During practical lessons, teachers emphasise the importance of timing, hygiene and health and safety to commercial practice. Whole class and small group activities are used to help

students develop not only practical skills and essential knowledge but also the key skills of communications, presentation and team building. In a lesson on make-up, the teacher encouraged students from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds to discuss how different cultural groups use make-up. The lesson developed not only students' understanding of their chosen subject, but also their communication skills and their understanding of cultural diversity. Handouts, projection slides and learning packs are professionally prepared and used during practical lessons to link theory to practice. Subject teachers work with literacy and numeracy specialists when preparing learning materials for NVQ level 1 students. Good use is made of diagrams and pictures to illustrate key points and written information is kept to the minimum. Students have many opportunities to broaden their experience through visits to shows, trade fairs and competitions and trips to manufacturers training centres in London and New York. Visits from outside stylists enable students to observe modern, commercial fashion techniques. Most students undertake a day's work experience a week.

78. Teachers in the area have good commercial experience. Full-time teachers undertake work-experience in local salons on a regular basis and part-time teachers bring valuable experience of contemporary practice to the area. Teachers use real-life examples to enrich their teaching. The college provides additional practical sessions in the evening which both teachers and students can attend as stylists. This allows a more commercial approach to be developed and improves the working relationships between teachers and students. Teachers undertake practical work in these sessions to maintain their commercial standards.

79. The assessment of students' work is rigorous. The quality of evidence presented for assessment in students' portfolios is good and effective use is made of real-life examples and photographic evidence. Most of the assignments produced by students are word-processed, including those from NVQ level 1 students. Teachers design assignments carefully and include opportunities for students to develop their key and basic skills and have them accredited. There are good links with the local community and employers and these are used effectively to ensure that students are assessed in the range of treatments required by the accrediting bodies. Some students visit local centres and old people's homes to provide hairdressing services and groups of people from such centres also attend the college.

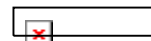
80. Internal verification procedures are rigorous and effective in ensuring that assessment practice and standards are maintained across both hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. Monitoring of assessments is thorough and students are encouraged to take part in monitoring their own progress and planning their work. Teachers provide students with detailed and constructive feedback and use information gained through assessment when planning lessons or assignments.

81. Students are well supported. Students receive good advice and guidance and tutorial support is effective. Students who need to develop their literacy or numeracy skills or English when they are speakers of other languages receive good support on NVQ level 1 courses. At the time of the inspection, there was insufficient additional support for NVQ level 2 students due to the long-term absence of a member of staff.

Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management are good. There have been significant improvements within the area since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, the commercial realism of the hairdressing salons and the quality of work-placement arrangements for students. Quality assurance arrangements are effective. Managers seek the views of teachers and students and act on them to bring about improvement. Teachers and managers work well together as a team. Teachers meet regularly to discuss curriculum issues and share good practice. Teachers are provided with good opportunities for personal development and managers are supportive of teachers' requests for external training and visits. There is, however, some unsatisfactory time tabling which has resulted in inappropriate accommodation being used for some lessons.

Visual arts, media and music



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

Strengths

- good development of students' technical and practical skills
- effective professional links
- good achievements in music
- good accommodation for music.

Weaknesses

- much unstimulating teaching in art and design and media
- low pass rates on some courses
- unsatisfactory leadership and management.

Scope of provision

83. The college provides a satisfactory range of courses for some 300 full-time students half of whom are aged 16 to 18. Most of the provision is at intermediate and advanced levels and is offered during the day on the main college campus. There is little part-time provision for adults. Accredited courses in art and design include GCE A level, AVCE single and double awards, GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses, a national diploma in fashion and GCE A levels. Media courses are limited to GCE AS media and film studies and GNVQ intermediate media. Contemporary popular music and courses in creating music through technology are offered at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. These courses attract many students who would not otherwise continue with their education. Approximately 43% of students in the area follow music courses. At the time of the inspection, the college was planning to introduce foundation and intermediate courses in fashion and an additional foundation course in music in September 2003.

