



TRURO COLLEGE

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Business](#)

[Computing and information technology](#)

[Leisure, tourism and sport](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Visual arts](#)

[Performing arts](#)

[Humanities
\(social sciences\)](#)

[English](#)

[Languages](#)

[Foundation programmes](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

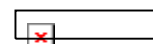
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2000/01](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

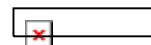
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

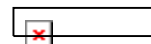


Name of college:	Truro College
Type of college:	Tertiary
Principal:	Jonathan Burnett
Address of college:	College Road Truro Cornwall TR1 3XX
Telephone number:	01872 264 251
Fax number:	01872 222 360
Chair of governors:	David Fryer
Unique reference number:	130629
Name of reporting inspector:	Keith Abbott HMI
Date(s) of inspection:	24-28 September 2001

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

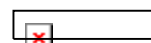


Truro College opened in 1993. It is a purpose-built tertiary college on the western outskirts of the city. Truro and the surrounding area has a population of approximately 55,000. It is one of the more prosperous towns in Cornwall. The vast majority of students are based at the main site in Truro. In addition, the college has open learning centres in Truro town centre and in Newquay. A further site at Tregye, three miles from Truro, is used for some full-time foundation and access to higher education (HE) courses. Since 1993, the college has grown rapidly. A new media and technology building, the Kenwyn Building, was opened in September 2000.

In 1999/2000, the college enrolled 6,713 students on further education (FE) courses. This equates to 3,050 full-time equivalent students. There were 1,715 full-time students aged 16 to 18. Overall, 74% of the full-time equivalent students were aged 16 to 18. Approximately 1% of students were from minority ethnic backgrounds. Of the 6,713 students, 58.8% were female. The college offers programmes in 13 of the 14 areas of learning. There is no provision in construction. Provision in engineering, agriculture, and hair and beauty is very small and was excluded from the inspection. The most substantial areas of provision are humanities and sciences.

The purpose of the college, set out in its mission statement, is to seek to provide excellence in its education and training provision for Truro and the surrounding areas and to be a centre for exceptional development in selected areas of activity.

How effective is the college?



Truro College is a very effective college. The quality of teaching and the achievements of students are outstanding in seven of the 12 curriculum areas inspected and good in the other five areas. Students are well supported academically and personally. Governors provide clear direction and effective oversight of operations. Senior managers provide strong leadership. Management of the curriculum is good in all areas. The range of courses meets the needs of the local community. The overall achievements of the college's adult students are satisfactory, but are well below those of students aged 16 to 18. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- outstanding pass rates on many courses
- good retention rates for students aged 16 to 18

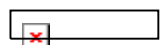
- effective teaching and learning in all curriculum areas
- strong leadership and management
- excellent equipment and accommodation
- rigorous and fair assessment of students' work
- effective guidance, enrolment, induction and tutorial support for full-time students
- wide range of courses and enrichment activities
- well-organised and effective work-based learning.

What should be improved

- unsatisfactory retention rates on some courses for adults
- aspects of the guidance and support offered to part-time students
- students' take-up of learning support.

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

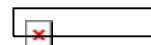
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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 Weak (5).

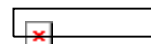
Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science	Outstanding. Pass rates and retention rates are high on most courses. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was excellent. Most teaching is good or better.
Mathematics	Good. Pass rates on general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses are high. Teaching is effective. Assessment is well organised and effective. There is good support for individual students. The pass rate on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) mathematics is unsatisfactory.
Business	Outstanding. There is a wide range of provision. Pass rates are high on many courses. Enthusiastic staff teach effectively. Students' work is of a high standard.
Computing and information technology (IT)	Good. There are high pass rates on most courses. Retention rates on a few courses for adults are low. Lessons are well taught. Teachers make good use of excellent specialist resources.
Leisure, tourism and sport	Outstanding. The pass rate is 100% on most full-time courses. Retention rates are generally high. Teaching is effective on all courses. The curriculum area is well managed. Equipment and facilities at the college and off-site are excellent.
Health and social care	Outstanding. Pass rates are high on most courses. Retention rates are high. Teaching is effective. There is strong and effective management of college courses and work-based learning.
Visual arts	Good. There is good teaching and effective learning. Courses are well managed. Students enjoy their studies and achieve well. There are good specialist resources.
Performing arts	Outstanding. There is an excellent range of provision in music, drama and dance. All subjects are well taught. Levels of achievement are high. Accommodation and equipment are outstanding.
Humanities (social sciences)	Outstanding. Pass rates and retention rates are high on courses for full-time students and on teacher education courses. They are low on some courses for adult students. Most aspects of teaching and learning are good. Guidance and support are effective, but management of a few part-time GCSE and GCE A-level and advanced subsidiary (AS-level) courses is unsatisfactory.
English	Outstanding. Examination results are excellent on GCE A-level courses. Teachers are enthusiastic and effective. They provide a high level of individual support for students. The assessment programme is carefully planned and assignments are well devised.
Languages	Good. There are high pass rates on most courses. Retention rates are low on a few courses. Most teaching is good, but some is unsatisfactory. There are excellent specialist resources.
Foundation programmes	Outstanding. Students have a wide choice of vocational options. Students respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Courses are well matched to individuals' needs. Students' progress is carefully monitored. The curriculum area is well managed.

How well is the college led and managed?



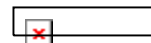
Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the last inspection in 1997, the college has widened its range of courses, substantially increased student numbers, developed its accommodation and maintained high retention and pass rates. Governors provide effective oversight of the strategic direction of the college. Provision in all the curriculum areas inspected is outstanding or good. A high proportion of the teaching is also good or better. Retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 are significantly above the average for FE colleges. Effective quality assurance procedures have helped to raise standards. Communication in the college is effective and staff morale is high. Financial management is good. The college provides good value for money. Managers need to focus on improving the retention rates of adult students and on improving aspects of the support for part-time students.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college operates an open-access policy and provides good opportunities in education and training for people with a wide range of experience and educational backgrounds. The range of provision meets the needs of the local community, school-leavers and employers. The college has successfully improved participation in FE by attracting new client groups such as adults returning to education and students wishing to study part-time. It organises many of its courses around the particular needs of individuals. For example, many courses which prepare adults for employment or for FE and HE are timetabled outside the normal working week. However, this is not the case with the access to HE provision, which is only offered on a full-time basis. There is a wide range of courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These courses provide good opportunities for students to progress to other FE courses, training or employment. The college is sensitive to equal opportunities issues. There is close analysis of students, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



There are extensive arrangements to provide information, advice and guidance to prospective full-time students. However, some part-time students receive insufficient guidance before they enrol. All full-time students' learning support needs are assessed soon after they join the college, although the arrangements for initial assessment did not operate effectively in 2000. Many students, however, do not take up the support that they are identified as needing. Full-time students receive good tutorial support and there are well-developed arrangements for personal tutors to review and report on full-time students' progress. Corresponding arrangements for some part-time students are too informal. Students receive good advice and guidance on progression to employment or HE. Students with specific learning or personal needs receive good support at the college.

Students' views of the college



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

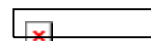
What students like about the college

- good reputation and high academic standards
- good advice about courses
- excellent computing, library, sports and specialist facilities
- good accommodation
- good teaching
- approachable and supportive staff.

What they feel could be improved

- social areas for students
- arrangements to assess and teach key skills
- arrangements for transport and car parking.

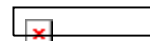
Other information



The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what

The governors must agree the plan and send copies of it to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

Part B: The college as a whole



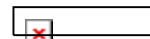
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	78	18	4
19+ and WBL*	79	16	5
Learning 16-18	79	16	5
19+ and WBL*	78	14	8

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



16-18 year olds

1. The vast majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Most of these students take GCE A-level courses. The college has consistently achieved retention rates well above the national average for students aged 16 to 18 in FE colleges. This success has been achieved across programme areas and across levels of study. In 2000, the overall retention rates on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were 95%, 88% and 85%, respectively. These compare very favourably with national averages of 80%, 77% and 77%, respectively. This places the college well into the upper quartile of FE colleges at each of the three levels. The college was also in the upper quartile at each level in 1999. College data for 2001 indicate retention rates of 82%, 86% and 84% respectively. Although retention continues to be high, all three rates are below the 2000 figures. Prior to this fall, the overall trend had been upward for several years.

2. The college also achieves very high pass rates on courses for students aged 16 to 18. For the last three years the average points score for students taking three or more GCE A levels has been over 20. In 2000, overall pass rates on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were 81%, 67% and 86% respectively, compared with national averages of 66%, 68% and 73%. The college was therefore in the upper quartile of colleges at levels 1 and 3, but just below the median at level 2. College data for 2001 shows overall pass rates of 75%, 78% and 91% at levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively. It also shows that 88% of entrants for GCE A levels passed their examinations. Of these, 58% achieved grade C

or above. In many subjects, the college achieved 100% pass rates. These include mathematics, further mathematics, economics, physical education (PE), fine art, art and design, drama, music technology, English (one-year course), communication studies, German, Spanish and Italian. The college also achieved good GCE AS-level results in 2001, with 85% of entrants passing and 56% achieving grade C or above.

3. On arrival at the college, each GCE A-level student is set a minimum target grade, derived from their GCSE grades. College analysis of the outcomes indicates that a high proportion of students achieve their target grades, and that, in general, students make better progress than would be expected on the basis of their GCSE grades on entry. Destination data indicate that the college prepares its students effectively for HE, with over 90% of leavers progressing to their first choice HE institution.

4. The college achieves good results on its vocational programmes. On most programmes, both retention rates and pass rates are above national averages. On many programmes all of the students who complete the course achieve the qualification. In 2001, examples included the first diploma in IT, first and national diplomas in public services, the intermediate general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in leisure and tourism, the council for awards in children's care and education (CACHE) diploma in childcare and education, the national diploma in popular music and the advanced GNVQs in art and design, and media and communications. There are low levels of achievement in key skills, however, with few students submitting their portfolios for moderation of standards.

5. Each year, 300 to 350 students follow courses leading to GCSE qualifications. Between 1999 and 2000, the retention rate improved from 67% to 72%. However, the overall pass rate for those completing their courses fell from 88% to 79%. Levels of achievement at GCSE are good, but retention and pass rates are depressed by the rates in GCSE mathematics. Although the rates in mathematics were above the national averages for FE colleges, they were lower than the rates for other subjects in the college.

