



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Arts Institute at Bournemouth

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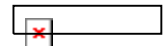
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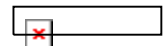
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Basic information about the institution

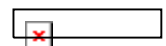


Name of institution:	Arts Institute at Bournemouth
Type of institution:	Higher Education Institute
Principal:	Stuart Bartholomew
Address of institution:	Wallisdown Poole Dorset BH12 5HH
Telephone number:	01202 363203
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Chair of governors:	Nigel Beale
Unique reference number:	130654
Name of reporting inspector:	Lynda Cole
Dates of inspection:	24-28 November 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the institution



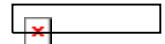
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth became a higher education (HE) sector college in July 2000, having previously been a further education (FE) institution. It is located at Wallisdown, on the border between Bournemouth and Poole. The institute specialises in art, design and media. Approximately 30% of the provision is in FE. Courses offered are mostly at level 3 with provision in general art and design, fine art, graphic design, multimedia and photography. Nearly all provision is located on the main institute campus with one part-time course offered at a local adult education centre. The

the Queen's Medal for Further and Higher Education in recognition of its work in film and animation.

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth primarily serves the conurbation of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch, but many students travel from outlying rural areas. These are predominately white European areas with just over 3% of the population in Bournemouth Unitary Authority of minority ethnic origin, and this is reflected in the students attending the FE provision. A small number of overseas students are enrolled on FE courses. In 2002/03 there were 398 full-time students and 445 part-time students. At the time of the inspection, there were a total of 468 students enrolled on foundation studies and national diplomas. There are around 400 part-time students on accredited programmes, most of which are short courses.

The institute's mission is that 'The Arts Institute at Bournemouth is committed to being a leading provider of education opportunities in arts, design and media. We believe in equality of opportunity and widening participation within a specialist academic framework which provides strong support for learning, teaching and professional development'.

How effective is the institution?



The institute provides good teaching and learning opportunities for most of its FE students. It has developed good links with external groups to widen participation. Standards of most students' work are high. Overall achievement rates are good and have improved over the last three years. Retention rates are low on some courses, particularly the part-time foundation studies in art and design and the national diploma in graphic design. Inspectors judged provision in both graded areas as good overall with unsatisfactory provision in one national diploma. Guidance, induction procedures and support are good, and the academic support students receive in lessons is particularly good.

Key strengths

- good support for students
- good standards of work by most students
- excellent resources
- clear strategic direction and good leadership of the FE provision
- good management information
- good teaching on most courses

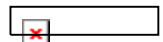
- o strong external links
- o thorough and realistic self-assessment.

What should be improved

- o provision on the national diploma in graphic design
- o students' attendance and punctuality
- o the proportion of very good or better teaching
- o retention rates on a number of courses.

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
Foundation studies in art and design	Good. Much teaching and learning is good, with well-planned assignments. Pass and retention rates on the full-time course are high. Students are highly motivated and explore ideas thoroughly using excellent specialist resources within a stimulating HE environment. Poor attendance and punctuality impair learning and there have been low retention rates on the part-time course.
Diplomas in design	Good. The contributory grade for national diploma in graphic design is unsatisfactory . There is good teaching and learning in the national diplomas in photography, multimedia and fine art, and students

	achieve high standards of creative and technical expertise. There are high pass rates on the national diploma in photography. Students benefit from good academic support and good specialist resources and facilities. The national diploma in graphic design is unsatisfactory with low retention rates and insufficient development of students' ideas and skills.
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How well is the institution led and managed?

Leadership and management of the FE provision are good. Overall, students' pass rates have improved in the last three years, and the institute has gained CoVE status for lens-based media. However, there are still some courses with poor retention rates, and provision in the national diploma in graphic design is unsatisfactory. A strong senior management team, supported by governors, sets clear targets and monitors progress. Management at course level is satisfactory. Appropriate quality assurance arrangements are in place and in most cases they are used effectively to improve provision. Self-assessment is conducted thoroughly and is realistic. Priorities identified in the strategic plan are supported by responsible financial management. Although analysis of available data is not always rigorous, accurate and accessible management information systems inform management decision-making at all levels. The institute provides good value for money.

To what extent is the institution educationally and socially inclusive?