Achievement and standards

84. Achievements overall are satisfactory. Pass rates on the advanced level, contemporary popular music course are consistently above the national average for colleges of a similar type. When

performing in public most students achieve good standards with some very good individual performances. At a concert held during the inspection week, groups and solo performers played several arrangements including their own compositions and exhibited the professionalism of mature performers. As well as a performance route, the area offers a technical course for students who do not wish to perform. Students on the music technology courses show very high levels of technical awareness and use the latest systems and software to support performers. The standard of students' work in music classes is good. Students who enrol and who do not play an instrument take up an instrument and make good progress in small group tuition sessions. Pass rates on some music courses have dropped to below the national average, but many students on these courses achieve individual units. Many students who start the intermediate level music courses with few qualifications gain partial achievements. Retention rates on music courses are low, but the college has taken action to improve retention rates and there were indications of improvement at the time of the inspection.

85. Pass and retention rates on GNVQ intermediate media have improved significantly and are good, but pass and retention rates on GCE AS media and film have dropped to below the national average. Most students on these courses master technical skills quickly and produce good practical work. Many students do not develop appropriate research skills and some students' writing abilities are weak.

86. Pass rates on general art and design courses are at the national average, but retention rates dropped well below the national average for fashion courses. A few students produce work of a high standard, but generally the work produced by students is pedestrian and lacks energy and creativity. Students do not use their sketchbooks sufficiently or carry out enough independent research to develop ideas for finished pieces. In fashion, students are competent in using professional methods of manufacture and make up garments to a high standard.

87. Punctuality is unsatisfactory across the area, but attendance is higher than the average for the college. Students are unaware of the importance of being punctual for rehearsals and recordings and disrupt lessons. Overall, progression rates to FE, or HE, or relevant employment are good across the area.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Contemporary popular music intermediate	2	No. of starts	24	27	20
		% retention	92	89	55
		% pass rate	91	83	27
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	13	15	15
		% retention	77	67	87
		% pass rate	70	0	100
Contemporary popular music advanced	3	No. of starts	33	33	56
		% retention	61	73	52
		% pass rate	95	74	86
AVCE art and design (single award)	3	No. of starts	*	15	17
		% retention	*	40	88
		% pass rate	*	67	87
GCE AS media	3	No. of starts	*	18	33
		% retention	*	78	70
		% pass rate	*	93	70

GCE AS art and design	3	No. of starts	*	7	39
		% retention	*	86	82
		% pass rate	*	100	75

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

88. Teaching in music is satisfactory or better and some teaching is very good. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in media and art and design and much of the teaching is uninspiring. In the best music lessons, teachers share their enthusiasm for their subject and instruments and instrumental teaching is very good. Teachers treat students as fellow performers and make frequent references to professional practice. In one lesson on vocals, the teacher demonstrated and coached sensitively, ensuring that the students never lost confidence. The students worked hard and accomplished the tasks set. Teachers place considerable emphasis on independent and collaborative learning through rehearsal and performance. Students are required to keep a performance log throughout the year. Many of these logs show that students develop a good understanding of the factors that contribute to successful performance and that students achieve wider personal goals. In the weaker art, design and media lessons, teachers fail to stimulate students. They set projects that are too easy and rely heavily on library books for resources. Students exploring poster design, for example, were passively copying or rearranging published images. There is insufficient emphasis on experimentation and students do not have enough opportunities to explore working in different ways and with different materials. In both media and art and design, handouts are poor and badly used. Teachers do not explain clearly their purpose and how they should be used.

89. Most students benefit from the effective professional links which have been established between the college and external organisations. Music courses at the college are run under a licensing agreement. The partner organisation provides work placements and live performance opportunities for students as well as training and networking opportunities for teachers. Fashion students gain work experience at well-known fashion houses. Teachers in the area are well qualified and many teach on a part-time basis. In music, they are frequently practising artists or performers in their own right. They set high standards and bring experience and commercial realism to lessons and help students develop valuable contacts. These teachers frequently enrich their lessons through anecdotes and references to the commercial world. Students following media and art and design courses, however, have few opportunities for enhancing their experience through trips and visits.

