

Treloar College

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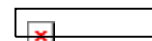
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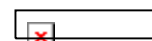
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Basic information about the college

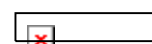


Name of college:	Treloar College
Type of college:	Independent, specialist residential college
Principal:	Dr Graham Jowett
Address of college:	Treloar College Holybourne Alton Hampshire GU34 4EN
Telephone number:	01420 547400
Fax number:	01420 542708
Chair of governors:	Peter Besgrove
Unique reference number:	ZZZ1149
Name of reporting inspector:	Gillian Reay HMI
Dates of inspection:	17-21 May 2004

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

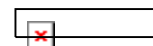


Treloar College was established by the Treloar Trust in 1996 as an independent residential specialist college of further education (FE) for young people between aged 16 to 25 with physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The college is about one mile from the centre of Alton, a small market town in north-east Hampshire. The Treloar trust is a registered charity that owns the college and a school situated some three miles from the college. The school was founded in 1906 by Sir William Purdie Treloar, Lord Mayor of London. Sir William launched a fund to build a hospital for children living on the streets of London who were suffering from non-pulmonary tuberculosis, a disease that affects the long bones and causes disability. The hospital was built in Alton, and some years later the college was added for the education and training of older boys. A girls' school was added many years later and in 1978, Lord Mayor Treloar College became co-educational.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds 96% of students. Only 7% students receive a funding contribution from their social service departments or from the National Health Service (NHS). In the past eight years, the college has grown from 134 to 171 LSC-funded-students. There has been a marked trend towards greater degrees and complexities of disability. This is shown by the growth of the area that meets the needs of students with moderate and severe learning difficulties and the increase in the number of students with complex communication needs or visual impairments. The majority of students have cerebral palsy, although many have disabilities such as spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, ataxias or acquired disabilities. An increasing number of students use alternative and augmentative communication devices and a significant proportion have progressive disabilities. The gender balance is 60% male and 40% female and 12% of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds: a significantly higher proportion than for the population of East Hampshire as a whole. The college's resources include a purpose-built health centre and staff teams who are able to provide palliative care. The college's residential accommodation has a capacity of 164 ; it is subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). The college hosts occasional part-time classes for adult students with learning difficulties or hearing impairments, and is currently funded by the local LSC to pilot the provision of diagnostic and assessment services to general FE colleges.

The college's statement of purpose is to 'strive for excellence in education, therapy and care in environments that encourage disabled individuals to achieve their potential'. The college also has a set of core values that are widely promoted to staff and students.

How effective is the college?



The quality of teaching and the standards of students' achievements are very good overall, outstanding in three areas, good in two areas and satisfactory in one area. There is very good development of communication and personal skills but literacy and numeracy provision is not well developed. Guidance and induction procedures are very good and personal and academic support for students is outstanding. The partnership with Alton College is very effective and students' progression into FE and higher education (HE) is good.

Key strengths

- outstanding achievement by many students
- very good teaching and learning
- very good specialist resources and accommodation at Treloar College
- celebration of difference and diversity across the whole college
- outstanding support for students

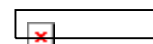
- very good collaboration between teachers and therapists
- good progression to FE and HE
- good strategic planning and very effective management and governance
- very effective partnership with Alton College
- a college-wide commitment to the promotion of independence, dignity and respect.

What should be improved

- access for some students to the community, and to work experience
- literacy, and numeracy provision
- target setting and recording of learning in individual learning plans.

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

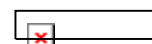


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
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Business and information and communications technology	Outstanding. Teaching and learning are very good and the high standards achieved by students are confirmed both in examination results and in the development of students' wider vocational and personal skills. Individualised learning is promoted, and students' programmes are closely matched to their identified needs. Very good physical resources and a strong culture of support help to ensure that students succeed.
Visual and performing arts	Outstanding. Teaching is outstanding; students achieve high standards; and pass rates are very good. Resources are excellent, including extensive use of ICT and information and learning technology (ILT). Support for students is exceptional. Management is good and there is a wide range of enrichment activities.
Humanities	Outstanding. Students' attainment is outstanding, and there are good pass rates with many high grades across the wide range of subjects offered at Alton College. The partnership between both colleges is very effective both in the flexible organisation of courses and the opportunities offered for students to access mainstream provision. Some accommodation at Alton is cramped, and some quality assurance concentrated more on pastoral than academic challenge.
Access course	Good. Students achieve high standards. The levels of students' achievement in personal development are high. Teaching and support for students are very good. Resources are of a high quality. Pre-entry and initial assessments are inadequate and insufficient external work-experience opportunities are available to students.
Literacy, numeracy and communication	Satisfactory. Students develop very good communication skills. The college has very good resources and provides very effective support for learning. However, target setting in literacy and numeracy lessons is insufficiently detailed. Tools for initial assessment are inappropriate and the recording of learning in literacy and numeracy is insufficient.
Independent living skills	Good. Teaching is good. Students make good progress; their achievements are particularly good in the core areas of the independent living skills and personal development skills. Staff from the different professional disciplines work together well in developing students' self-awareness. Students have access to a very good range of specialist staff support and a good range of equipment. The core programme is well planned and managed, with good links to students' individual learning plan goals, but sports, leisure and after-college activities are not yet well integrated into the programme.

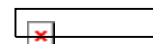
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are outstanding. Treloar College is clearly and rigorously accountable to the college governors, whose function is quite separate from the work of the Treloar's Trust. Achievement by students is outstanding. Very good teaching, good, often outstanding curriculum provision, outstanding guidance and support, very good resources and excellent links with Alton College combine to challenge and inspire students. Students become sensitive but determined self-advocates as a result of this provision. The college goes far beyond the requirements of legislation and statute. Through its thorough self-review processes the college knows what it does well and understands where it can improve. The trustees, governors, college principal and staff together provide flexibility and coherence, meeting the changing and ever more complex needs of students

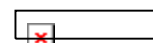
and empowering spiritual and practical realism.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



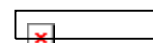
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college takes students from all areas of the United Kingdom who have complex physical and learning difficulties. Of the students, 60% are male and 12% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Communication with students and parents is very good. Students are well represented on college committees and there is an effective student council. For example, the student council at Treloar College elects one of its members to be a student governor. The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity underpins all college activities. Social and educational integration at Alton College is outstanding. The college fulfils all the requirements of the Children's Act 1989, Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. However, not all staff have attended race relations training although it is planned for the summer term. Respect, dignity, and support underpin all relationships and college activities. Opportunities for external work experience and provision for literacy and numeracy are underdeveloped.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Student support and guidance are outstanding. Comprehensive, individualised and consistent support is provided by teachers, learning support, care workers, health, counsellors and therapists. Initial guidance and induction is good. Students settle quickly into a supportive but challenging environment that extends their learning. The exceptional partnership between teachers and therapists ensures thorough assessments of students' needs for individual learning and support. Well-planned learning support is effective. Support in the residences is very effective and enables students to develop very good personal and independent living skills. Students are enabled to direct and control their learning, personal lives and relationships. Counselling and pastoral support are outstanding and meet students' needs during difficult times. The college ensures that specialist careers and transition planning are fully embedded in students' programmes and that there is good progression into FE and HE. Students acknowledge and value the dedication and commitment of staff. The college's sexual advice and further education policy (SAFE) is very well written and ensures that students are well informed and develop a good understanding of themselves and others.