6. For the past three years, the college has run the International Baccalaureate course. This is a broad-based course that includes the study of a language. It is designed for students who intend to progress to HE. Retention and pass rates are high. The first group of 23 students all successfully completed the course in 2001. As a result, they were all able to progress to university. The International Baccalaureate course is becoming increasingly popular. In September 2001, 36 students started the course.

7. The standard of students' work in lessons was generally good. In 68% of lessons, levels of attainment were good or better. It was less than satisfactory in 4% of lessons. Students in all curriculum areas were highly motivated. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was good. Students work hard, make enthusiastic contributions to class discussions and produce good written and practical work.

Adult learners

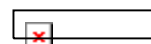
8. About 25% of the college's full-time equivalent students are adults. Most take part-time courses in business, humanities, health and social care or IT. Many of these students study at the college's three open learning centres. Overall, retention rates for adult students are below national averages for FE colleges. In both 1999 and 2000, retention rates at level 1, 2 and 3 were each below the national average. For students completing in 2001, college data indicate that retention rates remain below national averages, but that improvements were made at levels 1 and 3.

9. Pass rates for adult students are generally above national averages. In 1999, the college exceeded national averages at levels 1, 2 and 3 and, in 2000, it exceeded the national average at levels 2 and 3. College data for 2001 shows improved rates at each level. However, adult students' pass rates are lower than those of students aged 16 to 18. For example, of the 86 adult entrants for GCE A levels 64% passed and 44% achieved grade C or above. Of the 118 entrants for GCE AS levels, 63% passed and 47% achieved grade C or above.

10. The college has relatively low numbers of New Deal clients and work-based learning trainees. Completion and pass rates are consistently higher than for comparable schemes in the area. Of those clients who started New Deal in 1999/2000, 85% of the trainees aged 18 to 24, and 65% of the trainees aged over 24, completed their planned programmes.

11. The college runs a substantial number of recreational courses and HE courses for adults. These were not included in the inspection and have been excluded from the statistics referred to in this report.

Quality of education and training



12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 210 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 78% of these, satisfactory in 18% and less than satisfactory in 4%. The quality of teaching was consistently good in all curriculum areas. It was particularly effective on foundation studies programmes and in leisure, tourism and sport where 100% and 94% respectively of lessons were good or better. The low number of unsatisfactory lessons was spread across several curriculum areas. Learning is also very effective. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 79%, 16% and 5%, respectively. Co-ordination of the teaching and assessment of key skills across the college is good. A key skills 'champion' has been appointed in each programme area to help develop good practice. Key skills and basic skills are taught well on foundation-level programmes.

13. A feature of many of the effective lessons is the enthusiasm teachers show for their subjects. Students are highly motivated. They enjoy their studies and participate with confidence in class discussions. There were examples of good use of current affairs and local issues to stimulate students' interest in their subjects. Most teaching of theory is effectively related to subsequent practical activities. In some curriculum areas, for example, science, art and design, and computing, teachers skilfully used practical demonstrations in their lessons. Teaching is also closely related to examination requirements. Even at this early stage in the year, the relevance of activities to success in examinations was being emphasised in several lessons. Many teachers make effective use of IT in their teaching. In most curriculum areas, there are useful materials on the college intranet; for example, specimen answers to past examination questions. There are sufficient modern computers, and students are encouraged to use the Internet for their research.

14. In the less than satisfactory lessons, and in some of the satisfactory lessons, teachers often failed to provide tasks and activities that were suitable for all the students. In particular, the more able students were not given sufficiently demanding tasks. Other weaknesses in these lessons included failure to check students' understanding, failure to involve students in class discussions, unclear use of whiteboards and overhead projectors, insufficient guidance on how to tackle activities and missed opportunities to develop key skills.

15. Assessment of students' progress is effective. There are explicit college guidelines for the management of assessment. Curriculum areas operate these guidelines consistently. Each curriculum area has clear plans for assessment, which are shared with the students. Assessment closely matches awarding body requirements. It is fair, accurate and rigorous. Homework is set on a regular basis. Students' work is carefully marked and most staff provide clear written feedback to students. In some areas, for example, English, languages and business, teachers do not always provide enough advice on how students can improve their work. There is good use of peer assessment and self-assessment in visual and performing arts and on foundation courses.

16. The college has thorough internal verification procedures which help to ensure good practice in assessment. Internal verification is carried out effectively on vocational courses. There is close monitoring of actions required to address issues raised in reports from external verifiers and moderators.

17. There are excellent systems for monitoring individuals' progress towards their learning goals. For example, GCE A-level students have half-termly reviews with their personal tutor, when progress is compared with the target minimum grades agreed for each individual when they joined the college. Individual action plans are regularly updated and used to drive improvements. Termly reports are sent to parents of students aged 16 to 18 and there are termly parents' evenings.

18. Assessment in the workplace is well planned and there are good systems for monitoring the progress made by work-based trainees. Employers are well informed about trainees' progress. National vocational qualification (NVQ) assessment is thorough and observations by assessors are held in the workplace.

19. The college provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses for full-time and part-time students. More than 40 GCE A and GCE AS-level subjects are offered. The range of vocational courses has developed since the college opened eight years ago. There are established courses, recruiting large numbers of students in art and design, health and social care, IT, media, public services and sports studies. In addition, there are courses in all other vocational areas, with the exception of construction.

20. The college has effective arrangements to help school-leavers choose appropriate courses. An extensive range of information, advice and guidance is available to students before they enrol and during their early days at college. School liaison activities include good opportunities for pupils to sample college courses and activities. Open days, open evenings and enrolment advice days help part-time students to choose appropriate courses. However, some part-time students receive inadequate initial guidance about their choices. They often enrol by post with insufficient discussion about the demands of their course.

21. All full-time students are interviewed. Prospective students receive impartial advice about their subject choices. Good induction programmes enable students to get to know the college and their courses quickly. There are also helpful and efficient procedures to enable students to change the subjects and courses they have chosen, if necessary.

22. Students receive extensive advice and guidance on career progression. In particular, full-time students benefit from excellent guidance in preparing for entry to HE. A high proportion, of students, approximately 90%, gain entry to their first choice institution. Students wishing to gain employment also receive a lot of help. They may undertake work experience, attend talks by external speakers, and attend group sessions and individual interviews provided by the Connexions service or by the college's own careers advisors.

23. The college provides learning support for students who need to improve their literacy, numeracy, IT or study skills. Soon after joining the college, the support needs of all full-time students are assessed. In 2000, administrative difficulties delayed the results and caused some unreliable assessment. However, early indications are that a new computerised system, introduced this year, will operate reliably. Students who need support are also identified by their schools, or by teachers at interview or during lessons. Once identified, each student is offered an interview to assess their individual needs and plan appropriate support. There is good communication between personal tutors and the learning support staff who work in attractive and well-equipped learning support workshops. A high proportion of students who are identified as needing support, however, fail to attend the interview or the support sessions arranged for them. For example, last year less than 15% of the 145 students assessed as needing support in communication regularly attended their support sessions. Staff in the learning support centres are well qualified academically, but they lack specialised qualifications to teach basic literacy, numeracy and IT.

24. Full-time students receive weekly tutorials. Tutors deal with pastoral matters, the progress students are making and items of college news. The tutorials are well attended and well conducted. Personal tutors also hold regular progress reviews with each of their tutees at which attendance, effort and progress are reviewed and a record made of the proceedings. Plans for improved performance are then agreed. Students also speak highly of the informal processes that help them to succeed. Teachers and tutors know their students well and are willing to provide help outside formal working hours. Tutorial support for adult part-time students is more informal, but staff are

ready and willing to provide help and guidance, and students speak highly of the support they receive.

25. The college provides support for a wide range of personal needs. The welcoming student support centre is conveniently situated close to the main reception area. There is financial support for those who need it; for example, to cover travel and childcare costs. There is also a confidential counselling service. The college does not have its own crèche. Students who have visual or hearing impairment receive valuable help from the county's support services. The college also contributes to meeting these individuals' particular needs, for example by providing specialised voice recognition software. Learning support assistants provide excellent support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

26. Adult students who attend the open-learning centres for basic skills and other tuition receive good support from specialist support staff based in the centres. The centres are conveniently situated in the town centres and they provide welcoming learning environments. The college leads a partnership of the region's colleges and the National Health Service trust which has successfully gained European funding to support adults who are long-term unemployed or who have acquired disabilities and need support in order to return to work. The project was highly commended as part of the assessment for a beacon award.

27. Teachers are highly motivated. They are committed to the success of their students and to the continued development of the college. They are well qualified and knowledgeable about their specialist subject areas. Some 97% of full-time teachers have a teaching qualification. The college provides good opportunities for personal and professional development through attendance at external courses and internal activities. In most curriculum areas, there is a suitable balance of full-time and part-time staff. Part-time staff bring valuable commercial and industrial expertise to the courses on which they teach. They are made integral members of curriculum teams.

28. Excellent assistance is provided by support staff. They work closely with curriculum teams. Library and learning resource centre staff are highly qualified and provide an extensive service which is appreciated by staff and students. Technical support for the extensive computing facilities is excellent.

29. The college has invested heavily in computers for students, teachers and support staff. The college has over 750 computers available to students, giving an approximate ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers of 4:1. Most machines are networked and have Internet access. Over half the machines are available on an open-access basis. Many teaching rooms are equipped with computers linked to projectors.

30. The college library is spread between three locations on the main campus. Most books are recent acquisitions and other media include videos, CD-ROMs and audiotapes. There is a good range of periodicals. The library catalogue is systematically maintained and includes all the resources held in different parts of the college.

31. The main campus has bright, modern buildings. Common areas are attractive and many of these areas are enhanced by displays of students' work. The open-learning centres are attractive places in which to learn and space in each centre is used efficiently. Access for people with restricted mobility is very good on the main site, but difficult at some of the open-learning centres. The college and the district council share responsibility for the large sports hall and the swimming pool located on the site. There is not enough parking space on the main site. Planning restrictions prevent a resolution of this problem.