90. The assessment of students' work is not uniformly good. Students are not always clear about what is expected of them particularly in relation to homework and preparation for lessons. Course records are incomplete and the monitoring of students' progress is fragmented because it is shared across different teachers. Students' work is not always assessed thoroughly and the sequencing of projects is poorly planned. Although students evaluate their own performance frequently, teachers do not provide them with sufficiently detailed written feedback on a regular basis. Too many assignments are left until the end of courses and there is consequently little opportunity for helping weaker students.

91. Although students meet their teachers for tutorials regularly, the time is not always used productively and there is insufficient focus on the learning needs of individual students. There is insufficient recording of actions agreed by teachers and students during tutorials and insufficient sharing of information across teaching teams. There is no systematic analysis of students who are at risk of leaving their courses early and no systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of the support provided. There is effective support for students with hearing difficulties. Several students in art and design have signers and some teachers in the area are familiar with signing.

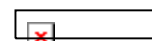
92. At the time of the inspection, the college had recently invested in improving music technology

facilities. The music suite is well designed and provides good facilities for practice, recording, teaching, assessment and performance. Equipment is not always maintained in working order and there is insufficient technician support in music. Facilities for art design and media are satisfactory. The learning resources centre has a limited stock of books relevant to the curriculum area and, at the time of the inspection, few had been recently purchased. Students have good access to general college computing facilities, but there is pressure on specialist facilities in media and music at certain times of the year.

Leadership and management

93. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The college has made little progress in addressing the weaknesses identified during the last inspection. In particular, weaknesses identified in the teaching of art and design have not been addressed. In music, courses are well structured but much of the provision in art, design and media is poorly planned and co-ordinated and schemes of work are superficial. The college experienced difficulties in filling three key vacancies over a long period of time and one post at programme area leader level remained vacant at the time of the inspection. Team meetings have not been held on a regular basis, communication with part-time teachers has been fragmented and key activities such as assessment planning, timetabling and development of schemes of work have not been given appropriate attention and have been poorly co-ordinated. A new manager for the area had recently been appointed at the time of the inspection and had started to take action to support weaker courses. It is too early to comment on the effectiveness of these actions.

Sociology, psychology and law



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

Strengths

- much good student work
- good teaching in most subjects
- rigorous, constructive marking and assessment of students' work
- effective leadership.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in many subjects

- poor attendance and punctuality
- some inappropriate teaching for the level of students' prior attainment
- inadequate learning support for law students.

Scope of provision

94. The college provides a narrow range of courses in the humanities. GCE A-level courses are available in three subjects, and can be taken over one or two years. Over 170 students enrol for these courses each year. Most are aged 16 to 18 and attend full-time courses, but the one-year courses are also popular with adults. There is an access course to HE, validated by the Open College Network (OCN), which attracts approximately 50 adult students a year.

Achievement and standards

95. Most students on GCE A-level courses have a good basic understanding of their subjects, and acquire appropriate factual knowledge. Many develop the critical and evaluative skills required to achieve high grades. Access to HE students produce work of a consistently high standard, especially in sociology. Students on the GCE AS law course have insufficient understanding of legal concepts and are not able to use the language of law appropriately. Psychology and sociology students can assess the comparative strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical perspectives, and are able to apply examples from their own experience to support their arguments. For example, sociology students used data and up-to-date material on feminist research in industrial society when preparing essays. Their work contains sensitive comment and analysis to demonstrate the extremes of feminist thinking in relation to access to medical care and attention. Some student work is impressive. Much of the set coursework contains well-written analysis and demonstrates students' abilities to evaluate evidence effectively. Course files are well organised and notes are appropriately employed and incorporated into essays and course modules. Standards are poor in both written and practical work in some GCE AS law lessons. Students have insufficient knowledge to choose and handle appropriate material to achieve their objectives. They do not develop ideas into reasoned arguments easily, and they take little pride in their work.

96. In contrast to the observed standard of students' work, pass rates on GCE A-level courses are mostly unsatisfactory. On GCE AS courses in law, sociology and psychology, pass rates are consistently below national averages for colleges of a similar type. In GCE A-level sociology, retention and pass rates improved significantly the year prior to the inspection and are above the national average, but with small numbers of students. Most students who enrol for GCE A-levels have low GCSE scores when they enter the college.