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

- supportive and helpful staff

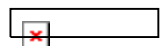
- a different place from school
- good, easily accessible resources
- being sociable and making new friends
- the family feel of the college
- one-to-one support for students with dyslexia
- the drop-in workshop
- the opportunities to develop greater independence
- being treated as an adult
- the chance to go out regularly when they have achieved 'green' status
- the good ICT and therapy facilities.
- Alton College
- all students integrated at Alton
- socialising with 'mainstream' students

- staff and students who try really hard to make provision as good as possible
- teachers that are amazing at getting students into classrooms and learning
- high level of academic teaching that encourage students to try hard.

What they feel could be improved

- more weekday evening activities
- not having to share a room
- more contact with the local school, so that pupils there are less wary of Treloar students
- chances to go out before they achieve 'green' status
- opportunities to repeat weeks in the independence flats
- the décor and layout of Allan house
- more activities offered at the weekends, such as visits to the cinema, clubs or restaurants for nights out like normal other teenagers.

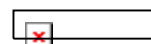
Other information



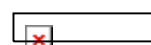
The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback

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 should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges 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 college as a whole



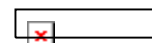
Achievement and standards



1. Students at Treloar College are aged 16 to 25. Most lessons are for groups of students of mixed age, and some students, because of the nature of their disabilities, take longer than the prescribed time to complete their studies. Inspectors were therefore not able to make significant distinctions in between the teaching and learning of students aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 plus. For the purposes of this report, all judgements relate to students aged 16 to 25.
2. There are 29 LSC-funded students who attend Alton College for a wide range of academic and vocational courses, mainly at level 3. Numbers on individual courses are small as demand changes according to students' individual needs each year. However, when achievement is aggregated for the last three years at general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), 91% of students passed their examinations, with 41% of passes at high grades. Similarly, aggregated grades for the last three years at advanced subsidiary level (AS level) show that 92% of students passed their examinations, with 53% at high grades. These figures reflect outstanding achievement when compared with national averages for general FE colleges. Pass rates in ICT key skills are 100% for the last two years as is the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) ICT foundation course. Visual and performing arts pass rates are also outstanding in art and photography. Retention rates for all Treloar students over the last three years are very good, at 96%, in line with other specialist colleges.
3. Students display outstanding motivation to work and make clear progress towards fulfilling their potential. It is very clear that students' annual reviews are often about teachers trying to persuade students of the need for a balance between academic achievement and personal needs. Students develop a broad range of analytical and practical skills in art, textiles, drama and music, and in ICT they carry out work to a high standard, using software packages confidently and accurately. Course work is generally good but it is outstanding in humanities, visual and performing arts, ICT and business. In provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and in literacy and numeracy, there is insufficient target setting in individual learning plans.
4. The development of personal and learning skills for all students at Treloar College is outstanding. All curriculum areas report that Treloar students are characterised by growing self-confidence, good development of self-awareness, the ability to direct others and good communication skills. In visual and performing arts, students are articulate and self-critical. Humanities students demonstrate high levels of ability to debate and manage their own learning. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good skills in decision making and problem-solving. In independent living skills, students make good progress towards achieving subject targets and individual goals.
5. Achievements in key skills in information technology (IT) are good: there has, for example, been a 100% pass rate in ICT key skills level 1 for the past two years. Achievements in key skills levels one and two in literacy and numeracy were poor in 2002/03. More appropriate qualifications have now

been adopted. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English and mathematics are undertaken at Treloar College as part of students' level 2 and 3 programmes.

Quality of education and training



6. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 67 lessons. Teaching and learning are very good at both Treloar and Alton colleges. Teaching is particularly good when emphasis is placed on developing students' independence. Teachers, therapists, support staff and teaching assistants combine high levels of experience, qualifications and enthusiasm to develop students' self-confidence: this helps them to express sophisticated opinions about their own learning, including aspects that they find difficult. Teachers use their skills well in designing interesting lessons and motivating students. Students value the high expectations that their teachers have of them. They make good progress in most subjects and achieve more than might be expected from the level of their prior attainment. In some subjects, for example, ICT, visual and performing arts, teaching is outstanding. Lessons and schemes of work are well planned. Lessons have clear objectives that are shared with the students. Teachers make good links with what has been learnt previously. There is a sharp focus on the requirements of external examinations. In most subjects students participate well in practical activities and discussion to reinforce their learning. Individual learning plans in literacy and numeracy fail to inform teachers' planning as they have insufficiently detailed targets. Planning for the development of practical and vocational skills for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also underdeveloped. The monitoring and recording of individual students' progress are good. Students receive outstanding individual support from tutors both in lessons and the residences.

7. Many teachers make excellent use of ICT particularly in visual and performing arts and in business studies. In many subjects students make good use of the internet for research as part of homework and use computers to prepare written work. Teaching materials and technical aids to support learning are comprehensive. The extensive range of specialist equipment available to students is very effective in promoting learning.

8. The college has improved teaching and residential accommodation since the last inspection: the overall quality at Treloar College is very good. Some teaching accommodation at Alton College is cramped. A new purpose-built residential complex on the campus at Treloar College accommodates up to eight students. These well-equipped flats enable students to live and learn with minimal support away from the main college buildings. However, in some of the other residences the too few single bedrooms limit some students' ability to study independently and develop additional independence skills. Independence flats are highly valued by students and the demand for their use is great. This shortage restricts opportunities for some students to develop and practice independent living skills. The college's board of governors has approved an extensive programme of site improvements for teaching and residential accommodation to address these issues. As part of its planned programme of improvements, the college has already improved the medical facilities, business administration area, the learning resource centre and the horticulture facilities. The learning resource centre is spacious and airy and has adequate book stocks as well as videos and ICT facilities. It is well used by students during the day, early evening and at weekends. The refectory service is very good and provides for a wide range of dietary needs.