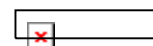
32. The college is effective in meeting the needs and interests of people in the local area. Students are drawn from all sections of the community-learning centres provide good learning opportunities for adults and enable them to plan their study around their other personal or family commitments. Training programmes have been established to meet the needs of local small businesses. For example, staff in the college's business unit have worked with staff from a local gardening firm to improve their retail and marketing skills.

33. The college has developed a range of effective strategies for widening its participation. It works with a wide range of providers and partners in the community. Effective work-based programmes have enabled trainees and clients to move into work. Many of these have come through the New Deal arrangements.

34. The additional studies programme provides rich and varied opportunities. Staff participate as well as students. Popular activities include sport and yoga. The more specialised activities include music and sign language. Provision is also enriched by regular lectures and talks, drama productions, exchange visits, an Eden Project placement, exhibitions of students' work and residential trips.

35. A significant feature of the college's inclusive provision is the excellent work undertaken with students with learning disabilities. This work has improved since the last inspection and is now a strength of the college's provision. Many adults and young learners benefit from a wide range of well-planned programmes. They make significant gains in skills and knowledge that enable them to move towards an independent way of life.

Leadership and management



36. Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior managers and governors, supported by enthusiastic staff, have created a highly successful college. Since the last inspection in 1997, the college has extended its range of FE courses and introduced HE programmes. It has developed its open-learning centres and established new work with local businesses. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased substantially. However, the number of work-based trainees is low. Each year since it opened, the college has met or exceeded its recruitment targets.

37. The management structure is simple and effective. Staff trust their managers and consider them to be very supportive. Senior managers maintain close contact with students. Communication throughout the college is excellent. Staff are consulted on day-to-day issues and on the future direction of the college.

38. Management of the curriculum is good. Leaders of the 12 teaching teams maintain close contact with students and staff. Full-time courses are well organised. Managers and teachers deal effectively with most course issues and help create the conditions for good teaching and the high standards of work produced by students. The college has not yet successfully addressed the comparatively poor retention rates of adult students on some courses, and adult students' lower levels of achievement. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 was well managed. Students can choose from a wide range of subjects and enrichment activities.

39. Quality assurance procedures, based on annual self-assessment, are effective. Inspectors agreed with most of the grades in the college's self-assessment report. Courses are reviewed rigorously although, in a few areas, the specific needs of adult students are not sufficiently considered. Views of students and parents are sought wherever possible. Action planning is good, with a strong emphasis on improving students' performance and the quality of teaching. Senior managers carefully monitor progress against the plans. Quality assurance of support services is less well developed. Standards to assure the quality of support services include few measurable targets. Self-assessment includes the college's work-based learning. A separate, detailed report for 2000/01 was shared with employers.

40. The lesson observation programme is comprehensive and effective. Findings are used both for staff appraisal and to identify an individual's training needs. The profile of lesson grades awarded by the college in 2000/01 closely matched those awarded by inspectors. However, the findings from the observation programme are not used to identify the quality of teaching for different types of

qualification, level, or age of student, or to inform judgements about the quality of tutorial support.

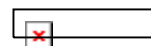
41. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. Governors receive regular reports on the implementation of the equal opportunities policy. Seminar topics for local businesses have included the Disability Discrimination Act and the role of women in business. Lunchtime talks have given students the opportunity to raise their awareness of equal opportunities issues. Good links with voluntary and community organisations help to promote equal opportunities. For example, the college has worked with a local hospital to introduce specialist provision for people who have become disabled because of accident or illness and who need retraining to become employable.

42. Governors work well with senior managers to set clear strategic objectives for the college. They monitor performance against the strategic objectives well and they review the mission annually. At each corporation meeting, governors receive presentations from staff and students on topics such as inclusive learning. This gives them a better understanding of the issues facing the college. They monitor the academic performance of students effectively. The corporation's academic and standards committee receives detailed reports and members ask searching questions. A governor attends the academic board and the full corporation carefully considers the board's papers. Governors meet students and staff regularly. Many attend college functions and some have links with individual subject areas.

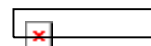
43. The quality of management information is generally good. Programme team leaders have on-line access to the management information system and most get reliable data to help them set targets and analyse retention and pass rates at subject level. Inspectors were able to rely on most of the data supplied for inspection.

44. Financial management of the college is good. The deployment of resources is efficient. Teachers' workloads are carefully monitored to ensure their time is used efficiently. The average size of class is high. Budget holders receive regular and accurate information on income and expenditure. The college offers good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science



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

Strengths

- effective and enthusiastic teaching
- excellent results on GCE A-level courses
- high retention rates

- high levels of attendance
- effective curriculum management
- rigorous and well-managed assessment of students' progress
- high rates of progression to science courses in HE institutions.

Weaknesses

- cramped conditions in some teaching accommodation.

Scope of provision

45. The college offers a wide range of GCE A-level and AS-level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics, geology and environmental science. Most students attend full-time and are aged 16 to 18. Currently there are no vocational science courses below level 3. Part-time courses are limited to GCE A-level human biology and access to science. Science options form part of the International Baccalaureate programme.

Achievement and standards

46. Overall retention rates are high. Retention rates on GCE A-level science courses have been well above the national average. Although retention rates on the advanced GNVQ in science have been slightly below the national average, the college no longer offers this course. Levels of attendance are also high. The average attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was 93%.

47. Examination pass rates are outstanding. Results in all GCE A-level subjects are well above the national average. For example, in each of the last three years, pass rates of 94% or more were achieved in GCE A-level biology, physics and environmental science. The proportion of GCE A-level students achieving A-C grades is consistently higher than the national average. In 2001, for example, 77% of physics students and 67% of chemistry students achieved grades A-C compared with the national averages of 43% and 44%, respectively. GCE A-level chemistry, physics and environmental science students consistently achieve higher grades than those predicted from their GCSE results on entry. In 2001, 125 students progressed to science-related courses in HE institutions.

48. Most students' written work is of a high standard. The students are given homework each week and their progress is monitored through tests that are set when each topic has been completed. Assignments are interesting and purposeful. Teachers mark work carefully and give helpful feedback. Work placements are arranged for GCE A-level students aiming to enter university veterinary and medical schools, but this is the only form of work experience for full-time students.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Science, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	93	109	89
		% retention	80	89	74
		% pass rate	97	97	94
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	68	91	82
		% retention	78	86	85
		% pass rate	98	95	86
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	85	71	98
		% retention	86	91	86
		% pass rate	100	98	98
GCE A-level human biology	3	No. of starts	39	36	26
		% retention	69	83	73
		% pass rate	88	70	93
GCE A-level environmental science	3	No. of starts	20	40	29
		% retention	65	85	86
		% pass rate	100	97	95
GCE A-level geology	3	No. of starts	7	12	19
		% retention	71	100	89
		% pass rate	100	100	69

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

49. Most teaching is good or very good. Some 77% of lessons observed by inspectors were good or better. Teachers make effective use of an appropriate variety of activities. They talk to the class, engage in question and answer with students, organise students to work in small groups and hold 'brain-storming' sessions. In the best lessons, they help students to learn by constantly referring to the work which has been covered and by summarising the important points. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject. Students are well motivated. They work productively and make worthwhile contributions to lessons. There were several examples of science being applied to real-life situations in a very productive manner. For example, in an environmental science lesson on pollution, there was frequent reference to situations relevant to Cornwall. In a few lessons, teachers failed to ensure that all the students were involved in sufficiently demanding activities and/or were not doing enough to check that students were learning effectively.

50. In practical lessons, teachers relate theory to practice clearly and effectively. For example, in a human biology GCE AS-level lesson, students successfully applied their knowledge of the chemical structure of glucose by constructing chemical models, they extended their knowledge by manipulating the models to carry out the condensation reaction to form maltose molecules. In practical classes in physics, excellent use is made of practical demonstrations. Students are encouraged to access the college intranet to obtain programme plans, assignments, and specimen examination questions.

51. Relations between students and teachers are very good. Students speak highly of the quality of teaching and the support provided by their personal tutors. All full-time and part-time students are allocated a personal tutor for the duration of their stay at college and they meet their tutors regularly.

Parents and guardians receive regular reports on the progress of students aged 16 to 18. Good support is provided for students with special needs. For example one GCE A-level student with cerebral palsy uses special equipment adapted by a technician to enable him to participate in all aspects of practical work in chemistry.

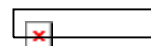
52. Teachers are well qualified and most have relevant specialist teaching experience. The laboratories are well serviced by a dedicated team of technicians. The college provides each student with suitable textbooks and laboratory manuals. The library is adequately stocked with books, videos and CD-ROMs, but the range of scientific periodicals is narrow.

53. Accommodation for science is good. The laboratories are modern, well furnished and appropriately equipped. Specialist rooms have stimulating wall displays and good use is made of two computer projectors. A few classrooms are either too small for the number of students or are unsuitable for science teaching. Although most laboratories are spacious, some were overcrowded during practical lessons.

Leadership and management

54. The programme area is well managed. The GCE timetable is effectively co-ordinated to ensure that all groups cover the same material each week, irrespective of the teacher. There is an excellent spirit within the programme area and staff work as a team, sharing teaching resources. Strong emphasis is given to improving the quality of teaching and learning and preparing students effectively for examinations. There are effective procedures for monitoring students' progress. Teachers, for example, meet regularly to review their students' progress. Retention and pass rates are monitored and carefully analysed. Action plans arising from self-assessment contain clear strategies for improvement and are monitored regularly.

Mathematics



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on GCE A-level courses
- good value added results in further mathematics
- effective teaching
- good support for individual students
- appropriate and well-marked assignments

- good resources.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates in GCSE mathematics
- low retention rates in further mathematics.

Scope of provision

55. Mathematics courses recruit large numbers of students. The college offers a wide range of advanced mathematics options as well as a further mathematics course. Students may take GCE A-level mathematics in one year if they are sufficiently able. Mathematics is a compulsory subject on the International Baccalaureate programme. GCSE mathematics courses are offered to students who have failed to achieve at least a grade C. They may take an eight-week course or a one-year course. They may also study through an evening class or through the college's open-learning centres. The learning centres run a 'link into learning' level 1 course. The college also offers key skills numeracy at levels 1, 2 and 3.