97. Attendance during the week of the inspection was poor. More than a third of the students were absent from the lessons observed. Frequently, some of the students present were hindered in their progress because they had missed previous lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sociology, psychology and law, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	*	34	33

		% retention	*	58	73
		% pass rate	*	36	36
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	8	16	6
		% retention	63	50	67
		% pass rate	63	19	50
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	17	58
		% retention	*	71	88
		% pass rate	*	53	47
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	27	18	9
		% retention	37	72	100
		% pass rate	11	61	100
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	37	37
		% retention	*	51	76
		% pass rate	*	14	46
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	39	23	2
		% retention	37	43	100
		% pass rate	5	13	100
Access to HE certificate	3	No. of starts	19	21	22
		% retention	58	57	64
		% pass rate	100	75	100

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

* course did not run

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

Quality of education and training

98. Most teaching in the area is good or better. Lessons are carefully planned and their content accurately reflects the requirements of awarding bodies. The majority of the students who attend lessons are keen to learn, and most teachers are able to hold their interest. For example, in a psychology lesson, students were helped to understand neurobiological theories of dreaming by applying theories to their own dreams that they had recorded in their diary. In some sociology lessons, students were encouraged to draw on their personal experiences to help them to understand topical debates about educational achievement and changes in student and family life. Teachers pay insufficient attention to developing their students' capacity to study effectively in some law lessons. Students are not given enough guidance on study techniques, and many students have neither the skills nor the self-discipline to work effectively on their own. Most teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and are effective at ensuring that students understand and learn basic factual knowledge. A comprehensive range of teaching methods is used across most courses. In GCE AS law lessons, teachers use a narrow range of teaching methods.

99. Students are provided with a good range of well-designed handouts and worksheets. The best of these provide demanding tasks for the student. For example, a psychology worksheet required students to assess which psychiatric illnesses are genuinely unique to particular social groups. Lessons in GCE A-level law make particularly good use of current examples of theft and morality,

taken from newspapers and websites.

100. There is a strong emphasis on relating theory to personal experience and observation. This was particularly effective in a psychology lesson in which students discussed their own perceptions and experiences of stress before moving on to analyse the academic theories and research evidence.

101. The systems for assessment and for monitoring and improving students' performance are adequate. Most students submit their coursework and produce sufficient written work. There is good emphasis on the development of the skills of analysis and evaluation. Most homework is marked promptly and accurately, and many of the teachers' comments give adequate guidance to students on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. There are formal arrangements to set targets to encourage them to improve.

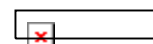
102. Student support is satisfactory. Induction of students to the college and their courses is effective and there is a strong tutorial system which provides good individual support for students. However, insufficient attention is given to supporting and monitoring the performance of weak students. The advice and help given to students with learning difficulties is effective and students receive sensitive support on matters relating to race and ethnicity. Access students receive good support to help them progress to HE.

103. The classrooms used for teaching humanities are satisfactory; some are good and provide appropriate learning resources such as IT stations and video recorders. However, they have no clear subject identity to stimulate students' interest. The stock of books in the learning resource centre is very good. In most subjects, the range and quality of reference material is more than might be expected in a small college. The books show frequent use.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course management is satisfactory and teachers work well together and share ideas in sociology and psychology. Although managers recognise the need to improve students' punctuality, attendance and pass rates, the measures introduced have yet to have impact although there were signs of improving retention rates during the year of the inspection. Quality assurance arrangements at course level, including lesson observations, are not sufficiently self-critical and consequently, teachers own perceptions of the quality of GCE AS courses are unrealistic.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good individual support for students on ESOL courses
- wide range of provision to meet students' needs
- good progression to FE and HE courses

- good use of learning mentors to improve retention rates on ESOL courses.

Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements to assess ESOL needs of students on vocational and academic courses
- insufficient development of students' speaking and listening skills
- inadequate strategy for ESOL support
- unsatisfactory accommodation.

Scope of provision

105. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time ESOL courses at seven levels from pre-foundation to advanced for some 430 full-time and 200 part-time students, the majority of whom are adults. All courses are set within the framework of national standards and Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and students leaving the college have a record of achievement that is understood nationally. The provision includes graded ESOL courses for adults, combined ESOL and vocational courses and additional individual or small group support for students on vocational or academic courses. Courses are held on the main college site and in community venues. All ESOL students study for internally accredited qualifications and those who wish to, and who are ready, can also take external qualifications. All students on full-time vocational and academic courses are assessed for additional support needs. Some eight students receive additional ESOL support and some 14 students follow combined ESOL and vocational courses.