9. There is a good range of qualified and experienced staff. Most staff are well qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the programmes and the complex physical and support needs of students. Opportunities for initial training and staff development are very good. A comprehensive induction programme is available for all members of staff and volunteers. The staff development programme includes a large number of topics that develop specialist expertise related to students' needs. Insufficient numbers of care staff have achieved national vocational qualifications (NVQ) at the appropriate levels. Opportunities for students' to practice and reinforce independence skills in residences and in the community during the evening and at weekends are limited by the number of

care staff available to undertake these activities. Some staff working in literacy and numeracy have had insufficient training.

10. The college employs rehabilitation engineers who provide innovative and specialised adaptations to meet individual needs in equipment and software. For example, they provide simple equipment for students with poor psychomotor co-ordination that enables them to use cooker hobs and scissors safely. Specialist equipment, assistive and augmentative technology and materials are often at the leading edge of technology and tailored to meet the specific requirements of individual students. For example very specific software packages are developed and customised to meet students' needs.

11. The college carries out a comprehensive pre-entry review of information provided by students, parents, carers and other agencies. There is good initial and ongoing assessment of students' therapeutic, medical and support needs. Initial assessment for literacy and numeracy is ineffective in identifying the students' abilities and needs. Pre-entry and initial assessment for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities does not accurately assess students' prior achievements in practical or vocational skills. Nor does it clearly identify what students need to learn in these areas. The initial assessment for students who choose academic or vocational courses is good.

12. The college is developing a computerised individual learning plan system. The individual learning plans of some students' in literacy and numeracy are imprecise and insufficiently detailed. Progress is not easy to measure because the targets are too general. The individual learning plans for courses in visual and performing arts/media, humanities, business and ICT are good. Students take an active part in setting and reviewing progress of their individual learning plan goals.

13. During the first term, assessment is continuous and additional information is used effectively to inform the baseline assessment. Additional learning needs or achievements are identified. This process may include appropriate amendments to individual learning plans or modifications to the students' targets.

14. Assessment of students' work is comprehensive. External and internal verification and moderation procedures meet national standards. Parents and carers are provided with regular reports of students' progress. All staff working with students monitor and record progress against targets and long-term goals in their individual learning plans. Academic and vocational progress are regularly assessed and recorded in detail.

15. Students are well informed about and understand their progress through staff feedback in lessons, in the residences and individual learning plan reviews. They are actively involved in the assessment and recording of their overall progress. They state clearly which teaching and learning strategies have been most effective in meeting their academic and other learning needs. The college places a high priority on students increasing their independence in all aspects of their lives and students speak convincingly about the progress they are making.

16. The outcomes of tutorials are used to inform the individual learning plans and they form the basis of the termly and annual reviews, which are very thorough. They capture well the progress students make throughout their course. The development of personal skills is very well documented. Multidisciplinary assessments of students' performance are analysed to provide a comprehensive picture of what students know and can do well. The transition planning for leavers is very effective.

17. Curriculum provision is good. The college offers an extensive range of programmes and activities designed to meet the complex and changing needs of students. Many students develop outstanding skills in self-advocacy and almost all are able to make informed choices about their provision and needs. Students are given every opportunity to own their own lives. Good use is made of residences and the community for students to practice and develop their independence skills although the formal recording of this progress is underdeveloped. The programmes and courses are designed and taught with close attention to individual needs so that students are able to understand their potential and are encouraged to expand their aspirations'. Very good links with Alton College benefit students by broadening their options and ensuring good progression to FE and HE.

18. There is an outstanding range of enrichment opportunities for students, many designed to present students with very challenging experiences. In these activities choice is important and students are able to make mistakes, as they learn through facing real dilemmas. Students have access to regular international exchanges, physically challenging pastimes and intellectual activities that enrich and enliven. The commitment of staff to this enrichment programme is unrivalled. The gains that many students make through these activities are not always recorded in individual learning plans.

19. For some students work experience opportunities are good. However, there are many students for whom access to opportunities for real work experience are limited. There is very little access to appropriate local work experience. For these students the emphasis is on enhancing their understanding of the world of work, usually within the Treloar Trust.

20. Transition arrangements both into and out of the college are very well managed and give students good opportunities to influence their destinations. Students seeking to live independently, go into FE and HE and have transition beyond Treloar College tailored to their personal needs, are very well supported. Links with the Connexions service are well developed. Electronic and published guidance on career choices and options is easily available to all students. Of the 54 leavers in 2003, 8% went to university, 10% moved into specialist residential colleges, 8% moved to live independently, 19% went into social services residential provision and 56% chose to live at home. One student died shortly after leaving college. The careers staff take great care to maintain links with students after they leave Treloar College, charting their continuing progress and applying this knowledge to the development of college provision. For example, the Treloar Trust is actively planning a new provision - 'Life after Treloar's'. Increasingly aware that life beyond Treloar College is very harsh for many students with physical and neurological disabilities: the Trust's vision is 'to encourage and support disabled young people in taking greater control over their lives'.

21. The college provides an extensive range of therapies, medical care and additional services to promote students' well being and learning. The therapies include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. Students can use a wide range of other services that include educational psychology and visual assessment. Access to medical services on site is good. There is a four bed medical unit. Health support includes nursing care, an out patient doctors clinic, dietician and dental hygienist.

22. The college has outstanding strategies to help students, their families and staff come to terms with disability, bereavement and grief. The college chaplain works with the counselling team who provide counselling and spiritual support as required. One aspect of this provision is the well-attended memorial services celebrating the lives of students of all faiths who have died. The 'thank God it is Friday' meeting also provides students of all faiths with the opportunity to celebrate life.

23. Induction is thorough. The students' handbook provides a comprehensive introduction into the college and its ethos. Students quickly understand the college structure and how they can obtain support and guidance: continuing guidance is very good. The college holds several events each year that parent/carers and students find informative and in which students take an active role.

24. The frequency and type of tutorial are planned to meet the different needs of students on the range of programmes in the college. Regular review of the students' progress through the tutorial and individual learning plan review meetings each term ensure appropriate adjustments to support the students' learning.

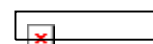
25. Personal support for students is very good. Staff know the students well and students are confident to approach different members of staff to obtain or direct support. The college has a clear and comprehensive policy on personal relationships and students are provided with good support in learning about relationships. Communication is very good between the staff in the residences and in formal lessons and ensures a consistent and supportive approach to learning.

26. The staff provide good learning support for students and enable them to take an active part in their programmes and to develop their personal confidence and interpersonal skills. They are

enabled to take charge of their life and learning by developing the skills to direct staff and others both in lessons and residential accommodation to meet their educational, personal and social needs.