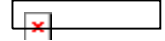
The institute's response to social and educational inclusion is good. Effective consultation takes place with local organisations and there are good community links. The institute successfully widens participation by running a significant number of workshops and activities during the summer and at weekends for a range of people within the community, including children as young as eight and adults and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Particularly good links with local schools are used to promote participation and to encourage students to progress to FE. Initial advice and guidance for students is good. Support for literacy, numeracy and language needs of students is satisfactory. With the recent appointments of a disability officer and an officer responsible for widening participation, the institution complies with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2000 (SENDA). It fulfils its duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001. Monitoring of equal opportunities is satisfactory with data collected on the ethnic backgrounds and gender of students. These data are analysed and actions have been taken to promote greater participation from under-represented groups. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds in the institute is similar to that in the local community.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Students receive good guidance and support. There is effective guidance onto courses and good induction to the institute. Initial assessment is satisfactory and there are appropriate procedures for addressing students' individual learning needs. Students receive relevant support both on personal and academic issues from tutors and teachers. There is effective use of tutorials to support students.

matters such as counselling, accommodation, welfare and finance. Careers education is responsive to the needs of students and provides effective guidance on progression to employment and HE.

Students' views of the institution



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

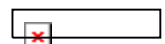
What students like about the institution

- good opportunities to use a wide range of very good learning resources
- support and guidance given by teachers, technicians and the student advice centre
- advice and guidance on applying to HE
- good range of relevant programmes and courses
- pleasant accommodation and facilities.

What they feel could be improved

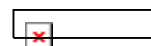
- space in some teaching accommodation
- opening hours of the facilities
- availability of car-parking spaces.

Other information



The institution inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the institution. Once published, the institution has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The institution's action plan must show what action the institution 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 should send to Ofsted only action plans from institutions that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The institution as a whole



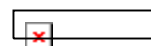
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	71	25	5
19+*			
Learning 16-18	73	23	5
19+*			

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).

** it was not possible to differentiate in lessons between the two age groups*

Achievement and standards



1. Students' achievements are good overall, and have improved over the last three years. Full-time courses are taken mainly by young people, although there are a significant minority of adults on the foundation studies in art and design and the national diploma courses in multimedia, fine art and graphic design. Most students on the national diploma in photography are adults. Nearly all students on part-time courses are adults.

2. On the full-time foundation studies in art and design, nearly all students are successful. In 2002/03, over 90% of the students who started the course completed it. Retention rates have risen gradually over the last three years. The pass rate was 97% in 2001, 98% in 2002 and 99% in 2003.

3. On national diploma courses, pass and retention rates are more variable. Across the national diplomas as a whole, just over 60% of those who started two-year courses in 2001 completed them successfully in 2003. Pass rates on the national diploma in photography are consistently high at over

90% in each of the last three years. On the national diploma in multimedia, pass rates reached 100% in 2002, but declined to 83% in 2003. Pass rates on the national diploma in graphic design were satisfactory in 2001 and 2003, but were low in 2002. Retention rates on the national diploma in graphic design are unsatisfactory, having declined over the last three years from 79% in 2001 to 62% in 2003. The pass rate in the first year of the national diploma in fine art in 2003 was high, at 96%, although too many students failed to complete the course. Actions taken recently to increase the proportion of students who complete national diploma courses have focused on improving the quality of advice and guidance, strengthening student support and raising attendance rates. Although it is too soon to judge the impact of these measures, indications are that fewer students are leaving courses early.

4. Most students on part-time courses are adults. The proportion of students who complete the two-year part-time foundation studies in art and design is low, at 61% in 2003. However, all students who completed the course were successful. There is also a range of part-time courses, mainly in creative arts and information technology (IT). Few students complete these courses and achieve the full qualification. Most students enrol in order to develop specific skills, and do not seek full accreditation.

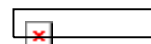
5. Most students' work is creative, thoroughly developed and shows expressive exploration of ideas. On the foundation studies in art and design course, students' research is rigorous and exploratory work is extensive. They develop effective skills of analysing and evaluating each other's work and are articulate and confident when expressing judgements. Students' experimentation in a range of underpinning skills in basic art and design across specialist disciplines is good. The quality of students' drawing and life drawing is less impressive. Projects and assignments introduce students to complex and difficult concepts that are suitably challenging. Sketchbooks demonstrate that many students are developing individual styles and creativity. On the part-time course, too many students do not complete work that shows potential.

6. Many students on national diploma courses produce work of a high professional standard. They demonstrate good independent research and study skills, and can relate their studies to the work of contemporary artists. In multimedia, students use a wide range of professional software programmes to produce work of a high standard, underpinned by good basic art and design skills including drawing and composition. There is some excellent work in fine art.