Achievement and standards

106. Pass rates in internal tests and at elementary level for external accreditation are good. Pass rates for the Pitman Basic examinations are over 90%, although only those students considered by the college to be ready to take the examinations are entered for them. Retention rates have improved since the last inspection and are at the national average for colleges of a similar type. College data for the year of the inspection indicate further improvement in 2003. Progression to vocational and academic courses is good, with 25% of students from the higher-level courses moving on to other FE courses and 10% of ESOL students progress to HE. Although attendance is just above the national average, students miss over 25% of their lessons.

Quality of education and training

107. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is some unsatisfactory teaching. Students work hard, particularly to improve their grammatical accuracy. They are punctual and complete homework. In the better lessons, teachers use subjects that are of interest to their students to

stimulate learning. They create opportunities for students to develop their opinions and ideas in English and to exchange views and learn from each other. Teachers cater for students' different learning styles by using creative as well as academic tasks. For example, a new group of students introduced themselves through producing a drawing that included the flag of their country, a speech bubble with hello in their language, and pictures of their likes and dislikes. Others in the group then had to speculate in English about what the drawings meant. Many lessons, however, are restricted to grammatical exercises, mainly from textbooks. The topics covered in these books do not always stimulate students or relate to their immediate language needs or their interests. In most of the lessons observed during the inspection, students did not have sufficient opportunity to develop extended speaking skills or to practise their English in realistic situations, such as role-play, interviews or discussions. On the combined vocational and ESOL courses, teachers engage students' interest by using specially prepared English teaching materials closely linked to the vocational subject. This allows students to develop both language skills and vocational knowledge. Formal teaching is supplemented with activities such as external visits and a sports day and teachers put on a Christmas pantomime for their students.

108. Teachers are committed and meet regularly to share information, resources and activities that they have found to be effective. At the time of the inspection the college was planning training for Summer 2003, for vocational teachers to help them enable students who are not fluent English speakers to join vocational courses. Much of the accommodation used for ESOL teaching is unsatisfactory and affects learning. Several classrooms are too small and inhibit movement, poor ventilation affects concentration, and one classroom at a community site is used as a thoroughfare to another room. All full-time students have access to a specialist computer room for two hours a week, but classrooms used for ESOL teaching do not have computers. This limits opportunities for research and for students to develop their written work.

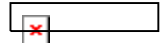
109. Assessment of students' work is rigorous on ESOL courses, with well-developed initial and on-going tests linked to national standards and the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. Test papers are well presented, with good illustrations and clear instructions to testers. All students can take the internal tests. In learning support, tests are inadequate to identify the specific needs of ESOL students on vocational or academic courses. They do not identify speaking or listening needs or specific grammar difficulties.

110. Teachers give good pastoral support through regular, timetabled tutorials and informally before and after lessons. The college has taken steps to improve retention rates further. A learning mentor follows up students who are absent and refers them for help to enable them to attend regularly, for example, with childcare or a travel pass. Where appropriate, teachers refer students to other services in the college such as the careers service. Academic support on ESOL courses is also good. Teachers set targets with students using information from assessment and record progress on individual learning plans. Teachers set homework tasks to enable students to practise and achieve individual targets and these are followed up and marked. Individual targets are not generally incorporated into lesson planning. However, cross-college additional language support for students on vocational and academic courses is insufficient to meet students' needs, with only 8 out of 44 identified students, receiving support at the time of the inspection.

Leadership and management

111. Although the management of individual courses in the area is satisfactory, the management of learning support does not adequately meet the needs of students with additional language needs. The college does not have a strategy for meeting the language needs of this diverse group of students across the whole curriculum. The ESOL programme has effective systems for course review and targets are set for recruitment, retention and pass rates. The achievement of targets is carefully monitored and successful action that leads to improvement identified. Curriculum managers provide effective support for teachers. They have produced a useful handbook that contains support material such as sample schemes of work mapped to the core curriculum and forms for lesson planning. Teachers are encouraged to take part in a variety of development activities.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities



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

Strengths

- good standard of work in lessons
- much good teaching and learning
- well-motivated and enthusiastic students
- good progression to FE, training and employment from vocational skills certificate courses
- effective use of and value for learning support assistants
- good development of students literacy and numeracy skills.