27. There is very good careers advice and guidance for all students. There is a well-stocked careers and transition library. Specialist careers guidance is provided by the college and through well-established links with the local Connexions service. There is a very good leavers programme that effectively prepares and supports the students. The leavers' pack is individually tailored to meet the needs of students. The college works with other agencies to ensure that students have the opportunity to move into appropriate living, learning and working environments when they leave the college.

Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are outstanding. Treloar College is part of the education provision of the Treloar Trust. The functions of the Trust are clearly distinct. Structures for accountability and governance for the college are clear and rigorous. The college governing body includes members of staff, representatives of the students and of parents. Governors determine college policy and strategy. They know the college well and hold it to account for what students achieve and how well they learn and make progress. Governors' self-evaluation is regular and well developed. The college has responded well to the issues raised in its last Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspection. Management in the key functional areas of the college is very good.

29. Outcomes for students across the college are sometimes outstanding, often very good and never less than satisfactory. The Treloar College community celebrates life, gives students the chance to know themselves, the strength to fight with realistic hope and the practical skills they need to meet challenges and deal with obstacles.

30. Communication across the college is excellent. Informal meetings and discussions are permeated with a careful understanding of the day-by-day needs of students. All staff have email and access to electronic information kept up-to-date on a daily basis. Management meetings, team and staff meetings are underpinned by appropriate structures and focus on understanding and meeting the needs of students and the adaptations and flexibility needed to meet those needs. For example a teacher in literacy and numeracy has allocated time to support a student as he devises interactive software to create talking books for visually impaired learners.

31. The college's self-assessment is excellent. The self-assessment report is well structured and based on carefully evaluated data and information. All staff are involved in its construction through reviews of programmes and courses. Inspectors assess that the report is an accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. The overall grades in the self-assessment report match those of the inspection. At times the college is harsher on itself than inspectors. The college's development plan focuses on strategic objectives, for example, students' achievements and work experience opportunities. There are very good procedures to identify the progress students make and detailed policies and procedures on most aspects of the work of the college. The partnership with Alton College works very well benefiting many students every year.

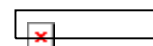
32. Performance management focuses on raising standards of achievement for students. The college follows the Treloar Trust policy on individual performance review. The outcomes of supervisions and lesson observations are discussed in the annual performance review but are not formally linked to the continuous improvement of curriculum areas. Training and development needs are then identified and staff have access to a very good programme of professional development and accredited training. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The college self-assessment made a similar judgement. There are some weaknesses in quality assurance procedures. For example, individual learning plans are not always used to target and record small steps in learning. Learning from non-directed activities is not regularly mapped and recorded.

33. Students and parents have very positive views about their experiences at Treloar College. Students' views are sought and acted upon. A student from Treloar College has been elected by Alton students onto their student's union and appointed as equal opportunities representative. Student perception surveys are a regular feature of college life. Many students report that they are encouraged to voice their views and opinions about all aspects of college provision. Many students talked with enthusiasm about their life at Treloar's and were positive but realistic about the challenges they face in the future.

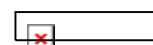
34. All staff fully recognise their responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities, disability, special educational needs, race relations and diversity. Whilst the college complies with most aspects of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, not all members of staff have been formally trained in its implications. Most college policies are regularly reviewed and a comprehensive range of staff induction training courses covers all the main aspects of appropriate legislation.

35. The college evaluates its cost-effectiveness by monitoring outcomes for students in relation to their individual learning plans, the targets they achieve and the quality of its teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and financial management is good. . The provision of teaching, resources, accommodation, support and therapy is under constant review. Resources, including staffing, are well deployed. Treloar College provides very good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Business and information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- outstanding achievements by students
- outstanding teaching and learning
- very good resources at Treloar College
- individualised curriculum
- very good support for learners.

Weaknesses

- no key weaknesses.

Scope of provision

36. The curriculum area offers a wide range of academic, vocational, business and ICT courses for full-time students at Treloar and Alton College centres. National vocational qualifications (NVQ) courses in business and administration are offered: administration at levels 1 and 2; customer service at level 2; and distributive operations at level 2. Employability awards are also available at Treloar College. AS level and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in business studies are taught by Alton College. GNVQ ICT courses at foundation and intermediate levels; IT at foundation, CLAIT, and AVCE IT are taught at Treloar College. A main feature of the provision is that it is offered flexibly to meet the specific needs of students who have complex physical disabilities and associated disorders, some with degenerative conditions. Students often study different tasks, on different units and levels, in the same group. There are 36 full-time students currently enrolled.

Achievement and standards

37. Retention and pass rates are consistently very high in both business and ICT, with most students achieving their main course goals. The success rate was 90% in 2003. Students achieve very high pass rates in the individual course units they have chosen to study. Examples of outstanding results achieved in 2003 across the curriculum are the 100% pass rates in GNVQ ICT foundation, OCR text production and word processing, IT key skills level 1 and NVQ distribution operations.

38. The standard of students' work is excellent. Students develop a wide range of business and IT related skills and attain very high levels of competence. These include web design, poster design, card design and production, distribution management, purchasing skills, financial and budgetary control. Many of the tasks undertaken meet specific customers' requirements and commissions, as well as providing evidence for students' portfolios. A particular strength is the development of essential personal and learning skills and attitudes. Many students develop keen critical and analytical skills, and are able to express points of view with increasing confidence. Students learn to work independently, as well as in groups, and to take responsibility for key decisions about their own studies. Many students progress to other institutions. For example, in 2003, 28% of leavers went on to HE and 12% went to other FE colleges.

Quality of education and training

39. Most teaching is very good or better. Teachers approach their work carefully with good lesson plans. They keep detailed learning diaries that provide extra information about each student's activities and progress. Teachers keep the learning and achievement of their students at the heart of their planning and teaching, with a clear emphasis on the successful progress of each student's different learning aims in each lesson. Teachers use a wide variety of different activities to stimulate their students' interest, and help students relate their studies closely to current business practice. Students clearly enjoy their lessons and are very stimulated by and engaged in their work. For many students, it may be the first time that they receive public recognition for their work. This motivates them further and they become proud of their achievements.

40. Teachers encourage students to work at their own pace and take personal responsibility for their own learning. Students respond well to this approach. They acquire very good vocational skills and recognise their importance for their future prospects of work. These include specific IT related skills such as digital imaging, the production of materials of professional quality, and research methods, as well as business skills, such as market analysis, stock control, invoicing, and purchasing goods via

the internet with controlled credit card arrangements. It is very clear that students also develop personally, with greatly increased confidence, improved communication skills, and a much stronger sense of self worth.