Achievement and standards

56. Pass rates in GCE A-level mathematics courses are outstanding. In 2001, all students passed both mathematics and further mathematics. Students taking further mathematics also achieve GCE A-level grades which are significantly above predictions based on their GCSE grades. In the past two years, retention rates have been above the national average in mathematics, but below average in further mathematics. Pass rates on the new GCE AS-level course are good. In 2001, 156 students started GCE AS-level mathematics. The retention rate was 83% and the pass rate was 81%. Pass rates in GCSE mathematics have been above the national average for FE colleges in each of the last three years. College pass rates are nevertheless unsatisfactory, since the national average pass rate in FE colleges is poor. Retention rates on the GCSE course have been close to the national average.

57. Students work well in lessons. They are attentive and keen to succeed and the quality of their work is good. Most students' knowledge of mathematics is sound and their mathematical skills are well developed. For example, in one lesson where the teacher was presenting an example of how to solve a definite integral, students demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of basic calculus.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Mathematics, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	183	135	142
		% retention	63	67	73
		% pass rate	47	53	49
GCE A-level	3	No. of starts	136	135	142

mathematics		% retention	71	90	79
		% pass rate	99	98	100
GCE A-level further mathematics	3	No. of starts	15	15	24
		% retention	60	73	63
		% pass rate	89	100	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

58. Most teaching is very effective. Lessons are well planned. Teachers' explanations are clear. They make good use of graphical calculators and overhead projection systems that allow the whole class to see their presentations, and this has a positive impact on the way students present their own work. In some lessons, there was insufficient questioning of students and too little discussion of mathematical concepts. Consequently, students' understanding of topics was not properly checked and there was not enough opportunity for the students to think for themselves. In some GCSE classes, the range of ability is very wide and teachers do not always succeed in meeting the diverse needs of all their students.

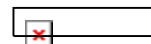
59. Assessment is appropriate. Assignments are well matched to course requirements and take account of students' differing abilities. They are also well designed and interesting. For example, in the mechanics module, an imaginative assignment on projectile motion contributed to students' good understanding of the topic and the high standard of their work. All teachers use the same assignments, which are available to students on the college intranet. Students' assignments are carefully marked, and annotated in a way that helps the students to improve their work and allows tutors to monitor their progress. Staff also provide useful verbal feedback to students. Students' progress is carefully monitored against their individual target grades.

60. Resources for mathematics are good. Classrooms are in close proximity to each other and are well furnished. The rooms have projection facilities. There is a dedicated resource area for mathematics, which houses a wide range of worksheets. Access to computers is good. Mathematics teachers are well qualified and experienced. Mathematics students receive good formal and informal support from their teachers and from personal tutors. There is also a specialist learning-support tutor for mathematics, based in the open-access centre. Some students are referred to this tutor by their subject tutors or seek help from the tutor themselves. The support provided is of a very high standard.

Leadership and management

61. The area is well managed. The mathematics team is well organised and effective. Teachers have regular meetings to plan their teaching and monitor students' progress. There are well-established quality assurance procedures, which include an annual review of each course. The reviews, however, do not focus sufficiently on teaching methods and the sharing of good practice. For example, in reviewing GCSE mathematics, there was no analysis of comparative performance of different groups of students, to evaluate how appropriate the courses are for students of differing abilities.

Business



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

Strengths

- excellent examination results on many courses
- very good teaching
- effective use of learning support materials on the intranet
- good teaching of key skills
- well-managed department
- constructive feedback to students
- high standard of portfolio work
- well-organised work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- some poor teaching materials
- not enough work-based assessors.

Scope of provision

62. Full-time business studies provision includes GCE A and AS levels in business, economics, accounting and law. The college also offers the advanced vocational certificate in education (AVCE) in business. There is a wide range of part-time evening courses for adults leading to professional qualifications; for example, in personnel, management, accounting and law. There are 14 foundation and seven advanced modern apprentices following work-based business administration qualifications at NVQ level 2 or 3, and one NVQ trainee with special training needs.

Achievement and standards

63. In 2001, pass rates on most courses were significantly above the national average. There were 100 % pass rates in the AVCE in business, GCE A and GCE AS-level economics and NVQ level 3 in administration. There were high pass rates in GCE AS-level law at 94%, GCE A-level law at 85% and GCE A-level business at 84%. Pass rates on professional courses are also high. For example, the certificate in personnel practice had pass rates of 100% and 83% in 1999 and 2000, respectively. In 2000/01, 80% of apprentices achieved the full advanced modern apprentice framework. One work-based learner with special training needs achieved NVQ level 2 and won a national competition where the prize was to work in the Houses of Parliament for a week. Retention rates on most courses are above the national average.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Business, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
AVCE business studies	3	No. of starts	30	14	23
		% retention	54	62	91
		% pass rate	100	57	100
NVQ administration	3	No. of starts	**	18	8
		% retention	**	73	88
		% pass rate	**	85	100
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	96	81	71
		% retention	77	78	79
		% pass rate	85	81	84
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	13	7	9
		% retention	46	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	52	51	40
		% retention	69	88	80
		% pass rate	92	85	85

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

64. In 71% of lessons, teaching was good or better. Typically, lessons are well planned. Teachers have clear objectives and pay close attention to individuals' needs. Activities are appropriate and bring out the best in students. Students participate enthusiastically in discussions and practical activities. In law and business lessons, effective use is made of newspaper articles covering current national and local events. Learning is consolidated by effective questioning and regular revision. In law lessons, there is appropriate reference to acts of parliament and case law. Although there were no unsatisfactory lessons, unsatisfactory aspects of work in a few lessons, included handouts with spelling errors, writing on overhead projector slides that was too small to be read by students at the back of the class and some untidy board work.

65. In all subjects homework is set regularly and returned promptly. Spelling and grammar are corrected and teachers provide constructive feedback. Students working on computer-based business projects are given good support. Assignments completed by work-based learners are

discussed thoroughly with the learners at regular assessment meetings. Students and trainees make good progress. Most produce work of a high standard. They are encouraged to develop IT skills on all programmes. The portfolios produced by work-based trainees demonstrate that they understand the NVQ requirements, including the need for well-organised portfolios of evidence. The range of portfolio evidence reflects the diversity of employers involved with the college.

66. Work-based training is well organised and effective. Strong links exist between college staff and the employers who provide work-based training. Employers are well informed of trainees' progress. Trainees pursue qualifications that are appropriate to their levels of skill. College staff review trainees' progress regularly and agree short-term learning targets for each individual. Individual learning plans are updated every three months.

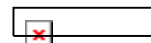
67. Key skills are integrated effectively with other aspects of work in GCE A-level lessons. One law teacher frequently related key skills to legal topics; for example, pointing out the relevance of a debate on police powers to communication, and the potential of 'stop and search' statistics for IT. Work-based trainees attend key skills training sessions on a weekly basis, at times to suit the individual trainee. Trainees' portfolios provide clear evidence of the key skills which have been acquired. Assignments are used to develop key skills which have not otherwise been covered. For example, one trainee produced a booklet about the college office, incorporating text, pictures and brief details of job roles.

68. Classrooms are good places in which to learn. They are attractive and the walls hold displays, posters and examples of students' work. Some also have small reference sections containing books and other resources. There are sufficient computers for students, all with access to the Internet. The college intranet holds a useful database of past examination papers and specimen answers, as well as course notes, revision exercises and assignments.

Leadership and management

69. The curriculum area is well managed. There is rigorous monitoring of students' progress using a computerised tracking system. Communication between teachers and managers is good. Students benefit from teachers who are enthusiastic and committed to their work and who work well together. There are regular and effective team meetings at which targets for retention and pass rates are set for each course. At course review meetings, there is discussion of the feedback obtained from students, the progress made in securing targets and the actions that need to be taken as part of the area's action plan.

Computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- good teaching, including effective use of IT in lessons
- excellent specialist resources

- good monitoring of students' progress
- well-managed courses.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some part-time courses for adults.

Scope of provision

70. There is a good range of full-time and part-time courses in computing and IT. The provision includes GCE AS and A-level courses in computing and in information and communications technology (ICT), the AVCE, ICT single award, first diploma IT, the national diploma computer studies, the European computer driving licence (ECDL), computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), integrated business studies (IBT) and entry-level programmes in IT and use of the Internet. There are many opportunities for part-time day and evening students to study at the main college site, at open-learning sites in Truro and Newquay and at several outreach centres.

Achievement and standards

71. The pass rates of students completing computing and IT courses are good. Pass rates for GCE A-level computing have been significantly higher than the national average for the last three years. In 2001, the pass rate was 92%. Students taking GCE AS-level computing this year achieved a 97% pass rate. The pass rate on the national diploma in computer studies course is consistently high. In 2001, the pass rate was 92%. Adults that complete and take the examinations in CLAIT courses achieve a high pass rate. Most students who take the introduction to computing course complete it and achieve the qualification. Retention rates are below national averages on the CLAIT and some IBT courses. Many of the adult students who attend the course choose not to take the final examination. The retention rate on the national diploma computer studies course was low in 1999 and 2000, but improved in 2001 to 5% above the national average.

72. Students talk fluently and enthusiastically about their work. Most computing students are proficient programmers and work diligently in class. IT students have a good grasp of basic word-processing and spreadsheet programmes. Full-time students have a good working knowledge of the Internet and use it frequently in their studies. Portfolios of work are well organised and are generally of a high standard. Some, however, contain examples of the poor use of English and incorrect spelling. Part-time adult students enjoy their evening classes and soon become confident in the use of computers.

A sample of retention and pass rates in computing and information technology 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	333	502	*
		% retention	78	77	*
		% pass rate	91	85	*

Introduction to computing	1	No. of starts	138	323	*
		% retention	95	93	*
		% pass rate	95	100	*
First diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	**	17	27
		% retention	**	94	67
		% pass rate	**	63	100
National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	21	15	24
		% retention	62	53	75
		% pass rate	100	100	92
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	33	34	40
		% retention	73	76	83
		% pass rate	96	88	92

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* results not available at the time of inspection

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

73. Most teaching is good or very good. IT resources are often used effectively to teach IT and computing. For example, teachers use computer-linked projectors to give clear demonstrations of how to use software programmes such as a Microsoft Access database. In one lesson, a mailmerge programme was competently demonstrated on screen, ensuring that students were able to follow it easily and run their own programmes effectively. Lecture notes are all delivered by powerpoint, improving their clarity and helping to maintain students' interest. Students can also access the powerpoint pages to re-read the lecturer's notes during the lesson. Students are encouraged to make full use of IT resources in their learning. For example, they can discuss projects in 'chat rooms' moderated by the teacher and they can access worksheets and other teaching resources placed on the college intranet. Teaching at evening classes for adults is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and use examples and language which are appropriate for adults.