Weaknesses

- insufficiently detailed individual learning plans for many students
- narrow range of vocational courses with insufficient courses leading to accreditation
- poor retention rates on the vocational skills certificate courses.

Scope of provision

112. The college provides a part-time, non-accredited pre-entry level course for adult students and a two-year entry level, full-time programme designed to provide a choice of vocational options and work experience for young people. The range of vocational courses is narrow. The adult programme

is a flexible, modular course including recreational activities, craft, drama, music, catering, IT, and gardening with some personal and social development components. There are 15 young people on the vocational programme and 43 adult students on the part-time programme. In addition, the college has contracts with two franchised providers, based in the community. One contractor offers a work placement and training programme for 20 students and the other, based in a community theatre, offers a performing arts course for 10 students.

Achievement and standards

113. Students achieve a good standard of work during lessons and their portfolios of work are of a high standard. Their work is carefully produced, neatly arranged and appropriately corrected and marked. Students take pride in their work and teachers attractively display individual and collective efforts. In one catering lesson, students had made pizzas. They were able to recall the ingredients needed, the method of production and their personal preferences for toppings. They had shown creativity in arranging their toppings and combining ingredients. There are poor retention rates on the first year vocational skills certificate course, at 52%. Students enrol for a two-year programme, but many leave before the start of the second year.

114. There are insufficient accredited courses for students on the adult programme and there are few progression opportunities. Modules are largely recreational or social. Students develop knowledge and skills, but are not accredited for their achievements. Some students have been on these programmes for over 10 years.

115. There are good progression rates to FE, training and employment from the vocational skills certificate courses. Of the 50 students that left between 2000 and 2003, 24 have gone into FE or training and 6 into employment.

Quality of education and training

116. There is much good teaching and learning. Teachers respond well to students' needs. In one lesson, as part of the hobby skills option for adult students, the teacher demonstrated skill in contextualising numeracy teaching as part of a mock auction. Artefacts and a mallet were introduced as props. A student played the part of the auctioneer and the rest of the group participated as they made bids to purchase the artefacts. The student was able to increase the bids by multiples of ten pounds. All students contributed to the exercise and were excited about the activity. They were able to recall auctions seen on television programmes and made great efforts to use appropriate language to fit the scenario. The teacher made reference to previous lessons and encouraged students to make links between ideas introduced prior to the role-play and the auction room scenario. Students are well motivated and enthusiastic in lessons. They are eager to please their teachers, achieve the set tasks or assignments and respond well to feedback on their performance. There is effective use of learning support assistants for students with a wide range of abilities and signers for deaf students. Students make good progress in lessons through well-targeted use of one-to-one teaching, support and coaching. Students undertake work experience and there are some good links with employers through well-established contacts.

117. The monitoring of students' progress on the vocational course is good. The individual learning plans used for students on this course address a wide range of learning needs with particular emphasis on numeracy and literacy needs. Targets for improvements in performance are set and are monitored through tutorial sessions every six weeks and new targets set. The work of students on the vocational skills courses is appropriately marked with good written and verbal feedback. Many students on the adult course do not have sufficiently detailed individual learning plans. These plans do not contain clearly defined, stepped targets for individual students relating to vocational or class activity and tasks. The monitoring of students' progress on this course is not sufficiently rigorous. Some teachers adapt the individual learning plans used for vocational skills certificate courses for the adult students.

118. Students are well supported. Induction procedures are appropriate, tutorials are effective and students receive good one-to-one support within and outside the classroom. Learning support

assistants are used effectively and there are good working relationships between teachers, support workers and students. Two support workers are teacher trained. The college provides specialist communicators for deaf students and provides specific courses to train teachers and mainstream students in British sign language. The provision and support for deaf learners in mainstream provision is effective and prominent within the college. The support provided for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills is good. Literacy and numeracy support is appropriately contextualised and carefully integrated with other learning activities. Teachers draw students' attention to spelling and grammar and encourage students to sound out words as they read task instructions and assignment details. They produce written material to accompany photographic and practical evidence of their achievements. The literacy and numeracy support for adults is informal and is not detailed in the individual learning plans of many adult students.