41. The Ian Karten centre at Treloar College provides students with an excellent, realistic working environment for business and administration, helping them to produce work up to the standards of current business practice. Outstanding resources meet a wide range of individual physical needs. Examples include wireless keyboards, raised adjustable tables and specialist keyboard input devices in the IT rooms. These keyboard devices are very successful in helping students with visual, perceptual and co-ordination difficulties. Teaching rooms at Alton College are suitable. There are good levels of teaching and support staff in this curriculum area. Treloar teachers are very experienced but have not updated their business or commercial experience. Not all teachers have teaching qualifications. Teachers at Alton College undertake appropriate staff development before teaching Treloar students.

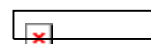
42. Appropriate and effective assessment policies and procedures are in place. Students receive detailed initial assessment, with frequent further reviews of their individual progress throughout their courses. Students understand what is required from them, and teachers provide good verbal and written feedback. Students value their teachers' feedback, both in lessons and during reviews, and this helps them to understand how to improve. Teachers check the quality of assessment through appropriate internal and external verification.

43. Students receive very good information, advice and guidance from staff and are guided onto the right level of course. Individual needs are closely assessed during the first few weeks, and continuing advice is then given throughout the course. The tutorial system is effective and students recognise its important contribution to their progress. Students value the helpfulness of all staff, and the clear, impartial support given to them on a wide range of personal and academic issues. A strong culture of respect for the dignity of the individual is a marked feature of the curriculum area.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are good. Systems are in place to monitor progress and set targets for improvement. An appropriate range of quality assurance methods, such as analysing teachers' observations or students' perceptions, is used. Self-assessment is well established, with course teams contributing to the self-assessment report of the programme area. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted, particularly through the highly individualised arrangements for curriculum access. Communication with senior management is good. Data management is not always effective and the sharing of good practice between Alton and Treloar Colleges is underdeveloped. Morale is good and a strong sense of pride and purpose is shared by teachers and other members of staff in the area.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- outstanding attainment by students
- outstanding teaching

- excellent resources including use of ICT and ILT
- exceptional support for students
- wide range of enrichment activities
- good management.

Weaknesses

- no key weaknesses.

Scope of provision

45. There are 39 full-time students, between the ages of 16 and 25. Eleven students study at level 1, sixteen at level 2 and twelve at level 3. Foundation and intermediate GNVQ courses are offered in performing arts, art and design and an intermediate GNVQ is available in media. There are City and Guilds 6922 and 6923 in photography, AS-level multimedia, AS-level and GCE A2 art, photography and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) drama awards. At Alton College students study AS-level and GCE A2 film studies, media and drama.

Achievement and standards

46. Achievement by students' is outstanding. Pass rates are high in performing arts, GNVQ media and AS-level photography. Work displayed in studios and throughout the college is of a high standard and uses a variety of media. Students are articulate and able to discuss developing work with confidence. Critical evaluation, communication skills and self esteem are well developed.

47. Life drawing shows creative use of line, colour and form. One student had developed a multi-coloured jewelled pattern on the computer from the paintings of Edward Hopper. Another had used computer generated images for cartoons and storyboards. The textiles work combines colour and texture with an imaginative use of felt making, dyeing and stitching. One student had stencilled a delicate purple trellis pattern onto a painted silk background before making it into a box lid. In ceramics students have made bowls decorated with strong brushstrokes of bright colour and a series of slumped glass dishes. In media, students produce and direct films requiring high levels of planning, co-operation and technical skill. One had made a computerised presentation of science fiction research and was able to answer questions and accept supportive criticism from the group.

48. Students in performing arts maximise their physical abilities. In one dance production students composed the music, vocal harmonies and the dance movements that incorporated able-bodied students alongside wheelchair users. The slow, steady movement of the students in chairs was explored as able-bodied students moved alongside and balanced against them.

Quality of education and training

49. Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging and demanding standards for students. The level of support from teaching assistants and volunteers is high. Staff are well qualified and have relevant vocational expertise.

50. Teachers carefully monitor the needs of individual students and encourage them to develop their full creative potential, particularly in music. In the college band students are treated as professional musicians and rehearsed with firm direction. In textile lessons, students' work is discussed and successes are shared at the end of the lesson.

51. The music rooms and recording studio are equipped to an industrial standard. In performing arts the stage is flexible with a range of blocks for theatre in the round accessed by ramps. The lighting bars winch down and the sound mixing desk is adapted to wheelchair height. Art studios are large and airy and contain many resources.

52. Workstations are carefully adapted by the rehabilitation engineering department. For example, joysticks and small keyboards can be set any angle to a wheelchair for ease of use. The photography darkroom has enlarger tables and arms adjustable by hydraulics. Work tables are heavy duty and easily adjustable. The learning resource centre has a specially adapted carousel that rotates books to the correct height.

53. However, accommodation for film and media studies students at Alton College is cramped. Classrooms are small and inflexible furniture limits group work. Wheelchair users lack the space to turn and make eye contact with other students during group discussion.

54. Individual learning plans are used and staff monitor students' progress in a work diary after each lesson. This becomes part of the next lesson plan where students' needs and targets are detailed. Assessment is thorough and external verifiers comment on its accuracy. Media assessment contains clear guidance on how students can improve their work.

55. The curriculum meets the specific needs of students with a range of physical and complex disabilities. The programme area is active in its cross-college role by providing art, drama, radio and music clubs and co-ordinating arts week. Progression to FE and HE and into employment is good.

56. Student support is exceptional. Teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers work as a cohesive team giving effective and encouraging support. In one-to-one class discussions teachers give clear directions to students on how work can be improved and students are given time to consider options rather than being rushed to a conclusion. Students are respectful of the disabilities of their fellow students when discussing or presenting work. In one media presentation students were encouraged to give one positive feedback point before saying how the work could be improved and were reminded that the presentation would be slow. This method leads to evaluation and self critical analysis in a supportive and encouraging environment. When a student is absent in theory lessons the support workers take notes to pass onto the students.

57. The range of enrichment activities is wide. "Radio MK" is broadcast live each day by students with increasing professionalism. There is a college band, drama, photography, dance and art club. Visits are arranged to theatres and museums locally and in London and students organise shopping trips and social visits to music gigs at Wembley.

58. In arts week there are many activities including craft workshops, performances and exhibitions. Under the 'artist in residence' scheme a ceramicist was employed this year and a drama placement is planned for next year. Artists work alongside students producing collaborative work and forging vocational links.

Leadership and management

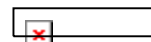
59. Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance and self-assessment is rigorous and

all staff contribute to the processes. Actions plans are monitored at regular meetings. Communications are good between staff and there is much informal discussion of students and their work.

60. Recently appointed staff have received induction and have been allocated an experienced mentor. Teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers are effectively deployed to support students in the studios. Good practice is identified at peer lesson observations and shared with colleagues.