74. In some theory lessons, teaching failed to ensure that students had learned what was necessary and in subsequent practical lessons, students had to ask for extra guidance because they were uncertain of the theory. In a number of lessons, some of the students were inattentive, using their computers when they should have been listening to the teacher. In a few lessons, the activities were not sufficiently demanding for the more able students.

75. Teachers mark students' work effectively. Helpful written comments indicate how students could improve their work. Students' progress is monitored effectively, and personal tutors are well informed about their tutees. Each student has an individual action plan which includes predicted examination grades. The plans are updated as and when necessary in order to try to improve students' performance. Modifications sometimes include the provision of additional support, which is readily available on a 'drop-in' or appointment basis.

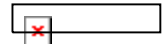
76. Teachers are well qualified, conscientious and enthusiastic. The specialist resources available are excellent. All computer workstations on the main site are linked to the college network and offer access to the Internet. Modern programming packages are available to suit the courses offered. All the teaching rooms are fitted with overhead computer screen projectors, which are used very effectively for teaching. The open-learning centre at Haven House in Truro has modern office-style furniture and the workstations are loaded with an appropriate range of IT and business software. In

most lessons, the handouts and workbooks given to students are very good.

Leadership and management

77. Courses are well managed by a competent and dedicated team. Regular team meetings and an effective course review process generate appropriate action plans for improving the quality of provision. Achievement data and value added data are analysed as part of course review.

Leisure, tourism and sport



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on all full-time courses
- very effective teaching
- excellent specialist accommodation and equipment
- close monitoring of students' progress
- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on a first diploma course and an intermediate GNVQ course in 2001.

Scope of provision

78. The college offers PE at GCE A and AS level, national diplomas in sports studies and public services, and first diplomas in sports studies and public services. There is an AVCE course in travel and tourism and a GNVQ intermediate course in leisure and tourism. The college has established sports academies in rugby football, hockey and association football. A wide range of part-time courses are provided to meet students' needs; for example, Royal Yacht Association coastal and day skipper courses, community sports leaders courses and Football Association intermediate treatment and management of injury courses.

Achievement and standards

79. In 2001, pass rates for all full-time courses were well above national averages, with most courses having a 100% pass rate. Many students gained additional qualifications, such as the community sports leader award. Students reach high standards of sporting performance. In 2001, for example, seven students gained national representative honours in a number of sports. Retention rates on most courses are close to national averages, although in 2001 they were below the national average on the first diploma in public services course and the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism.

80. On most courses, students progress well, in relation to their levels of attainment on entering the college. The quality of students' written work is good. Coursework is well presented and provides clear evidence of effective organisation, planning and evaluation. Students show the ability to relate theory to practice. In the GCE A and AS-level PE courses students demonstrate their knowledge of theoretical principles through practical examples. Students on the AVCE travel and tourism course understand the practical implications of visitor statistics relating to holiday destinations.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Leisure, tourism and sport, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
First diploma public services	2	No. of starts	17	23	18
		% retention	82	87	56
		% pass rate	71	75	100
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	16	16	17
		% retention	75	75	53
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma science (sport studies)	3	No. of starts	19	29	36
		% retention	58	93	78
		% pass rate	100	100	91
National diploma public services	3	No. of starts	29	21	22
		% retention	72	76	76
		% pass rate	90	100	100
GCE A-level PE	3	No. of starts	34	36	26
		% retention	85	83	77
		% pass rate	93	100	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

81. There is much outstanding teaching in practical and theory lessons. Teachers successfully motivate their students. Many generate a real sense of fun and enjoyment in their lessons. For example, in a fitness-testing lesson for first diploma public services students, the students worked purposefully in groups to carry out and evaluate the tests and did so with evident enjoyment. Students are given copies of schemes of work and lesson objectives and are well informed about their courses. In a few lessons, teachers failed to take full account of their students' differing levels of ability. For example, a few students with high levels of ability in sports did not find their lessons demanding enough. Work placements provide students with good opportunities to develop their practical skills in realistic settings that are often related to their planned careers. On public services courses, team building, fitness and awareness of the requirements of the uniformed services, are

enhanced through excellent residential programmes. In the outdoor education elements of courses, there is a strong emphasis on health and safety. The college ensures there is a high proportion of staff to students for outdoor activities and the teachers regularly remind students of safety procedures.

82. Assessment strategies are clearly related to schemes of work. Students' progress is well monitored. Teachers' comments on written work enable students to see how they might improve their work. There are regular evaluation meetings for teachers and students on GCE A-level and AVCE courses at which progress is reviewed against target grades set at the beginning of the course. Students' fitness levels are also assessed using recognised tests. For students in the sports academies, the results are published and there is a strong element of competition to improve fitness levels.

83. The range of courses caters for students with widely differing abilities. There is an effective interview process which ensures that students are placed on appropriate courses. Additional courses, which are popular with students, enrich the main programmes of study. Excellent off-site facilities are used for additional activities and practical assessments. Students with disabilities are given appropriate additional guidance and support. One student on the AVCE travel and tourism course receives help from a learning support teacher to set up equipment, carry out research and type assignments.

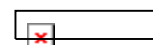
84. Teachers are well qualified and skilled in their specialist areas. Many have relevant experience of industry which they use effectively to put theory into practical contexts. Some teachers on public services courses are ex-services personnel who can draw on this experience when providing practical guidance to students.

85. Accommodation, facilities and equipment are excellent. Specialist equipment is well maintained and extensive, especially the equipment for outdoor education which includes dinghies, kayaks and windsurfers. The college has a large multi-purpose sports hall, a fitness suite, playing fields and a 25-metre swimming pool. As part of the sports studies and public services courses students undertake a variety of water sports once a week.

Leadership and management

86. The curriculum area is well led and there is a strong commitment to high standards of work. Quality assurance policy is thorough and effective. Lesson observations and evaluation of students' progress form the basis for discussions on raising standards. There are regular team meetings and members of staff are well informed about college issues. Retention and pass rate targets are realistic and are set and reviewed on a regular basis. Course programmes are well planned. Students who have enrolled in the sports academies are guided to courses which will motivate them and provide them with academic as well as practical sports qualifications.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates and retention rates

- high standard of students' work
- good teaching
- good support for students
- well-managed courses.

Weaknesses

- failure to stretch more able students in some lessons.

Scope of provision

87. The college offers an appropriate range of programmes leading to awards in childcare and education, counselling, and health and care at levels 2, 3 and 4. A growing part-time programme includes work-based training in care and early years leading to NVQs at level 2 and 3, and a care option on the college foundation studies programme provides a progression route from level 1. Access courses provide adults with the opportunity to return to study to prepare for HE. In constructing their programmes' access students can select from a wide range of options drawn from different NVQ programmes. This enables them to follow courses of study which suit them individually. A wide range of vocational short courses is offered to both full-time and part-time students.

Achievement and standards

88. Pass rates are outstanding. With the exception of NVQ level 2 results, they are well above the national average. The diploma in childcare and education, and the access to HE in nursing course, have both had 100% pass rates in each of the last three years. In 2001, 79% of students gained high grades on the AVCE in health and social care, which was 27% above the national average. Retention rates on all courses are also significantly higher than the national average. In 2001, there was a 100% retention rate for GNVQ and AVCE courses. Progression rates are very good. For example, in 2001, 95% of access students, all of the CACHE diploma students and 63% of the AVCE students progressed to HE or related employment.

89. Students are well motivated. They manage their time effectively, enabling them to get the maximum benefit from the opportunities offered by the college, including the opportunity to participate in community projects to develop their personal skills. Students' assessed work, particularly the work produced by CACHE diploma and access students is of a high standard. Work experience forms a part of all courses. Level 3 health and care students study six key skills. In addition they broaden their studies by choosing from a range of additional units or GCE AS-level courses.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Health and social care, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	**	11	18
		% retention	**	91	72
		% pass rate	**	100	91
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	13	14	11
		% retention	92	86	100
		% pass rate	100	86	91
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	51	64	72
		% retention	90	92	97
		% pass rate	72	50	*
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	335	47	45
		% retention	83	80	100
		% pass rate	100	100	91
Access certificate, HE nursing	3	No. of starts	29	19	23
		% retention	76	79	86
		% pass rate	100	100	100
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	41	20	21
		% retention	83	80	81
		% pass rate	100	100	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* results not available at the time of inspection ** course did not run

Quality of education and training

90. In 80% of lessons the teaching was good or better. Lessons are well planned. The teaching is interesting and students engage in a range of learning activities. Students are made aware of lesson objectives and are highly motivated. In class discussions, they are encouraged to look beyond obvious answers and to explore the relationship between cause and effect. In one lesson the factors limiting effective communication were identified and discussed. In a few lessons, some of the work was not sufficiently demanding for the more able students. In some lessons, there were missed opportunities to develop key skills. Support for work-based students is very effective, enabling them to progress quickly to their awards. IT is used effectively throughout the curriculum area. All students have an e-mail account and are they encouraged to use the Internet for research. Students benefit from the college's good external links with health and social care professionals. They have good opportunities to hear external speakers in their lessons and there are regular visits to health and social care organisations. Students make good use of work experience in tackling other aspects of their courses.

91. Students speak highly of their courses and the support they receive at college. All students receive good pre-course guidance, which enables them to make well-informed choices. Changes to chosen programmes are made in the students' best interests. For example, two students transferred from a health and care course to work-based learning after one term. A well-planned induction period is used to assess the needs of individuals and agree learning plans. The plans are regularly reviewed and amended at meetings between students and their tutors. There is excellent advice about progression and career opportunities. Students are well prepared for making job or universities and colleges admissions service (UCAS) applications.