7. On the national diploma in graphic design, the standard of students' work is less impressive. Their skills and ideas are underdeveloped. The quality of work in students' sketchbooks is weak, and their observational drawing skills are not well developed. There is an over-dependence on secondary sources, and insufficient engagement in the creative processes that lead to high-quality design work.

8. Attendance is poor, at 76%, and many students are not punctual. In some classes, prompt attendance was particularly poor, with students missing important elements of lectures and briefings.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 44 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in just over 70% of lessons observed, satisfactory in 25% and unsatisfactory in just over 4%. Only one lesson was judged to be outstanding. There was a significantly higher percentage of good or better teaching and learning on the foundation studies course than on the national diplomas.

10. In the best lessons, teachers plan stimulating activities using well-devised assignment briefs that are clearly linked to good schemes of work. Teachers have extensive creative expertise and enthusiastically impart their knowledge and experience to students. Students learn new technical skills and collaborate effectively in group activities which helps them learn to evaluate and criticise

their own and others' work.

11. Teachers develop most students' technical skills to high professional standards whilst also concentrating on the importance of developing basic design and drawing skills. Most students are highly motivated and confident in using a range of media. Detailed well-written handouts provided in lessons give students useful additional information.

12. There is increased emphasis on greater integration of key skills aspects within the art and design curriculum. This is beginning to happen on some courses where, for example, communications teachers work in the same lessons as vocational teachers to develop students' use of language to describe and evaluate sketchbooks.

13. In less successful lessons, teachers fail to develop students' ability to explore concepts and ideas with sufficient originality and do not challenge students' views in discussion groups. In a few lessons, teaching is over-complicated with frequent detailed instructions that interrupt learning. In one formal lecture, the teacher relied too heavily on reading from notes and did not sufficiently check students' understanding.

14. The institute is situated on a single site in attractive purpose-built accommodation, with some outreach work undertaken locally in an adult education centre. Accommodation planning for future developments is good with a phased programme of new buildings, including 20 incubation units for graduates wishing to work in the creative industries. Refurbishment of existing areas has included an excellent lecture theatre and new workshops and studios. Some accommodation used by fine art students is too small and impacts on the students' ability to work on large-scale pieces. Recreation areas include a students' union, a small refectory and a bar that also provides food. There is suitable access for students with restricted mobility. Signage is not very clear around the site, particularly signs to show where the main reception is situated. Equipment is of a high professional standard. Students benefit greatly from access to specialist resources, particularly in photography and multimedia, which they share with HE students. Each course has designated rooms with specialist equipment and computers with relevant software. IT resources are excellent and facilities are well managed. Some students are beginning to use the virtual learning environment that has recently been developed for retrieving assignment briefs and teachers' additional materials. Progress is under way to resolve the occasional problems concerning electricity supply that cause servers to fail temporarily.

15. The institute library is well designed, has an extensive book stock, and an excellent range of journals, videos and CDs as well as specialist computers with relevant software. The Design Collection is a registered museum housed within the institute library which includes numerous classic examples of product and industrial design, print media, technology, packaging and fashion. This collection provides students and staff with a high standard teaching reference, study and research resource.

16. Staff are suitably well qualified and many have valuable professional or commercial experience that they use effectively in lessons. The institute has successfully recruited a large number of part-time visiting lecturers who are practitioners in specialist fields and share their current commercial practice. Most teachers have a teaching qualification and all those without a teaching qualification are encouraged and supported to gain one. Many staff, including visiting lecturers, have gained professional updating through specialist training courses offered at the institute as well as training on more general issues concerning teaching and learning. Staff are able to submit applications for funds and time to undertake specialist research activities as well as support for exhibitions at a regional or national level. Technician support for specialist areas such as three-dimensional design workshops, photography and printmaking and multimedia are particularly good. In the three-dimensional design workshop area, students are given varied levels of access through a badging scheme. Technicians are able to see at a glance when students are using a machine and whether they have appropriate training and authority to use it.

17. The assessment of students' work and the monitoring of their progress are satisfactory overall. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that initial assessment is effective in diagnosing any additional support needs that students may have. Support offered as a consequence of this is good,

particularly for students diagnosed as dyslexic. Students on the national diploma programmes are also assessed to identify their literacy and numeracy levels, and their preferred learning styles. The links between these assessments and the individual learning plans agreed with students are not clear. However, individual learning needs are usually met through effective tutorial and subject support for individual students. On all courses, students' progress is reviewed regularly in tutorials, and staff effectively help individual students to understand assessment criteria. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are informed if there are serious concerns about a students' progress or attendance. An open evening is held in September for parents to find out about the full-time courses and the assessment criteria.