119. The area has appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support assistants. Students have access to computer equipment in many classrooms and good access to mainstream college facilities. The accommodation for the students in the area is appropriate with some good IT facilities for specialist IT courses, including lap top computers and specialist projectors.

Leadership and management

120. Leadership and management are satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, the programme area leader was on long-term sick leave and the other manager had recently left post. Other part-time and full-time teachers had accepted additional responsibilities and were making great efforts to co-ordinate activities. Teachers meet to discuss and review courses on a regular basis and record and monitor their actions. Although good progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses identified during the last inspection, there is insufficient long-term planning to develop new initiatives. The college has acknowledged the need to increase opportunities for vocational training and for working with specialist agencies for disabled people. There are insufficient formal links with external disability agencies and support organisations. At the time of the inspection, recent efforts had been made to involve employers in special projects such as a partnership with the construction industry in order to increase vocational options for students. Senior managers have developed links with local special needs schools and there is an annual open day at the college for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are prominent within the college and there is a strong emphasis on social inclusion. Students are able to access mainstream provision and services.

121. There is appropriate quality assurance and monitoring of the franchised provision, including regular visits to providers. Teaching is observed, records kept and feedback given. Health and safety and equality of opportunity are monitored during visits.

Literacy and numeracy

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

Strengths

- high standards of teaching and learning on separate special programmes
- effective help for students on vocational programmes who receive support
- good individual learning plans and review procedures.

Weaknesses

- restricted range and scope of separate special provision
- unsatisfactorily low proportion of students receiving literacy and numeracy support
- unsuitable teaching accommodation.

Scope of provision

122. The provision comprises a special programme of literacy and numeracy courses for adults offered as short courses and over one year. There is also a basic skills course for adults with mental health difficulties and a return to learn course provided one day a week. Two classes are organised in collaboration with a local hospital and are taught in the workplace. Literacy and numeracy support is provided, mainly for full-time students, on vocational programmes. Support is provided in a variety of ways including separately timetabled lessons for small groups of students from the same course, in-class support provided by a specialist tutor, and as one-to-one support for students with specific learning needs in literacy and numeracy. During 2002/03, there were 64 adults on the programme and 72 students, mostly adults, had received support at some time during the year

Achievement and standards

123. Students work towards individual learning goals. Their achievement is recognised with a college certificate. At the time of the inspection, the college had recently introduced an assessment policy and procedure that sets standards and describes the criteria for assessment for these courses. Pass rates are generally high, indicating that most students achieve their individual learning goals. In 2002/03, 105 students were entered for the national qualifications in adult literacy and adult numeracy. Retention rates have improved and were good in 2001/02. The overall retention rate across the programme in 2001/02 was 93%, and some short courses had a retention rate of 100%. The retention rate for students receiving literacy and numeracy support in 2001/02 was 85%. Progression rates for students receiving support are good. A total of 53% of students receiving support in 2001/02 progressed to other courses within the college compared with 43% for students without support.

124. Most students make at least satisfactory progress and produce work at appropriate levels. They gain in confidence and develop other personal skills. Teachers place a helpful emphasis on the development of learning and study skills, and encourage students to become as independent as possible. Levels of attendance are good. In the observed lessons, the rate of attendance was 81% compared with the national average of 72% for this area in 2001/02.

Quality of education and training

125. Much of the teaching is good on the special programme and in learning support. Lessons are well planned. For example, literacy lessons often include opportunities to practise all four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Teachers take careful account of individual learning needs. They make good use of up-to-date and authentic learning materials. In some lessons, there is effective use of ILT to enhance learning. For example, in one lesson, students worked on letter writing. They re-wrote a badly written letter by playing a game of 'computer consequences'. Each student worked on a small part of the letter on-screen, and then moved along to edit their

neighbour's work on the next computer, and so on around the group. This succeeded in engaging the students and helping them to learn. In learning support sessions, teachers place learning tasks in the context of the students' main area of study. Students are engaged in their lessons. Teachers make good use of a wide range of teaching and learning methods. Students respond well and demonstrate that they acquire new skills. In the best lessons, they are enthusiastic and enjoy their studies. Homework is set and used to extend the development of skills learned during lessons. In some lessons, teachers do not differentiate sufficiently the tasks and materials to take account of the full range of ability of students. Some teachers fail to consolidate learning when moving from one activity to another, make insufficient checks on learning and do not make sufficiently clear the learning objectives for classroom activities.