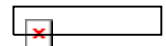
92. Equipment for practical activities is adequate for the requirements of the programmes. The

college provides each student with a textbook. Most classrooms are well equipped and fit for the purposes for which they are used, but classrooms in the older buildings are sometimes cold and lessons are sometimes affected by outside noise.

Leadership and management

93. The programme area and courses are well managed. Staff are keen to ensure that standards remain high. There are regular course team meetings. Action plans are systematically monitored and updated in the light of feedback from students and staff. For example, when AVCE health and care students complained about the assignment schedule, it was amended to spread the workload more evenly. Course documentation and systems for monitoring students' progress are thorough. Internal verification procedures are sound and operate effectively. All staff are involved in self-assessment and the setting of retention and pass rate targets for their courses. There is good communication within teams and with senior managers. Management of work-based programmes meets the needs of employers and students. However, the number of NVQ assessors is barely sufficient to cope with the current number of students. Teachers are well qualified. They have relevant vocational qualifications and good practical experience. A good programme of staff development activities ensures that their knowledge and experience remain up to date.

Visual arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- good retention rates
- effective teaching and learning
- good accommodation and specialist resources
- wide range of provision.

Weaknesses

- failure to integrate key skills with other aspects of the intermediate GNVQ course

- insufficient space for storage of coursework.

Scope of provision

94. The college offers a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time courses in visual arts and in media studies. There are general intermediate-level courses in both these subject areas. At advanced level, there is a wider choice of options in both subject areas, a national diploma course in photography and a foundation course in photography. A wide range of GCE A and AS levels is offered, including fine art, art and design, photography, design and technology, graphics, and textiles. Many courses are offered on a full-time and part-time basis during the day and evening.

Achievement and standards

95. Pass rates on most full-time courses are consistently above national averages. In 2001, pass rates for GCE A levels in fine art and in photography were 100%, and all the photography students achieved grade C or above. In 2001, all students who completed the advanced GNVQ courses in art and design, and media and communication, were also successful. However, in 2000, the pass rate on the advanced GNVQ in art and design was low, at 47%. On the intermediate GNVQ course in art and design, both retention and pass rates have been at or above the national average for each of the last three years. Retention rates on GCE A-level and advanced GNVQ courses have generally been above national averages for the past three years. A high proportion of students progress to HE or to related employment.

96. The standard of work observed in lessons and in students' portfolios and sketchbooks is very high. At advanced level and on the pre-foundation degree course in photography the work is good and is well presented in collections of visual research accompanied by clear written commentaries. The best work combines practical skill, creativity and perceptive analysis. Intermediate students also produce work that is consistently at or above the standard normally seen at this level. They also benefit from effective arrangements to raise their levels of literacy and numeracy.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Visual arts, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	12	10	18
		% retention	92	78	78
		% pass rate	91	100	85
GCE A-level fine art	3	No. of starts	53	40	70
		% retention	71	81	78
		% pass rate	97	93	100
GCE A-level art and design (photography)	3	No. of starts	54	54	56
		% retention	72	72	79
		% pass rate	97	97	100
GNVQ advanced media and communication	3	No. of starts	40	43	60
		% retention	75	86	84
		% pass rate	100	91	100
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	39	41	33
		% retention	62	85	83

		% pass rate	100	47	100
--	--	-------------	-----	----	-----

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

97. Most visual arts and media studies teaching is very effective. Well-planned lessons reinforce previous learning and enable the students to made steady progress towards realistic goals. Teachers work effectively with individuals and whole groups and make use of a suitable range of oral, written and visual examples in their teaching. Some draw effectively on their own work in demonstrations to students. For example, in GCE AS-level textiles and GNVQ intermediate practical lessons, teachers used their own sketch boards to show how to work through assignments. In some lessons there were examples of less effective teaching, including talking at the class and failing to hold students' attention, and untidy use of the whiteboard. Teachers produce thoughtfully designed projects and prepare students effectively for the required tasks. For example, national diploma fine art students were supplied with an informative range of preparatory materials for their project. In one well-conceived life-drawing lesson for GCE A-level art, the students were engaged from the outset by being invited to discuss and set the model's pose. However the teacher failed to exploit the situation fully by inviting the students to change seats to vary their view of the model. Students are well motivated and they enjoy their time at college. There are good working relationships between teachers and support staff. Teachers are well qualified and part-time teachers and visiting lecturers bring valuable industrial and commercial experience to many of the lessons.

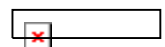
98. Teachers assess students' work fairly and regularly. Most oral and written feedback is clear and students understand how their work could be improved. However, assessment procedures are not always operated effectively across the curriculum area. There is not enough use of student groups to critically evaluate individuals' work. Good additional support for literacy and numeracy is available to visual arts students. The teaching and assessment of key skills is not sufficiently integrated with other aspects of work on the GNVQ intermediate course.

99. There are good resources for visual arts. Classrooms, studios and workshops are well designed and appropriately equipped. In the new purpose-built accommodation for media and vocational photography courses the darkrooms, television and photo studios house an abundance of high specification equipment. However, there is no dedicated workshop for three-dimensional design. In both visual arts and media, there is a lack of storage space for students' project work and not enough staff workrooms.

Leadership and management

100. Management of the curriculum area is effective and efficient. Good leadership has enabled managers and staff to respond well to large increases in student numbers by adding to the range of courses and options. The curriculum area is organised into course teams under a course team leader. Course teams have student representatives and they meet regularly. The action plans emanating from planning and review meetings are carefully monitored. Self-assessment is effective. Managers assess teaching frequently. However, there is little sharing of good classroom practice across the programme area.

Performing arts



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates
- good teaching in all subjects
- good resources
- wide range of provision at level 3
- varied and demanding performance programme
- effective programme management.

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

101. The college offers a comprehensive and varied range of programmes for dance, music and drama at level 3. Each can be studied on an academic or a vocational basis. The national diploma in popular music course has been running for three years and currently has 34 students. Separate vocational programmes in dance and drama were introduced in September 2001. They have recruited well. There are currently 205 students on GCE A or AS-level performing arts subjects. The additional studies and summer-school programmes enable students to sample performance opportunities. The well-resourced theatre acts as a professional venue for visiting companies. Almost all of students in this curriculum area are aged 16 to 18. At present, there is no level 2 provision.

Achievement and standards

102. The pass rates in all subjects are excellent. All students who completed performing arts courses in 2001, passed their examinations. This included students sitting GCE AS-level music, music technology and drama and a few students taking GCE A-level dance. All the students taking GCE AS-level music technology achieved grade C or above, but only 19% of those taking GCE AS-level dance. Retention rates on the national diploma in popular music have been slightly below national averages for the past two years. On other courses, retention rates are generally above the national average.

103. Students' written assignments show a high level of attainment. Their portfolios of work provide evidence that learning is effective and that students understand the performance production

processes in each discipline of the performing arts. Practical performance work is also of a high standard. Many students have progressed to prestigious specialist HE institutions.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Performing arts, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
National diplomain popular music	3	No. of starts	23	25	17
		% retention	74	68	65
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level drama	3	No. of starts	39	54	56
		% retention	82	78	75
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level music technolgy	3	No. of starts	*	*	12
		% retention	*	*	92
		% pass rate	*	*	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

104. There is an effective balance between the teaching of theory and practical work. Teaching in both theoretical and practical lessons is very good and a sound grasp of theory provides students with an effective platform for practical work. Teachers rightly focus on the practical aspects of their subjects and on developing the students' performance skills. For example, in GCE AS-level drama, students were observed demonstrating sophisticated improvisation skills for devised theatre practices. Dance work shows that students can apply their knowledge to practical activities. The varied programme of public performances ensures that skills are tested in an appropriate forum. Performances range from popular musicals such as 'Guys and Dolls' to the Greek tragedies of 'Euripides'. Popular music students also perform in local venues. Students are encouraged to work on their own and many do so to good effect. Music students show a confident and sophisticated use of music technology equipment. Individual tuition on instruments helps their musical development.

105. The employment of current practitioners as teachers ensures that vocational standards are maintained and that students follow up-to-date professional practices. For example, dance students must work bare-foot and wear clothes that allow for easy movement. In drama, annotation on scripts is always in pencil and in music correct instrumental procedures are followed. Health and safety issues are fully recognised and the correct procedures followed. Relationships between staff and students are good. This helps students to be articulate, perceptive and confident in their practical activities. Teachers are sensitive to students' reactions to their performances. They recognise that 'permission to fail' is part of learning to succeed in the performing arts.

106. Students' work is assessed with integrity. Teachers make detailed written comments on all written assignments and give helpful verbal feedback. Most music assignments are double marked. Staff assessment of practical musicianship is frank and unequivocal. Students in each subject are expected to evaluate and assess the practical work of their peers. They recognise the value of this approach. Some assignments do not place sufficient emphasis on the development of key skills. Students value the tutorial support they receive. They are kept accurately informed of their progress throughout the course.

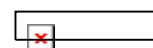
107. The quality of accommodation and equipment is good. Students comment that good resources are a major attraction of the college. Dance students benefit from a studio with sprung floor and

mirrored walls. The theatre is of professional standard and is used by local companies. The drama studio is a good facility, designed for imaginative rehearsals. Popular music facilities are good and students have access to digital recording equipment. Resources for music technology are only just able to meet the needs of the current number of students. On occasions, accommodation is inappropriate and signs forbidding refreshments in music technology areas are sometimes ignored. There are adequate, skilled technical support staff to ensure that equipment is repaired quickly. Professional development is given a high priority. One lecturer was recently able to study the Commedia Dell'arte in Venice.

Leadership and management

108. The curriculum area is well managed. There are regular programme area meetings where items are freely discussed, accurately recorded and subsequently acted upon. The contribution of part-time specialists and current practitioners is recognised and valued. Part-time staff are kept acquainted with developments and communication is open and effective. Lessons are regularly observed and issues relating to achievement, retention and resources are addressed efficiently by course teams.

Humanities (social sciences)



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

Strengths

- consistently good pass and retention rates for full-time students and students on teacher education courses
- well-planned and enthusiastic teaching in most lessons
- high proportion of students who progress to HE
- good resources and enrichment activities
- effective guidance and support for full-time students.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates on some courses for part-time adult students

- unsatisfactory management of some part-time GCSE and GCE A-level provision.