18. On national diploma courses, students are given clear directions on how to improve the quality of their work. Before they start project work, students receive clear assignment briefs outlining both the assessment process and the assessment criteria. Work is assessed thoroughly and, through written feedback, individual discussions and group tutorials, students learn how to evaluate the quality of their own work and what they need to do in order to progress further. In multimedia, assessment and feedback sheets are particularly constructive, identifying strengths and weaknesses in detail. Assessment is fair and accurate and matches awarding body criteria. External verifiers' reports confirm the reliability of the institute's internal standardisation procedures.

19. Procedures for ensuring that assessment is rigorous take place on foundation studies in art and design. However, the quality of written feedback given to students is not sufficiently evaluative to help them improve. The format used to record the findings from assessment is unnecessarily complicated and, as a consequence, is not used effectively by all teachers. There is lack of rigour in the internal verification process.

20. The institute provides a good range of programmes and courses that meets the needs of students. The strategic plan emphasises the institute's focus on specialist FE at level 3, with links to other providers to offer progression routes from level 2. Students are able to choose from a good range of different specialist pathways on foundation studies in art and design. There is also a good range of national diplomas. No national diplomas are available in fashion or textiles, but the institute has plans to introduce the national diploma in design in September 2004. There is a range of part-time courses in art, design, media, photography and information and communications technology (ICT). Most of the courses offer progression routes to HE, both within the institute and to other HE establishments. The institute also offers a suitable range of accredited and non-accredited courses as part of the local adult education provision. Some of the success rates on the accredited courses are low, but students do not always intend to complete all aspects of their qualifications. There are numerous examples of students progressing from these courses to part-time and full-time courses at the institute.

21. Most students undertake work towards key skills qualifications in communication, application of number or IT, predominantly at level 2. Some students also study the wider key skills of improving their own learning, working with others and problem solving, again at level 2. The institute is integrating the teaching of key skills into art and design lessons. Success rates for key skills are poor but have improved slightly compared to previous years.

22. Good links with the local community are used to widen participation in education and training. A widening-participation officer was appointed in 2002 and oversees a range of projects. Saturday art schools and summer schools are used to promote participation and to encourage students to progress to FE. There are very good links with local schools, several of which previously had low rates of progression to FE. Staff from the institute visit schools to talk about courses. School pupils also visit the institute to sample some of the opportunities available and to take part in project work and student presentations, such as an annual fashion show. A few students have had opportunities to undertake work placements with local employers, particularly those involved in the photographic industry. Work-experience opportunities are otherwise limited. Some students have also had opportunities to take part in community projects, such as developing a website for a local gallery and producing murals for the council. Full-time students take short accredited qualifications as part of their main programme of study, such as careers guidance and study skills. There is a good programme of visiting lecturers with extensive professional and commercial experience both on foundation and national diploma courses. Students also attend careers events and visit exhibitions

and galleries, both in the United Kingdom and abroad.

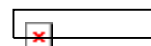
23. There are good support and guidance arrangements for students. Detailed information about the institute is made available to prospective applicants. A well-planned sequence of presentations, visits to the institute and interviews with specialist staff help to ensure that students are prepared for the transition from school to the institute and are placed on appropriate courses. Induction arrangements are effective and ensure that most students are able to settle into institute routines and are well aware of the demands of their courses.

24. There is good personal support for students. Students have access to a good range of counselling, accommodation, welfare and financial advice through the student advice centre. Students are aware of the support available from the centre and their feedback on the services provided is very positive. Students have satisfactory access to relevant and effective support on personal and academic issues from tutors. Tutors advise and guide students effectively to make good progress and move onto HE or employment. Tutorials are arranged on an individual basis and all students have at least one tutorial per term. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality has improved, but some poor attendance and a lack of punctuality was observed during the inspection.

25. The initial diagnosis of students' learning needs is satisfactory. Screening tests are used for communication skills, and the institute carries out additional testing for students who appear to have dyslexia. Satisfactory additional learning support is provided within lessons by learning support staff and on an individual basis outside lessons. Staff at the institute are particularly aware of the needs of students with dyslexia. Tutorial records are kept of learning support sessions, but some of the recording lacks detail and the targets set are often insufficiently specific. Analysis of retention and pass rates amongst students who receive support show that the support received has a positive impact on retention rates, but limited impact on pass rates. In addition to the services supplied by learning support, many students benefit from good subject-specific support from teachers at group tutorials within courses. Most students are also confident to ask subject teachers for additional guidance and support, and are appreciative of the individual help they receive from teachers.

26. The careers education and guidance support provided by the institute guidance staff and the provision made by Connexions is effective. Students applying for HE courses are supported particularly well and benefit from guidance from HE staff at the institute. There is a well-organised annual careers week, involving speakers from HE institutions and employers, and students also attend external careers events. The careers library is well stocked and has useful additional resources to support students applying to HE. Students' destinations are carefully collected and reported, although there has been little analysis of this information.

Leadership and management



27. Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, the institute has transferred to the HE sector, successfully completed several building and refurbishment projects, gained CoVE status for lens-based media and has significantly increased its turnover. The FE portfolio has not changed notably since the last inspection in terms of size or content. Students' achievements have improved overall in this period. However, retention rates on some courses are low and provision in national diploma graphic design is unsatisfactory.

28. Strategic leadership is good. The FE provision at the institute is led by a strong senior management team. The principal is well supported by the vice-principal who has day-to-day responsibility for FE provision. Senior managers set clear objectives and monitor progress towards these objectives on a regular basis. The aim to expand HE provision and to maintain FE at its current size, as outlined in the strategic plan and three-year development plan for the local LSC, is clearly understood by staff and governors. Through the extensive committee structure, school boards, the FE forum and an academic board, a wide range of staff take the opportunity to contribute

to strategic decision making.

29. Governors are well informed about the financial and academic performance of the institution. They make an enthusiastic contribution to aspects of the work of the institute. One governor uses her experience and interests to contribute to the support of overseas students studying at the institute. The four committees of the corporation - strategic development; finance and resources; audit and human resources; and student affairs - meet regularly. They receive a range of reports, discuss agenda items and are effective in evaluating the FE provision.

30. Management at course level is satisfactory. The FE provision has recently been brought together into one of three academic schools and a new management structure is in place. Changes to course leadership on two courses have led to some instability in planning but most teams on FE courses work well together. They have clearly defined responsibilities and a commitment to improving high standards. Course leaders are aware of their targets for student recruitment, pass and retention rates and monitor them effectively. Aspects of management on some courses are weak. For example, the management of assessment procedures on the foundation studies course is insufficiently rigorous, and managers have been slow to take action to improve the quality of provision in graphic design.

31. Appropriate quality assurance arrangements, as outlined in an internal FE quality handbook, are in place. Self-assessment by course teams is good. The annual monitoring of courses is informed by external verifiers' reports, achievement data and student perception surveys. Peer teaching observations, staff reviews and good continuing professional development are beginning to impact positively on the quality of teaching and to encourage staff to share good practice. The self-assessment report acknowledges as a weakness the low retention rates on some courses over the last three years. While several different systems are in place to address this issue, they have yet to have any significant impact on retention rates on some courses.

32. The institute has productive links with a number of schools, the local LSC and regional creative industries employers. Students benefit from these links through employment opportunities and workshops. CoVE status has enabled the institute to become involved in a range of projects with schools and the local community. The CoVE steering group benefits from external membership from employers. The institute works effectively with other agencies. With social services, for example, they have provided arts and crafts activities for young people with severe learning difficulties.

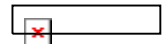
33. The institute is successful in implementing its commitment to widening participation. It runs a wide range of weekend workshops, activities and summer schools for the local community, particularly for people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also for young people aged under 16. Pupils at one local school, for example, were delighted to be able to take part in a prestigious fashion show at the institute. For mature students, the modular approach of part-time courses provides them with good access to specialist resources and opportunities to retrain. All students on FE programmes have a good range of progression opportunities within the institute.

34. The institute fulfils its duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001. Many staff have attended training sessions on disability, equality and diversity and recent appointments of a disability officer and a widening-participation officer have ensured compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and the SENDA. Students' achievement data are broken down by ethnicity, gender and age but there is insufficient analysis of this information to effectively inform self-assessment. There were several examples of good equality of opportunity practice.

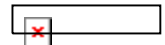
35. Management information systems meet the needs of managers and teachers. Data on students' achievement were readily available for inspectors. An efficient finance team provides budget holders with regular up-to-date management accounts, information on enrolments and progress against targets. Managers have a clear understanding of course viability and staff costs. Course teams receive timely data on students' achievements to use for their annual course monitoring reviews and self-assessment. However, management information is not yet used effectively to monitor or improve students' attendance.

36. The institute exercises responsible financial management. FE funding is not audited separately by the LSC but the institution is subject to audit by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Recent refurbishments and building projects have been well managed. Resources are of a high standard and the maintenance of accommodation is exemplary. While FE students represent approximately 30% of the students, they have access to all of these resources. An innovative project to develop an enterprise pavilion, with 20 incubation units, is being funded by the regional development agency to provide people with the opportunity to run their own business. Staff and other resources are deployed effectively and efficiently. The average class size during the inspection was 16. It is difficult to separate provision for HE and FE students but, on the basis of students' achievements, average class size and resources, the institute provides good value for money for its FE students.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Foundation studies in art and design



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on the full-time course

- good standards of research and exploratory work

- good teaching and learning

- excellent specialist resources

- good academic support for individual students.

Weaknesses

- poor punctuality and low attendance

- low retention rates on the part-time course

- insufficiently evaluative written feedback to students.

Scope of provision

37. The foundation studies in art and design course prepares students for HE. There are currently 266 students, with 239 on a full-time course and 27 on a part-time course. Of these, 170 are students aged 16 to 18 and 96 are aged 19 and over. The course has eight pathways in which students specialise to prepare them for application to specific HE courses: fashion and textiles, photography, film, media, visual communication, fine art and three-dimensional design. The film studies pathway within media is new and provides an opportunity for students that is not often available at this level.

Achievement and standards

38. Students' achievements are very good on the full-time foundation course. Pass and retention rates for the last three years have been high. Pass rates on the part-time course have improved. However, retention rates on the part-time course for the last three years are low. Indications are that fewer students are leaving early on the current part-time course.

39. Students work well on their own, are highly motivated and are confident when expressing their views. They are making good progress in analysing and evaluating their work. Students' research and exploratory work across the foundation course in art and design are good. Students are developing good underpinning skills in basic art and design in a range of disciplines. Students' sketchbooks and worksheets show that many are developing individual styles. They can experiment effectively with different media to produce a wide range of ideas. However, in several lessons observed, students were not punctual and attendance was poor with students missing important elements of formal lectures, demonstrations and project briefings. The work of part-time students is not as good; aims and objectives are not always completed. Part-time students' research work is thorough, with plenty of exploration of different ideas, but final pieces lack originality.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Foundation studies in art and design, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	247	231	262
		% retention	88	91	92
		% pass rate	97	98	99
Foundation studies in art and design (part time)	3	No. of starts	15	24	23
		% retention	67	63	61
		% pass rate	60	93	100

Source: the institute, using recommended software

Quality of education and training

40. There is much good teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers explain complex processes effectively. Teachers are experienced and use current professional practices to

produce well thought-out and highly appropriate schemes of work. Assignments and project briefs are well written and provide contemporary art references for students to investigate. Teachers use a good range of well-designed hand-outs that give students valuable additional information. Teachers set high standards. In a particularly successful lesson on the part-time foundation course, students were attentively learning about photographic materials and techniques. The teacher's enthusiasm and experience captivated students who demonstrated their sound understanding of the specialist technical language. In another lesson observed, students were introduced to casting and moulding techniques using a range of materials including plaster, wax and rubber. The thorough planning and organisation by the teacher enabled all students to learn new skills and the basic principles of working in three dimensions. Students produced a number of fascinating casts of their hands and of floor surfaces. Some highly effective research and well-written essays are produced in contextual studies. In a few lessons, teaching is over-complicated with too much detailed instruction that interrupts learning. In some lessons, teachers failed to question students sufficiently to make sure they understood, and did not challenge them effectively when they were discussing their ideas.

41. Resources are excellent and are used effectively and efficiently to support teaching and learning. Students clearly benefit from the very good range of specialist equipment and facilities. Students have access to excellent general classrooms, studio space, workshops and specialist facilities in photography, printmaking, media, fashion, textiles and film. Workshops are very well managed by technicians. The staff and students make good use of the intranet as a useful resource to record assignments, read hand-outs, and access a library of previous students' work. Most teachers are practising artists and designers. Students also benefit from part-time teachers and visiting speakers who are currently working in the creative industries.

42. There are clear procedures for assessment that are shared with students, and assignment and project briefs contain clear assessment criteria. Tutorials are used effectively to give students feedback on how to make progress. There are also regular, helpful, informal reviews of portfolios. The extensive paperwork to record students' progress includes comprehensive student profiles and tutorial records that teachers are required to complete. However, the format used for the recording of findings from assessment is complicated and impairs clarity of feedback to students. The quality of information recorded is variable. Some records are not completed and many have comments that are too general. Students receive good verbal feedback on their assessed work but there are insufficient written comments to help students reflect on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. External verification revealed some lack of rigour in the internal verification process and some marking was too generous.