126. The initial assessment procedure is effective for students entering the separate special basic skills programmes, but less so for students on vocational programmes who need support with their literacy and numeracy. Induction is thorough and effective for students on the special programme. Individual learning plans are effective. They are based on the outcomes from initial assessment, and have clear short-term goals, targets to reach the goals and a description of interim steps. Teachers regularly review progress towards targets, record this and provide clear feedback to students. Students understand their learning targets and know what they need to do to improve. Records of progress are attached to the individual learning plans and provide a clear description of learning gains. Until recently, this area did not have an internal verification procedure.

127. The programme area has two full-time teachers in addition to the programme area leader. There are also 13 hourly paid teachers. Teachers have good specialist competence and knowledge. There is scope to develop further and add to the stock of learning materials. Some teaching equipment is not of a good standard, but the curriculum area has benefited from the provision of personal computers with appropriate software for developing basic skills. Teaching accommodation has improved during the last two years. There is a specialist teaching room with a store of learning materials. Most other rooms are dispersed around the college and lack ease of access to specialist resources. A few teaching rooms used for teaching literacy and numeracy are not fit for purpose.

Leadership and management

128. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers ensure that teachers have a good understanding of recent national curriculum developments and that they apply effective techniques in their teaching. There is good team working and there are meetings of the whole team twice a term. Programme area policies and procedures are understood and implemented by staff. There is a strong commitment to high standards, but quality assurance arrangements are still developing. Although the college is in an area with low levels of literacy and numeracy in the local population, the scale of the provision is inadequate and the college has not developed and implemented an appropriate strategy for addressing this need. The provision of literacy and numeracy across the college lacks effective planning, and monitoring and is not sufficiently responsive to needs. The special programme is small and is limited in scope. The take-up of support for literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactorily low, and has decreased during the three years prior to the inspection.

Part D: College data

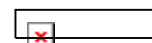
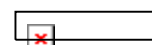


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18%	19+%
-------	--------	------



1	25	22
2	31	20
3	33	14
4/5	0	0
Other	11	44
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments
Science and mathematics	394	249	9
Land-based provision	0	15	0
Construction	0	53	1
Engineering, technology and manufacture	0	0	0
Business administration, management and professional	196	206	6
Information and communication technology	470	784	17
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	244	355	8
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	137	671	11
Health, social care and public services	15	244	4
Visual and performing arts and media	257	413	9
Humanities	119	97	3
English, languages and communication	301	195	7
Foundation programmes	666	1,137	25
Total	2,799	4,419	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

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	109	80	158	212	199	137
	Retention rate %	59	70	74	68	66	72
	National average %	77	78	79	74	77	80
	Pass rate %	86	66	48	79	70	82
	National average %	57	63	65	58	66	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	712	630	546	616	672	614
	Retention rate %	72	70	73	66	76	76
	National average %	73	74	74	75	77	78
	Pass rate %	78	77	71	79	76	81
	National average %	63	67	67	62	65	65
3	Starters excluding transfers	462	470	847	569	607	588
	Retention rate %	63	57	69	69	68	68
	National average %	75	75	74	76	78	77
	Pass rate %	53	62	58	69	66	72
	National average %	66	68	69	61	64	66
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	43	15	*
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	70	80	**
	National average %	78	77	**	83	84	83
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	80	8	**
	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 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1999 to 2001: College ISR.

** too few students to provide a valid calculation*

*** data unavailable*

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)	52	37	11	60
Level 2 (intermediate)	65	26	9	34
Level 1 (foundation)	71	23	6	17
Other sessions	60	37	3	30
Totals	59	33	8	141

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

Office for
Standards
in Education