Scope of provision

109. The broad range of humanities provision at GCE A and AS level meets the needs and interests of full-time students aged 16 to 18. Subjects include, archaeology, classical civilisation, general studies, history, politics, psychology, religious studies and sociology and students can choose practically any combination of these subjects. All humanities students aged 16 to 18 also take GCE A-level general studies. Humanities subjects are included as options on the access to HE and International Baccalaureate programmes. There is an initial teacher education course which leads to higher-level courses within the college. The range of GCSE and GCE A-level evening courses for part-time adult students is narrower than that offered to full-time students, and there is no daytime provision. No part-time GCE AS-level courses are offered. A small number of students study humanities subjects through the college's open-learning centres.

Achievement and standards

110. Pass rates for full-time students aged 16 to 18 on GCE A-level humanities courses have remained well above national averages and, in most cases, have risen over the past three years. Retention rates are consistently above the national average and have also risen. In 2001, a high proportion of students aged 16 to 18 obtained grade C or above in their GCE A levels. GCE AS-level pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 were also high, sometimes outstanding. Pass rates for students on GCE A and AS-level courses in psychology and in GCE A-level sociology are higher than would be predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. Pass rates and retention rates on teacher-education courses are high. In contrast, pass and retention rates for adults on part-time GCE A-level courses are often unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates on the GCSE psychology course have declined and are now low. Most students who complete their access to HE course are successful, but the retention rate is low. Most GCE A-level students and most access students who complete their courses, progress to HE. Attendance at lessons and tutorials is good, except for GCE A-level general studies lessons, where it is poor. Retention rates and pass rates in general studies, however, are above the national average.

111. Standards achieved by the majority of students are high. Students develop detailed knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They research, analyse and evaluate their work effectively. Psychology students carry out experiments to improve their understanding of their own personalities. History students are taught the importance of well-informed judgements. A high standard of work is produced by access to HE and International Baccalaureate students. Course work in psychology and sociology shows flair and originality.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Humanities (social sciences), 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	80	93	121
		% retention	75	73	81
		% pass rate	90	98	92
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	38	25	31
		% retention	76	76	77
		% pass rate	83	94	95

GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	81	78	68
		% retention	83	85	76
		% pass rate	81	80	82
Other GCE A-level subjects*	3	No. of starts	31	46	58
		% retention	84	83	91
		% pass rate	96	83	92
GCE A-level, one-year course subjects**	3	No. of starts	67	67	64
		% retention	69	72	58
		% pass rate	65	56	68
Access to HE in humanities and social studies	3	No. of starts	18	11	28
		% retention	67	45	64
		% pass rate	83	100	***

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* *archeology, classical civilisation, politics, religious studies*

** *archeology, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology*

*** *results not available at the time of inspection*

Quality of education and training

112. Most teaching is good or better. In the best lessons, teachers set tasks that require students to think for themselves. Students work hard and make good progress. In many lessons, lively discussions and well-organised group work help students to explore topics in depth. For example, in a sociology lesson, students worked in groups to design an educational system, sharing ideas and making good use of applied sociological concepts. In some of the less successful lessons, teachers' expectations of their students are too low. Aspects of unsatisfactory teaching included inadequate guidance on tasks, failure to check students' understanding, failure to include all students in discussions, and lack of advice to students on how to take notes.

113. Teachers mark students' work carefully, offering constructive comments on how they can improve their work. The students are also given helpful advice on arranging their coursework. On teacher education courses, students' work is assessed effectively and teachers' comments are related to clear assessment criteria. Teachers know their students well. They monitor their progress carefully and discuss this with their students at individual tutorials. Reports on the progress of students aged 16 to 18 are provided three times a year. Parents receive frequent feedback. There are parents meetings at college after each report and these are usually well attended.

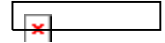
114. Staff are well qualified and enthusiastic. Classrooms are close to each other, close to the library and well equipped. Teachers use an extensive range of resources including the Internet and videos. They produce good study guides, which include useful information on how written work will be assessed. External speakers, fieldwork and educational visits enhance students' learning. International Baccalaureate students have undertaken community service in Swaziland. On a trip to Morocco, students from different humanities subjects benefited from sharing their findings with each other.

Leadership and management

115. The management of full-time courses is good. Teachers share a common purpose in raising the level of performance of their students. Data on students' pass rates are analysed in detail and

actual performance is compared with national averages and college targets. Most college targets are above national averages. Surveys of the views of students and parents show a consistently high level of satisfaction with the quality of provision. The college places an emphasis on improving teaching and learning as part of teachers' professional development. There are some weaknesses in the management of part-time GCSE and part-time GCE A-level courses for adults. Arrangements to ensure that applicants receive appropriate pre-course information, interviews and initial guidance are underdeveloped.

English



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on GCE-A level courses
- enthusiastic and effective teaching
- high levels of support for individuals
- wide range of enrichment activities
- carefully planned programme of well-devised assignments.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate for part-time GCE A-level English
- unsatisfactory pass rates in GCSE English in 2001.

Scope of provision

116. The college offers GCE A levels in English literature, English language and literature and communication studies for students aged 16 to 18. The courses recruit well. GCE A-level English language and literature is available to part-time students. GCSE English is offered to students

wishing to improve their grade. English is also a compulsory subject within the International Baccalaureate programme.

Achievement and standards

117. Levels of achievement on GCE A-level courses are outstanding. Pass rates on all three courses for full-time and part-time students have been well above the national average for the last three years. The proportion of students who achieve high grades is also impressive. In communication studies, 91% of students gained A-C grades in 2001. In both communication studies and English language and literature, grades achieved were higher than predicted on the basis of students' GCSE grades at entry. This was not the case with English literature. In 2001, the pass rate in GCSE English was significantly lower than in previous years and is unsatisfactory. Retention rates on full-time GCE A-level courses are above the national average. On the part-time GCE A-level English course, retention is well below the national average.

118. Students in all subjects are confident about developing and expressing their own views and judgements. In English, students are highly competent in close analysis of texts and they quickly develop skills in the examination of language and form.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	67	50	42
		% retention	69	78	55
		% pass rate	81	69	39
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	50	45	48
		% retention	78	87	89
		% pass rate	95	97	95
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	143	128	138
		% retention	76	83	80
		% pass rate	95	94	96
GCE A-Level English (1 year course)	3	No. of starts	25	13	23
		% retention	60	54	52
		% pass rate	87	83	100
GCE A-level communication studies	3	No. of starts	69	69	70
		% retention	70	77	71
		% pass rate	87	90	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

119. Teachers in this curriculum area place great emphasis on enjoyment of the subject and high levels of achievement. The majority of lessons are extremely well planned. There are clear objectives and an appropriate range of learning activities. Teachers are enthusiastic in their delivery and consistently seek to involve students in the lesson. In an International Baccalaureate lesson, students were preparing a presentation on their responses to a selection of openings to novels. They were encouraged to be imaginative and adventurous in their presentations and were clearly enthused by the activity. There is a strong emphasis on developing the skills required for the examinations and, in many lessons, teachers helped the students to shape and structure their

growing understanding of texts and topics. In a minority of lessons, activities failed to accommodate students' differing abilities and levels of knowledge.

120. Students' motivation, commitment to work and concentration are impressive. In many of the lessons, students showed themselves to be confident and articulate in expressing their views. Students also worked constructively with one another, in pairs and small groups, sharing ideas and checking their own understanding. During one lesson, the students were asked to explore possible meanings of made-up words in the poem 'Jabberwocky' by Lewis Carroll. They worked enthusiastically in pairs, then as a whole class, explaining their own interpretations and evaluating those of other students.

121. Students are clear about the requirements of their course. On all courses, there is a rigorous schedule of written assignments which is planned for the year ahead, given to students and displayed in all classrooms. Within lessons, teachers routinely ensure that students understand the requirements of the tasks set and check progress. Feedback on students' work is always encouraging. Achievement is valued. Students recognise the importance of regular assessment and take considerable care in preparing and carrying out their assignments. A positive feature of this curriculum area is the wide range of activities that enrich the study of the subject. Writing competitions for students are held several times a year and are popular with students. A weekend revision course, covering both English courses, takes place each year, and trips and visits linked to texts and topics are organised on a regular basis.

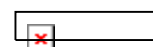
122. Students speak very highly of the support they receive from their teachers. Care is taken to ensure that students quickly settle into their studies, and help with work is readily available. Teachers set high standards for attendance and punctuality and monitoring is rigorous. Students feel strongly that their teachers have high expectations of them and they appreciate the regular progress reviews.

123. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Several members of the team have substantial experience as examiners and a high priority is given to professional updating in the subject and examination requirements. There are well-established procedures to ensure that staff work as a team, planning courses and sharing good practice. Resources are good. Lessons take place in well-maintained and well-equipped classrooms. Some of the rooms are a little too small for the classes occupying them. Attractive displays of students' work in classrooms and corridors give a lively and positive image of the subjects being studied. Teachers use a wide range of resources in lessons. In an English language and literature lesson, for example, the interactive white board was used to introduce students to an informative web site on a particular author. Resources to help students work on their own are less well developed.

Leadership and management

124. Courses in English are extremely well organised by a number of course teams. The teams work closely together and teaching programmes are regularly reviewed and changed in the light of students' performance and feedback from students. Staff are provided with good information on retention and pass rates, and attendance and all staff are involved in reviewing the achievement of their students. Quality assurance procedures are implemented effectively. The lesson observation process is particularly thorough.

Languages



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

Strengths

- high pass rates at GCE A level
- effective use of the target language in lessons
- good specialist resources
- good enrichment opportunities.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching
- low rates of progression from GCE AS level to GCE A level
- managers' failure to address weaknesses in students' performance.

Scope of provision

125. The college offers a wide range of courses at GCE A level and has growing provision for adult learners. GCE A and AS-level courses are provided in French, German, Spanish and Italian. GCE AS-level Spanish and Italian can be studied without prior knowledge of the subject. Many students study more than one language to advanced level. There are currently some 200 students, aged 16 to 18, studying advanced-level language courses. There is no GCSE provision for full-time students aged 16 to 18, although students are encouraged to study new languages through the additional studies programme. The majority of adult learners follow the practical languages programme, mostly at levels 1 and 2. These courses cover a good range of languages, including Russian.