43. There is a very good range of pathways provided on the full-time foundation course. Within the pathways, students have the opportunity to study across an extensive range of topics. Students also benefit from a range of enrichment activities, including visits to galleries, studios and employers.

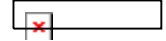
44. Students are generally supported well. Individual advice and guidance about standards of work are good. Careers guidance is offered during a careers week in which course leaders from other HE institutions address students, and ex-students speak about their experience since leaving the institute. Students find this particularly helpful in choosing their special pathways. Advice on progression is good. There is a useful Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS) guidance booklet and regular reviews of students' portfolios are provided to help students prepare for interviews. The student profile folders include records on entry qualifications, preferred learning styles and short-term and long-term progression aims. However, these records vary in quality and many contain general comments that give insufficient help to students.

Leadership and management

45. The day-to-day operational management of courses is good with clear line reporting structures, effective communication and good supportive teamwork. Equality of opportunity is promoted well, with teachers ensuring each student's individual creative potential is fulfilled. Regular team meetings enable all staff to contribute to decision making. Teachers are aware of the targets set for recruitment, pass and retention rates, and work effectively together to maintain high standards. Staff appraisal is held annually and provides teachers with good opportunities to discuss both their personal, and course, development. Managers ensure that teachers are appropriately involved in

self-assessment, which is critical and thorough. The institute's system of lesson observation and those carried out by external consultants contribute effectively to the self-assessment report.

Diplomas in design



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

Contributory grade for national diploma in graphic design is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on the national diploma in photography

- professional standards of work in multimedia and photography

- good teaching in photography, multimedia and fine art

- excellent specialist resources

- good academic support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates in graphic design

- insufficient space for fine art activities

- insufficient development of students' ideas and skills in graphic design.

Scope of provision

46. There is a range of full-time courses at level 3 leading to national diplomas in photography, multimedia, fine art and graphic design. There is a part-time Northern College of Further Education

(NCFE) course in art and design at an outreach centre. There are 202 full-time students on national diploma courses: 136 of these are aged 16 to 18, and 66 are aged 19 or over. The institute has recently received confirmation of full CoVE status in lens-based media.

Achievement and standards

47. Overall, pass rates on national diploma courses are good, having been over 90% in each of the last three years. However, retention rates are unsatisfactory overall, with only 69% of students that commenced national diplomas in 2001 completing them in 2003. There are high pass rates on the national diplomas in photography and fine art. Pass rates in photography have been above 90% for the last three years and there are also good retention rates on this course. Retention rates on the national diploma in graphic design are unsatisfactory, having declined from 79% in 2000 to 62% in 2003.

48. Students on most national diploma courses demonstrate good practical craft skills and are competent in a range of design and multimedia software. Photography students' work is original, innovative and of a high standard. Most students are mature and confident in their approach and demonstrate good independent research and study skills. Multimedia students are competent at using a very wide range of professional software programs and this is combined with a sound basic knowledge of design, drawing and composition using traditional media. Many students, working individually and in small groups, have produced some exciting, very imaginative and innovative work including animations, original designs, websites and impressive explorations of typography combined with pictorial images.

49. Students' work in graphic design is not of a sufficiently high standard. Research files often contain large quantities of assembled secondary evidence and lack references to relevant primary sources and suitable further development.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Diplomas in design, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
National diploma photography	3	No. of starts	31	35	37
		% retention	90	77	79
		% pass rate	93	96	93
National diploma multimedia	3	No. of starts	37	24	17
		% retention	78	67	76
		% pass rate	86	100	83
National diploma graphic design	3	No. of starts	19	32	29
		% retention	79	70	62
		% pass rate	93	81	89
National diploma fine art	3	No. of starts	*	*	50
		% retention	*	*	61
		% pass rate	*	*	96

Source: the college using recommended software

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

50. There is much good teaching on the multimedia, photography and fine art courses. Teachers

plan lessons well and inspire students to work hard and develop critical analysis skills which are applied effectively to help them evaluate their work. Most students have been able to develop the skills that enable them to produce original, well-crafted and professional work. Teaching on the multimedia course is generally creative and resourceful. Teachers have extensive knowledge of multimedia applications and technologies and set high professional standards. Students work collaboratively with enthusiasm and energy on projects in lessons. Some students have extensive computer-based skills, including software programming; others are developing good traditional print and graphic design-based media skills. This broad mix of expertise widens the opportunities for learning by all students.

51. Students are fluent in specialist technical language and are confident in analysing and evaluating their own work and the work of others. Comments made during the regular group assessments by teachers and students are incisive and helpful. There is good teaching of creative expertise and technical skills in photography. Fine art teachers are highly enthusiastic and support and guide students effectively to achieve original and distinctive work. Lessons develop students' personal creative skills in a broad programme of activities. One student in fine art was working on a project in which she embedded coloured inks in ice cubes to explore the forms produced as they melted. She had been inspired by the work of Andy Goldsworthy and had taken elements from his work and adapted them to make her own creative solutions. However, teaching on the national diploma in graphic design does not fully develop students' skills or their ability to explore concepts and ideas in depth or with sufficient originality.

52. Resources are very good. Courses have base rooms and students also use well-equipped workshops and general facilities which have good technician support. However, in fine art studios, students do not have sufficient space to work on a large scale. Computer resources are particularly good. Students are able to work either on personal computers or on specialist design computers, store their work on servers and retrieve it wherever they are working in the institute. For example, fine art students have computers in their base rooms which allow them to develop and experiment with ideas from their sketchbooks. Visiting lecturers and part-time staff bring valuable current industrial and commercial experience to the institute and students value their expertise and insight.

53. Students on all courses receive good, regular advice and guidance on their progress towards assessment grades and the actions needed to improve them. Teachers are specific and clear when giving feedback, both verbally and in writing. Stringent and detailed assessment is conducted on most courses.

54. There is good liaison with external organisations, professional bodies in photography, national training organisations and practitioners through which good practice has been shared. Professional training courses have been attended by staff and students, including placements with a photographic equipment manufacturer in Switzerland and staff training on colour management at a London studio. Outreach work with schools has been effective. Photography and video commissions for bodies as diverse as the city of Cherbourg and Chelsea Flower Show have directly involved students and staff in the production of professional standards of work. In 2003, 46% of students progressed to related employment.

55. Students are able to develop work and skills outside of the boundaries of their main course of study. There are good enrichment opportunities available to all students, including visits to Brighton, a local arboretum and to major London galleries. National diploma students are able to participate in enrichment activities taking place on degree programmes.

56. Students receive good personal support. Adults with specific learning needs are offered very effective and sensitive support and their teachers liaise with specialist qualified staff to plan their learning and develop approaches to research and study skills. There is flexible timetabling for adults with work or childcare commitments, particularly on courses with a high proportion of adult learners. Good progression routes are available onto courses within the institute's own range of degree and foundation degree courses and onto other HE establishments. In a particularly effective well-structured advice lesson about UCAS applications, students responded with high-calibre questions about work-experience and gap-year opportunities.

Leadership and management

57. Course organisation and development are satisfactory. Each national diploma course currently has different formal and informal arrangements for course organisation and planning which are effective. Teachers promote relevant support that is available and learners achieve their individual creative potential. There are good, open communications between staff and senior managers with regular formal meetings. A new manager has recently taken overall responsibility for the quality assurance of national diplomas but little formal work has begun. Staff were involved effectively in self-assessment which was conducted rigorously. Staff appraisals and reviews are effective. The annual student perception survey is analysed for students' views and action plans are developed to address key issues.

58. The CoVE provision is managed well. There is good strategic development and operational management including regular, recorded progress meetings. Additional capital funding has recently been secured to purchase additional computers, photographic and video recording equipment and new, powerful software will extend the opportunities available to students and staff to use technologies which are directly comparable to those used in industry.

Part D: Institution data

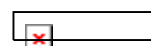
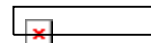


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

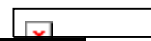
Level	16-18 %	19+ %
2	0	11
3	100	89
Total	100	100



Source: provided by the institution in autumn 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by course and age Autumn 2003

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Foundation studies in art and design	170	96	57
National diploma in fine art	54	11	32
National diploma in graphic design	29	6	17
National diploma in multimedia	30	8	19
National diploma in photography	23	41	32
Total	306	162	468



Source: provided by the institution in autumn 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
2	Starters excluding transfers	0	0	0	182	131	154
	Retention rate (%)	0	0	0	75	69	44
	National average	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Pass rate (%)	0	0	0	86	89	93
	National average	*	*	*	*	*	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	216	247	292	161	175	160
	Retention rate (%)	88	86	83	84	81	84
	National average	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Pass rate (%)	97	95	96	91	96	94
	National average	*	*	*	*	*	*

*data not available

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Institutions in England*, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.
2. Institution rates for 1999 to 2002: *Institution ISR*.

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)	71	25	5	44

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