61. Equal opportunity is integrated into the curriculum. Students report no discrimination based on race, gender or disability. Enrichment opportunities are open to all. Art projects use American, European and African art forms as themes for research. Plays and music performed reflect different cultures. For example, the college band is rehearsing a medley of Bob Marley songs for the end of year performance, along with rhythm and blues and rock ballads.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good pass rates with many high grades
- outstanding students' coursework and work in class
- very good teaching support
- outstanding inclusion of students at Alton College
- strong partnership between Treloar and Alton Colleges.

Weaknesses

- some cramped accommodation at Alton College.

Scope of provision

62. There are 29 LSC-funded students who attend Alton College to undertake GCSEs, AS-level and GCE A2 courses. These students represent 16% of the Treloar College student population and

constitutes around 2% of the overall Alton College population. The many AS-level and GCE A2 courses available include those in English language, English literature, French, geography, history, psychology, sociology, and minority subjects, for example, government and politics, philosophy, religious studies, and Spanish.

Achievement and standards

63. Students achieve high standards in many AS-level and GCE A-level subjects, principally through the long-standing partnership with Alton College, a high-achieving beacon sixth form college. Numbers of GCE A-level students have risen rapidly over the past two years. Some 93% of students over the past three years have completed their courses, and results overall are good. Some 97% of students completed their AS levels, and 86% of students achieved GCE A levels. The number of passes at A or B grades is outstanding compared with national averages for sixth form colleges at around 66%, and results in the humanities and in English outstrip those for other curriculum areas by more than 10% over three years. Written essay work and spoken work in lessons are outstanding. One student was observed typing an A grade psychology essay on biological therapies, in 40 minutes, with no notes or help. Most students progress from AS level to GCE A level, though this is decided in consultation with individual students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Humanities and English subjects	AS-level	No. of starts	8	12	21
		% retention	100	100	86
		% pass rate	100	100	94
Humanities and English subjects	GCE/ A Level	No. of starts	2	9	5
		% retention	0	100	100
		% pass rate	0	100	60
GCSE English language - 1 year	2	No. of starts	0	3	4
		% retention	n/a	100	100
		% pass rate	n/a	66	50

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* Validated Alton Colleges, ISR data, collated by inspector and agreed with link managers at both colleges.

Quality of education and training

64. Teaching is very good across the whole range of humanities and English provision. Teachers demonstrate very good specialist knowledge of their subjects, and make appropriate, but understated, allowance for the special physical needs of Treloar students. In several AS-level and GCE A-level lessons revision of theoretical and high order concepts was interspersed with quick fire discussions, and Treloar students handled the pace and demands of these lessons very well. Much good learning happens in many lessons. Students express views at or above what is expected nationally for GCE A level, and can use technical and expressive vocabulary very well. Students communicate well in lessons.

65. Some lessons at Alton College are too teacher-centred, but in others pair and group activities encourage Treloar students to mix with other students and learn independently. In one class, two students from both colleges and the teacher earnestly debated the relative technical merits of different electoral voting systems; in another, a student politely corrected the teacher's slip in defining 'choleric' as meaning 'melancholic'.

66. Students are systematically helped to undertake extra-curricular activities, such as trips to Russia, or a mock bar trial competition that culminated in a Treloar student "defending herself" at the Old Bailey in London. Many other well-advertised opportunities are taken up independently for enrichment, both in college and the local town.

67. Humanities' and English teachers at Alton, and Treloar teaching assistants who support individual students are extremely well-qualified, trained, and committed to their subjects and their students. The Alton accommodation generally offers very good wheelchair access, but communal areas and classrooms are too cramped; phased plans for better social and curriculum areas are progressing, and resources have been committed to enhance provision.

68. Staff have very high expectations of students. For example, some students are allowed to try out AS-level and vocational courses, to see if the physical demands of life in a crowded mainstream college are right for them. Other students are encouraged to apply for the most competitive places in HE. Students praised staff for accurately assessing their academic potential, and helping them overcome personal doubts to make applications to competitive universities. There are coherent systems at Alton College for monitoring the progress of all students mainly through effective personal tutoring, and by using targets based on national measures. Teachers make concise, relevant and challenging comments in marking and feedback.

69. Detailed reviews are conducted at both colleges for the same students, and these are seen by the link-co-ordinator from Treloar College, who teaches on both sites. There is good informal communication between the Treloar College co-ordinator and teachers at Alton college as well as more formal communication through the team of teaching assistants and occupational therapists. Interventions recorded in the minutes of these weekly meetings appear to be mainly pastoral or practical rather than academic.

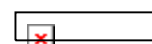
70. Guidance and support at the beginning of courses are thorough, and students stay on courses, enjoy success and make progress very well as a result. There are more flexible patterns of progression: for example, students sometimes take three or more years to complete courses, and study GCSEs, AS-level and GCE A-level and vocational courses in several places. Support for students during these courses is very effective, and many students speak highly of the sensitive support that teaching assistants and Alton teachers provide in helping them overcome the extreme range of physical and emotional barriers to learning that many of them face. For example, a student went to Russia, to reinforce his understanding of Russian history, and a modern linguist travelled abroad with an Alton College friend to improve their spoken language skills.

71. Students from Treloar College enjoy a depth of welcome and care from Alton college staff that is effective in supporting their studies. They are seamlessly integrated into the life of Alton College and share in significant extra-curricular activities for example, helping to organise the college prom.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are good. Managers in both colleges wholeheartedly support their long standing partnership. Many flexible arrangements for enrolment, induction, timetabling and resources are implemented with informal, but agreed, aims and protocols; and these consistently support students whilst they are on the Alton campus. A highly inclusive social and academic environment at Alton College enables Treloar College students to mix freely as fellow students and friends, and promotes a very serious attitude towards learning from which considerable academic and social benefits accrue. Self-assessment of the provision is rigorous and accurate. Some formal quality assurance aspects of the partnership are underdeveloped.

Access course for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- high standards of achievements in personal development
- very good teaching
- high quality resources
- outstanding student support.

Weaknesses

- inadequate pre-entry and initial assessment
- insufficient access to external work experience opportunities.

Scope of provision

73. There are 67 students in total enrolled in the programme for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 17 at pre-entry and 50 at entry level. The pre-entry and entry level students follow programmes that are designed to develop social skills and those of independence, self advocacy, and literacy and numeracy. Subject areas include literacy, numeracy, communication, IT, independence skills training. A range of practical vocational courses is provided in health and social care, photography, media, arts, drama, textiles, horticulture, sports and leisure. External accreditation is provided for students through Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), the English Speaking Board, City and Guilds, Edexcel certificates in skills for life and skills for working life and the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC). Individual programmes are designed by speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists to support students in the development of communication, independence and mobility skills.

Achievement and standards

74. Students' achievements in personal development are good. Students are very successful in developing independence skills. They become self-confident, are able to communicate effectively, develop self-awareness, decision-making and problem-solving skills. Some students make outstanding progress beyond expectations. For example, a student on entry with little confidence and interaction with staff and students, now in his second year was observed in a problem solving lesson, initiating the discussion, listening and responding to other students and suggesting possible actions required. External accreditation is taken where appropriate and students' achievements are good. Limited numbers of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress onto

vocational programmes in the college. In 2003 two students were placed on a photography programme, one on a business administration and one on an ICT vocational programme.

Quality of education and training

75. Most teaching is good or better. Teaching and support staff work effectively as a team to promote learning. The best lessons encourage students to make their own decisions and to play an active part in their own learning. Students demonstrate initiative and skills associated with teamwork. In one lesson students had to agree actions to be taken collectively before the task was undertaken. In an English Speaking Board lesson students were preparing a group talk in which self evaluation and group evaluation were actively promoted. Students were able to analyse the talk from watching a video recording that one of them had made. Suggestions were then made as to how the talk and their performance could be improved.

76. High-quality resources successfully support students both in their programmes and in the development of independence skills. Assistive and augmentative technology is used very effectively and meet the individual communication and learning needs of students. ICT equipment is used extensively and for each student a suitably adapted computer with relevant software is available for use during lessons. Students' mobility and independence are enhanced by electric wheelchairs if required, adjustable tables, adapted scissors to use in cutting fabric in textiles lessons and domestic equipment appropriate to the needs of students with physical disabilities.

77. Pre-entry and initial assessment is inadequate and does not give a comprehensive picture as to what the student can do in terms of practical or vocational skills. Prior learning and prior achievements are not adequately used to inform the students' programmes or to build on the skills students may have already developed. During the three week initial assessment, students sample practical skills in horticulture, art and textiles. Single statements written by tutors in assessment records for these areas, for example, 'one to one help needed' and 'keen and enthusiastic', do not provide sufficient detailed or analytical information to recommend an appropriate and relevant individualised programme for the student to follow.

78. There is insufficient access to opportunities for external work experience to enable them to develop further their confidence and increase their ability to integrate successfully into the community. Three students undertake work experience, two of whom shadow or perform work related skills within the college campus. Only one student works outside the college grounds in the crèche at Alton College. Some students, however, are involved in enterprise projects undertaken in textiles and horticulture lessons. This arrangement provides valuable opportunities for students to gain work related skills. Students also work as a production team to produce and sell items at college fetes.

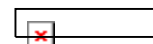
79. Outstanding student support promotes effective learning. Students are treated with dignity and respect by staff who understand their needs and provide sensitive and appropriate levels of support. Effective multi-disciplinary support services are available that include speech therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists on site. They devise programmes, that are monitored effectively and contribute to the students' overall learning programme. Individual one-to-one support is good; all support staff are competent in addressing the personal and communication needs of the students. Personal tutors and key workers are effective in providing emotional support to students. All students know who they should go to with a personal issue and speak highly of staff.

Leadership and management

80. Leadership and management are good. The team meets regularly and contributes to the development of effective self-assessment. Staff are well supported and benefit from the extensive internal and external staff development activities. Lesson observations are good and are undertaken once a year by the programme manager and once a year by peer review. Although issues arising from observations are not linked to individual performance review, they are addressed by action planning and further observation. During the course of peer observation the need for more training for tutors in working with students with alternative and augmentative communication was identified.

Training is being arranged with the speech and language therapist and a training plan is to begin in September 2004. There is effective induction for new staff who are assigned a mentor. Equal opportunities are actively promoted through everyday practice. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds, with all levels of disability and with complex needs, practice self-advocacy, to have their own voice and to make choices and decisions. Resource management and financial management are good. Managers and staff feel that they have adequate resources to perform their jobs effectively.

Literacy, numeracy and communication



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

Strengths

- very good development of communication skills
- very good resources
- very effective learning support.

Weaknesses

- insufficiently detailed target setting in literacy and numeracy
- inappropriate tools for the initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills
- insufficient recording of learning in literacy and numeracy.

Scope of provision

81. Some 140 students with considerable communication difficulties take part in literacy, numeracy or communication development. At pre entry level, students' learning is integrated into the rest of their programmes. At entry level students attend discrete lessons for literacy and numeracy and work towards their individual goals in the daily tutorial hour. Students may also attend twice weekly drop-in workshops and receive individual support. A variety of entry-level qualifications is offered. Key skills communication is integrated into vocational students' programmes at level 1 and two. Application of number is taught in discrete lessons. Alternative accreditation is offered at entry level 3 or level 1. Level 2 students take key skills, GCSE English or GCSE mathematics. Support for

dyslexia is also available.

Achievement and standards

82. Students make very good progress in communication and personal development. They can speak with confidence to individuals and groups and talk to unfamiliar people either with communication aids or directly. Students use the appropriate conventions of starting and finishing a conversation in person or by telephone. GCSE students respond well to questions. Students on vocational courses can make useful contributions to group discussions, interview business people and give short presentations. Students receiving dyslexia support make very good progress. Most students' progress in numeracy is satisfactory. However, a few students who are capable of calculating change when shopping are still not able to do so by the end of their college courses. Achievements in key skills levels 1 and 2 were poor in 2002/03. Progress in literacy is satisfactory at level 1 but progress in reading and spelling is slow for many students at entry-level.

Quality of education and training

83. Teaching is satisfactory overall and much is good. Lesson planning has improved recently with clear aims in each lesson for individual students. Communication is particularly well taught and communication skills are well developed for all students. Target setting for literacy and numeracy, however, is insufficiently detailed. Students work towards goals that are often too broad to achieve over a short timescale. Most individual learning plans contain goals expressed as core curricula statements that are difficult both for staff and students to understand. They often do not inform lesson planning. Some more achievable targets are not shared with all those staff in contact with students

84. Resources are very good. Students use a wide variety of communication aids and alternative and augmentative communication technology. Students have their own computer work station and ready access to interactive software. One teacher has dedicated time to develop imaginative and creative software programmes in response to requests from other teachers. Talking books are prepared by a student for visually impaired learners. There is a good range of newly acquired adult reading material. Good paper numeracy materials linked to the core curricula are available. Literacy work packs are still in the process of being selected. Some child orientated materials are still used. Two staff have qualifications in teaching students with dyslexia and all teaching assistants undergo training in supporting literacy and numeracy. However, most teachers have insufficient specialist training.

85. Tools for the initial assessment of literacy and numeracy are inappropriate. Teachers use a variety of tests, many of which produce contradictory results. They are inappropriate for young adults when they express students' abilities in terms of children's reading ages. More adult assessments have recently been adopted. Diagnostic assessment does not always inform lesson planning and is not yet complete for all students. However, diagnostic tests for students referred for support are well-chosen and lead to useful suggestions to teachers about how to help students. The college does not record learning in literacy and numeracy sufficiently. Many comments in records of progress are very general. Records relate to long term goals rather than more limited targets and are not specific enough to help teachers plan. They do not help students understand and remember what they can now do that they could not before. However, the recording of progress in dyslexia support is good.

86. The range of opportunities to develop students' skills is satisfactory. It includes discrete lessons, individual support and work on individual goals during daily tutorials. Students can attend drop-in workshops and practise numeracy in practical situations such as the college shop or in planning for trips. However, literacy and numeracy are not well integrated into most vocational lessons. Entry level students do not do enough structured work on their individual targets. Some teachers do not refer students who could profit from the drop-in workshops.

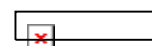
87. Support for students is very effective. They work in small groups and receive much individual attention. There are several teaching assistants in each class. Students' needs for alterations to communication aids, seating and mobility devices receive close attention. Specialised software

programmes are designed to meet individual needs. Dyslexia support from two specialist teachers is very good. However, not all staff providing support have dyslexia training. Teaching staff do not all recognise the need for referral to dyslexia support.

Leadership and management

88. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The provision has improved from a position of weakness in 2002. It has been restructured to include literacy, numeracy and communications across the college. Diagnostic assessment is now carried out for all new students. The college has acquired a range of good learning resources and appointed two new full time equivalent specialist staff. All learning support assistants are undertaking training. Key staff have received training in the core curricula and diagnostic assessment. There is an effective teaching observation scheme. Peer observation helps to share good practice. However, benefits from the advice of a quality initiative facilitator for leadership and management did not begin to show until March 2004. An essential skills forum was only established in March 2004; strategic plan is still in draft form although an action plan has been prepared. There is no plan for staff training or structured mentoring scheme for staff without specialist training. Most vocational courses do not integrate literacy and numeracy satisfactorily, and the quality assurance system does not focus on the quality of literacy and numeracy across the college. Systems for moderating non-accredited achievements are still in development. Equality and diversity are very strongly promoted in relation to disability and to gender but race equality issues have a lower profile.

Independent living skills



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

Strengths

- good progress in personal development and independence skills
- very good development of self-awareness in students
- very effective partnership between teachers and therapists to promote independence
- access to a very good range of specialist staff and equipment
- coherent curriculum planning for the core areas of independent living skills.

Weaknesses

- weak strategy for integrating the sports, leisure and after-college activities into the independent living skills core curriculum.

Scope of provision

89. Independent living skills cover a diverse range of activities. The core programme consists of independence training, personal development, advocacy, citizenship, and careers education. The programme also includes sports, leisure, and after-college activities. All students receive training in living skills, but a more extensive programme tends to be provided for those students with more complex physical and learning difficulties. The lessons and activities are taught by a wide range of staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, care workers, therapists, counsellors and the careers team.

90. The college's teaching rooms, therapy areas, leisure facilities, residential houses and independence flats are all used for parts of the curriculum and substantial elements are provided in the local community. Some elements are delivered through formally planned learning, but the programme also features optional and 'drop-in' activities. The philosophy of independent living skills stresses student choice and self-determination, but with a clear underlying principle that very active participation is expected.

Achievement and standards

91. Students make good progress. Their achievements are particularly good in personal development and independence skills that help them to take a more active role in their own learning. Students are increasingly self-aware. They know their own strengths and weaknesses, and actively pursue learning goals designed to overcome those weaknesses. Students are knowledgeable about their own progress and are able to reflect upon the consequences of their disabilities. Many students are able to give very accurate descriptions of how independent they are likely to be in their adult lives and they are realistic about the amount of help they will require. As a result, they are increasingly able to make good decisions about when to seek help and they communicate their needs well when directing others.

Quality of education and training

92. Teaching is good, particularly in the core areas of the independent living skills programme, where teachers' and therapists' planning is closely related to students' overall learning goals. In other lessons, such as those in sport and leisure, there is thorough planning for activities, but a much less clear link to the goals in students' individual learning plans. Staff are effective in explaining the aims of lessons to students, who respond well by recognising the importance of the next stage of learning. Students listen carefully to instructions and guidance, and most are quick to ask for help when they need it. Students are able to sustain their concentration for impressively long periods of time, especially when there is a combination of practical and theoretical activities.

93. Members of staff have very good relationships with students. They are skilled in encouraging them to take part in discussions and give ample time for all students, including those with substantial communication difficulties, to talk about their ideas and opinions. Teachers and therapists skilfully prompt discussions about issues affecting the students and help them to think about solutions. As a consequence, students are honest in their appraisal of their own situation and develop a positive attitude to overcoming difficulties. Many of the discussions centre on life styles, future careers and housing options: topics which provide interest and motivate students. Progress towards independence is well recorded and carefully explained to students. In particular, students are given a good understanding of how close they are to being able to travel independently and the criteria they will have to meet in order to spend time in the independence flats. Such is the success of many students in quickly mastering many of the practical and organisational skills required that there is increasing pressure on the accommodation in the flats and as a result delays occur in meeting some students' requests.

94. The level of liaison between teachers, therapists and care staff in planning and implementing programmes for individual students is impressive. Therapists are central to the planning of the independence programme and they have a thorough knowledge of students' aptitudes. The high number and wide range of specialist staff, including counselling and careers teams, are able to provide students with accurate guidance and information. Students report that they can turn to a number of staff for advice and they appreciate the efforts staff make in order to get to know them well. Students' access to learning is greatly enhanced by the very good provision of specialist equipment, including practical adaptations to utensils in the training and independence flats.

Leadership and management

95. Leadership and management are good. In the last two years, substantial improvements have been made to the organisation of the independent living skills curriculum. A good rationale is now in place and a coherent programme has been developed for the core elements that has replaced the more loosely-organised previous system. As a result the curriculum is now closely linked to students' individual learning plans. It also provides a reliable means of measuring students' progress and monitoring the effectiveness of the programme. The process of reorganisation is not complete and some aspects of independent living skills, notably sport, leisure and some after-college activities are not fully integrated into the programme. Teaching in these areas is not so precisely directed to the individual learning plan goals and the measurement of students' progress is not as accurate. The college's self-evaluation recognises the need for further change, and on the basis of the successful implementation of recent action plans, managers and staff have the capacity to tackle this area of weakness. Equality of opportunity and diversity are promoted in all aspects of independent living skills provision.