Achievement and standards

126. Students achieve well on language courses. Pass rates on most advanced-level courses are above the national average and in German they have been consistently so for the last three years. In 2000/01, the pass rate at GCE A level was 100% in German, Spanish and Italian. A high proportion of students attain grade C or above at GCE A level. Adult students achieve high pass rates in French. In other languages, pass rates for adults are in line with the national average for all students. Many adult students who start language courses, however, decide not to enter for assessment and this depresses the pass rate.

127. Students' pass rates in German compare well with their previous performance at GCSE level, but this is not the case in French, where many students fail to achieve the grade predicted on the basis of their GCSE grades at entry. In French, there are significant differences in the performance

of students from different teaching groups. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 are higher than the national average in French, German and Spanish, although they have not improved significantly over the last three years. In 2001, many of the students who started a language at GCE AS level have not progressed to the full GCE A level. For example, out of 53 students who took GCE AS-level French only 28 have continued with a full GCE A-level course.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Languages, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	81	45	67
		% retention	77	85	83
		% pass rate	86	73	87
GCE A-level German	3	No. of starts	36	23	29
		% retention	80	82	85
		% pass rate	93	100	100
GCE A-level Spanish	3	No. of starts	15	23	24
		% retention	79	82	80
		% pass rate	100	75	100
GCE A-level Italian	3	No. of starts	7	7	8
		% retention	71	57	63
		% pass rate	80	100	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

128. Most language teaching is effective. A particular strength is the use of the target language by teachers and students. Students confidently use the foreign language in class discussions and in seeking clarification from their teachers. Teachers develop the confidence of students through their enthusiastic and lively approach to teaching. Grammar is taught effectively in most areas and students enjoy this aspect of their learning, especially when grammar is practised in conversation and linked to a topic of interest to the class. In one lesson, as part of a discussion on genetically modified products, the teacher helped to inspire students' confidence by first requiring them to discuss a cartoon image. In most lessons, teachers are aware of the different needs of individuals. A minority of the teaching, however, is unsatisfactory. The content of some lessons is not sufficiently demanding, particularly for the more able students. In a few lessons, there was little opportunity for interaction between the students. For example, students preparing a debate were given a script to read, but there was no opportunity for them to discuss ideas or to draw conclusions. In another lesson, the teacher failed to check that students understood the complex points which had been raised before moving on to the next activity.

129. Learning is enhanced by good specialist resources. Classrooms provide a good learning environment and most have language laboratory facilities. The languages workshop area provides suitable resources for students to revise and work on their own, including up-to-date topic files and reference books. Students are also able to access IT-based resources, and are encouraged to do so when they study on their own. The languages workshop is staffed by a specialist technician and is well used by students. Languages staff have good academic qualifications and most are very experienced.

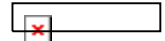
130. Students receive a high level of support from their teachers. In most cases, students receive helpful feedback on their written work, although sometimes there is inadequate guidance on how they can improve their work. Course handbooks are useful. They include profiles of former students

who have successfully progressed to study languages in HE institutions. Students have good opportunities to take part in enrichment activities, including conversation classes, exchange visits abroad and work experience in Germany. One student, studying German and drama, spent a week working in a German theatre.

Leadership and management

131. Languages provision is well managed and managers are aware of current issues relevant to the curriculum area. Languages staff meet regularly to discuss students' progress, plan enrichment opportunities and respond to course evaluations completed by students. The team works to a common methodology for language teaching, which is described in the staff handbook. Managers have not been successful in discovering the reasons for, and tackling the differences in performance between subjects and groups.

Foundation programmes



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

Strengths

- excellent pass rates
- very good teaching, focused on individuals' needs
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- good learning resources
- effective communication between teachers on foundation programmes.

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

132. The foundation programmes include a wide range of accredited courses for adults and young

people, including provision for basic skills, vocational and life skills at pre-entry and entry level, key skills at levels 1 and 2 and NVQs at levels 1 and 2. There are also a variety of vocational and social skills programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, food hygiene certificates, Red Cross first aid certificates and specialist courses for people with mild to severe and profound learning disabilities. There are clear progression routes to level 1 and 2 programmes in mainstream provision, including work-based learning. The department is involved with the community. It supports a sandwich bar and a recycling and furniture renovation project. These projects offer real work experience for students on the vocational access course and access to independence courses.

Achievement and standards

133. The achievements of foundation studies students are excellent. Courses are tailored to individuals' needs. They enable students to develop transferable skills that are relevant to mainstream courses and work-based learning. Over the past three years, all students entered for qualifications have been successful in gaining them. Many students also achieve additional qualifications. These focus on social and team-skill qualifications as well as vocational qualifications such as food hygiene certificates. Retention rates are high. On NVQ level 1 and the vocational access course, retention rates have improved over the last three years. In 2001, the retention rate at NVQ level 1 was 93%. There are good rates of progression from foundation programmes to mainstream courses, work-based learning and employment. Some students who start on a foundation programme gain employment and complete their NVQ qualification at work.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Foundation programmes, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
NVQ	1	No. of starts	30	16	14
		% retention	66	75	93
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Vocational access course	entry	No. of starts	28	28	35
		% retention	53	75	72
		% pass rate	100	100	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

134. Teaching on foundation courses is very good. Lessons are well organised. Students are highly motivated and keen to attend college and work placements. Teachers are encouraging and supportive of individual students during lessons. They provide suitably demanding activities for students of all abilities. For those students with profound learning disabilities, teachers and learning support staff demonstrate skill in observing students' responses to stimuli, assessing their progress and identifying appropriate new goals. In a lesson for students with profound learning disabilities, for example, the objective was to stimulate students' senses through the use of specific sensory equipment and materials. As part of a specific sequence followed in previous lessons, the room was darkened and a range of coloured lights, music, and a breeze from an electric fan were introduced. One student, whose learning goal was to anticipate stimuli, was clearly animated and teachers were very encouraging when they recognised from her behaviour that she had anticipated the next stimuli.

135. Learning programmes are tailored to individuals' needs. A thorough initial assessment of every student is used to determine the most appropriate course and level of study. Vocational access course students receive a useful induction, including team-building activities to encourage co-operation and mutual respect. Induction also enables students who are unclear about career options to experience course 'tasters' in a range of vocational areas to help them establish their

preferences. Individual students receive good learning support and guidance through the tutorial system. They also have access to specialist counselling, support and advisory services. Good use is made of community work placements. Placements are carefully chosen to match students' needs, particularly where students require a substantial level of support. All students receive basic and key skill support at the appropriate level.

136. The curriculum for students with profound learning disabilities is carefully constructed and leads to accredited qualifications. Tutors effectively monitor individuals' progress. Detailed assessment records are kept and progress is measured against each student's assessed starting point. Self-assessment is used effectively to encourage students to become more aware of what they are doing. Students are involved in setting their own learning goals and they are encouraged to develop increasing responsibility for organising their own learning. In the case of a few NVQ students there has been too much reliance on written evidence when making assessments. Little use has been made of tape recordings, photographs, or oral questioning for assessment purposes.

137. Learning resources are good. Classrooms are attractive. Students' work, information posters, and interesting magazine and newspaper articles are displayed on classroom walls. The environment is welcoming for foundation students whose previous experience of formal education may have been less than satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in working with students who have learning difficulties. They are supported effectively by trained learning assistants. A suitable range of equipment and materials includes specialist computer software designed to produce text and accompanying images for students with low levels of literacy. Close links are maintained with community support organisations for people with learning disabilities, with social services, and with schools for children with learning difficulties.

Leadership and management

138. The foundation provision is well managed. There is effective communication between teachers on foundation programmes. Teachers are made aware of developments and any issues of concern. Regular course reviews focus on the needs of students, target setting, progress and achievement. Teachers use common methodology, terminology and assessment methods to ensure that standards of work are consistent across all programmes. Lesson observations are used to identify further training needs for staff. Good use is made of a range of funding sources to enhance learning opportunities. Teachers and managers have comprehensive information about students' retention rates, progress and achievement. However, the college management information system does not cope well with recording the wide range of activities and qualification routes which comprise individual students' programmes.

Part D: College data

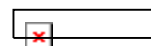
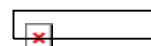


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	6.4	26.2
2	9.9	21.1
3	58.9	14.4

4/5	0.0	0.9
Other	24.8	37.4
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2000/01

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	1,803	1,870	19.1%
Agriculture	87	73	0.8%
Construction	0	0	0%
Engineering	158	340	2.6%
Business	795	1,445	11.6%
Hotel and catering	262	355	3.2%
Health and community care	916	1,928	14.8%
Art and design	1,122	1,082	11.4%
Humanities	4,766	1,581	32.9%
Basic education	77	612	3.6%
Total	9,986	9,286	100%

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001.

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
1	Starters excluding transfers	666	920	938	961	979	959
	Retention rate (%)	87	87	95	65	66	63
	National Average (%)	81	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	75	77	81	70	67	61
	National Average (%)	59	62	66	62	63	69
2	Starters excluding	754	889	743	610	712	929

	transfers						
	Retention rate (%)	83	83	88	69	69	75
	National Average (%)	76	76	77	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	83	78	67	75	82	69
	National Average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,429	2,680	2,611	532	481	640
	Retention rate (%)	82	79	85	75	70	74
	National Average (%)	77	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	90	91	86	70	84	73
	National Average (%)	71	72	73	64	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	5	6	4	69	93	65
	Retention rate (%)	80	83	100	81	78	86
	National Average (%)	83	84	80	84	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	75	75	*	75	83	65
	National Average (%)	64	65	70	58	61	60

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

2. College rates for 1997/98-1998/99: *Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates*, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

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

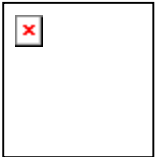
* data not available

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)	75%	20%	5%	155
Level 2 (intermediate)	85%	11%	4%	27

Level 1 (foundation)	70%	20%	10%	10
Other sessions	89%	11%	0%	18
Totals	77.6%	18.1%	4.3%	210

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2001. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.



School inspection reports are available on the OFSTED web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk)