



# The Sixth Form College Colchester

## 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](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Science](#)

[English](#)

[Media studies](#)

[Art and design](#)

[Performing arts](#)

[Business studies and economics](#)

[Geography](#)

[History, politics and classical civilisation](#)

[Modern foreign languages](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

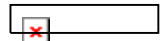
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

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

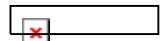
**Basic information about the college**



---

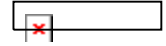
Name of college:	The Sixth Form College Colchester
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Ian MacNaughton
Address of college:	North Hill Colchester CO1 1SN
Telephone number:	01206 500700
Fax number:	01206 500770
Chair of governors:	Syd Kent
Unique reference number:	130680
Name of reporting inspector:	Clive Rowe HMI
Dates of inspection:	10-14 December 2001

**Part A: Summary**



---

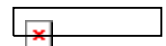
## Information about the college



The Sixth Form College Colchester was established in 1987 when secondary and post-16 education in the Colchester area was reorganised. The college occupies a town centre site and has mainly purpose-built accommodation, though space is at a premium. It was designed for about 850 students and there are now just over 2,000 students, slightly more than the number recorded at the time of the 1996/97 Further Education Funding Council inspection. Colchester has 11 secondary schools, 3 of which have sixth forms; 2 are grammar schools. Competition for post-16 learners is strong. Colchester Institute, a large general further education (FE) college is also located in the town. The college now draws a significant minority of students from outside the Colchester area, particularly where rail travel makes commuting possible. Some students now travel in from as far away as Ipswich. The local economy has become very buoyant over recent years and unemployment is less than 2%. Labour shortages in a number of categories are now an issue.

The sixth form curriculum for full-time students reflects the strong demand for General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced-level (A-level) subjects and the reportedly good informal links with Colchester Institute which focuses primarily on vocational courses. The sixth form college has just two Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses in business (single and double award) and health and social care (HSC) (single award). All full-time students, the overwhelming majority, take key skills. There is a range of additional studies courses, many of which are very popular and extra-curricular activities include sport, visual and performing arts, as well as a large number of clubs and societies. The student body is 96.1% white reflecting the ethnic profile of the local area. There are rather more females than males, a ratio of approximately 54:47.

## How effective is the college?



The college is effective. The quality of education is good overall and very good in many curriculum areas. High standards have been maintained in most areas since the last inspection, at a time when numbers have grown and Curriculum 2000 has been introduced. Teaching, while mostly good, is not outstanding with more than a quarter of lessons graded either satisfactory or below. There are few opportunities for teachers to share good practice. The college is well served by its governing body.

### **Key strengths**

- good student achievements
- good learning
- good teaching

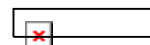
- high levels of student retention
- good progression to higher education (HE)
- excellent support and guidance
- well-managed introduction of Curriculum 2000
- good range of courses
- well-qualified, committed and experienced staff
- good communications across the college.

***What should be improved***

- monitoring the effectiveness of classroom teaching
- monitoring the effect that poor accommodation has on teaching and learning
- developing students' ability to learn independently
- the review on progress of students taking General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) packages.

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

## Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

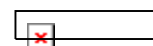


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> This is a good department with the potential to become very good. Teaching, standards of work and students' attitudes are good, although the range of teaching methods is narrow. The department is well led and managed. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.
Science	<b>Good.</b> There is good provision for students. Students achieve good results on most courses. Students develop good practical investigative skills in some areas, but theory work is insufficiently demanding. Physics and biology have made significant progress in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support teaching. Accommodation is inadequate. Self-assessment fails to identify weaknesses in teaching.
English	<b>Outstanding.</b> There is much very good and some excellent teaching and examination performances are very good. Students are enthusiastic about their work and acknowledge the dedication of their teachers. The department is efficiently organised though the arrangements for ensuring the quality of teaching are not sufficiently robust.
Media studies	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is efficient and often good, but tight lesson structures sometimes result in overly directed lessons which reduce the students' role to that of listener and note taker. Students achieve very well, many especially so, given their starting points.
Art and design	<b>Outstanding.</b> Students achieve very well on all art and design courses. The teaching is very good. Learning is effectively developed by well-chosen and carefully planned projects which encourage students to produce lively, creative, practical work. Students display a soundly based confidence in their work and their abilities.
Performance arts	<b>Outstanding.</b> Courses are popular and students achieve very well on nearly all courses. Teaching is of a very high standard. Resources are well used to improve learning.
Business studies and economics	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on GCE AS and A-level courses in economics, accounting, business studies and in the first year of key skills information technology (IT). Pass rates in economics have been sustained at an excellent level over several years. Students benefit from good teaching and excellent personal support and guidance. In some lessons, there are insufficient opportunities for students to display initiative or contribute to discussion. Some classroom accommodation is inadequate and inhibits the range of teaching methods in use.
Geography	<b>Good.</b> Students achieve good pass rates and retention rates are high. Most students achieve what would be expected of them in

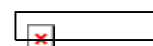
	relation to their GCSE scores at entry. Teaching in geography and geology is good. Management of the environmental science course is ineffective. Students make good use of ICT.
History, politics and classical civilisation	<b>Outstanding.</b> Students achieve very well on all courses. Teaching is of a good standard, quickly building up students' confidence and examination skills. Teachers provide extensive out of class support.
Modern foreign languages	<b>Outstanding.</b> Achievements are excellent in all four languages at GCE A level and in two at GCSE: this standard has been maintained over the last four years. Teaching and learning are also outstanding. The department has continued to recruit well against the national trend, but the introduction of Curriculum 2000 is having a negative impact on a number of enrichment activities which have, in the past, been a feature of this provision.

### How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good at all levels in the college with the result that most students make at least the expected level of progress, given their starting points. The senior management team is efficient and communications with staff are good on most matters of importance. The college is well supported by an articulate governing body, wholly committed to the improvement of the college. Heads of department demonstrate effective leadership not least through the way they have coped with the frequent changes to examination specifications and the highly successful introduction of GCE AS courses. Across the college, too little attention is given to addressing areas of known weakness and to developing the sharing of good practice.

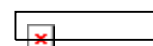
### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college works in partnership with schools and other colleges in the town to ensure the smooth transition of post-16 learners. The colleges' mission is known and understood by all those seeking to apply and by partners. The admissions policy gives priority to students who live within the locality. Through the admission criteria for individual courses, the college achieves an appropriate balance between widening participation and ensuring that all students starting courses have a good chance of examination success. The demand for GCE AS and A-level courses exceeds the number of places available. The college, in collaboration with other local partners and providers, has chosen to develop its GCE provision rather than increase the take up of vocational qualifications.

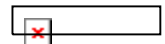
A strong feature of the college is the way in which it promotes and sustains equal opportunities. Provision for students with physical disabilities is good. The college enables learners from all backgrounds to study and take advantage of the many social and educational opportunities provided. In many departments there are good displays of work, including students' work, making them stimulating places to learn.

### How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The college maintains close and effective links with schools. Pre-entry guidance and advice is impartial. Well-designed pre-enrolment induction and enrolment activities help students to settle into college life and their studies quickly. There is appropriate and effective support to meet the needs of individual students and a range of services to meet personal needs. Students' progress is carefully monitored. There is comprehensive careers education and guidance. Advice on progression opportunities is good. Many students do not immediately appreciate the value of some aspects of the weekly tutorial and the accommodation for counselling and support sessions is unsatisfactory.

### **Students' views of the college**



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

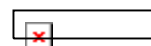
#### ***What students like about the college***

- choice of courses
- additional enrichment activities
- good teaching and enthusiastic teachers
- the understanding of the needs of students and provision of individual support
- the help from teachers outside of class time
- treatment as adults and with respect
- friendly and approachable staff
- easy access to good careers advice from careers staff and teachers.

#### ***What they feel could be improved***

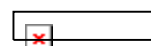
- the content of the group tutorial
- the assessment of key skills
- social areas and the refectory
- work areas for use outside of timetabled lessons
- accommodation on the north site.

### Other information



The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. 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

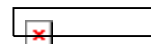


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching	74	23	3
Learning	72	25	3

*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).*



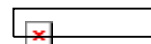
## Achievement and standards



### **16-18 year olds**

1. The Sixth Form College, Colchester offers a wide range of academic programmes for students aged 16 to 18 which prepare them for GCE A-level, GCE AS and GCSE examinations. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about achievement and standards on particular courses.
2. The levels of retention and pass rates at GCE AS and A levels are good and have been maintained at high levels since the last inspection. In 1999/2000, 85% of the students following level 3 courses completed their course and 89% of these passed their examinations. Both of these figures were above the national averages for sixth form colleges. The proportion of A to C grades achieved in examinations is high. In 2000/01, the average UCAS points score was 19.0 compared with a national average for all schools and colleges of 17.8. The college reports that the top 100 students achieved an average of 38 UCAS points. Data indicate that students are achieving very slightly above what could be expected on the basis of their GCSE points scores at entry. The number of students progressing to HE is high and increasing. In the year 2000/01, some 800 students progressed directly to HE or were taking a year out prior to starting their course. Students did particularly well in the first year of the revised GCE AS examinations.
3. Retention and pass rates have also been good for level 2 courses. In 1999/2000, the retention rate of 87% and pass rate of 92% were above national averages for sixth form colleges. However, students who followed a complete programme of GCSE subjects performed poorly. Of the 66 students who began the programme, only 33 completed it and achieved 2 or more GCSE higher grades. The college has subsequently revised its provision for students with lower GCSE scores at entry. The college also offers a range of enrichment programmes at levels 1 and 2. Results on these courses are extremely variable, though many students take these courses to increase their interest in the subject matter as much as to gain qualifications. Students who take tests in key skills achieve very good results. For example, in 2000/01, of the 447 students entered for communication at level 3, 83% passed a rate well above the national average of 52% for this qualification.
4. Most students come to the college with the intention of securing a place at university and many are successful. The college has a good record of helping students to gain entrance to Oxford and Cambridge Universities; 17 students gained places in 2001. Most students acquire full sets of notes that serve them well when revising for examinations, but too few are encouraged to undertake research and investigation to extend their knowledge beyond the boundaries of the subject syllabus specifications.

## Quality of education and training



5. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 147 sessions. Teaching is of a generally high standard. Just under three quarters were awarded the top three grades, with 44% judged to be very good or excellent. Most teaching is good. About a quarter of lessons were satisfactory and only 3% unsatisfactory. Average attendance was 86%, which compares favourably with the 84% average attendance for sixth form college inspections undertaken in 1999/2000.
6. Although the positive features of teaching noted in the last inspection report were not so clearly in evidence, the quality of teaching remains good overall. Teachers are in nearly all cases, knowledgeable, caring and competent practitioners though in too many lessons, partly to ensure

that students had sound sets of notes from which to revise, teachers did too much of the thinking for their students. This practice is to some extent a response to the pressures of accepting an ever-wider ability range within classes and to the frequent change of examination requirements. Even in many of the good lessons teachers are frequently overly directive of learners. A strong teacher lead is often appropriate, not least to ensure speedy coverage of some of the course specifications, but some students remain too dependent on their teachers to take their learning forward at points in the course when they could reasonably be expected to show more initiative.

7. In the best lessons, teachers employ a good mix of whole-class teaching, group activities and individual work to maintain high levels of interest and concentration. Students are encouraged to develop their analytical skills and IT is generally well integrated with the work. In a significant minority of lessons, the learning objectives are not stated clearly enough or reviewed. In the few instances where lessons or aspects of teaching were unsuccessful, students' involvement was reduced to copying and writing dictated notes, with little account taken of their individual learning needs. In these lessons, teachers made insufficient checks to see if the intended learning had taken place.

8. All sixth form students take key skills. Many make good use of the out of hours teaching which staff willingly provide to help them develop not only subject expertise, but also skills in areas such as IT. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of optional additional studies and enrichment programmes to promote the development of personal skills not least through performing in public and participating in college events and activities.

9. Feedback on student assignments is generally thorough and well used to correct errors and encourage improvement. In a few departments, teachers undertake a detailed analysis of in-course assessment, for example, through cross-moderation of marking, and use this to address recurring problems and to review the effectiveness of their teaching methods. Other departments do not have a consistent approach to marking or sharing good practice on assessment methods. The monitoring of students' progress is good. Good support is provided to students sitting and re-sitting external module examinations. Students requiring additional time or other examination concessions are identified early and suitable arrangements made for them. Students wishing to re-sit GCE AS modular examinations are offered re-sit classes in most subjects.

10. All students undertake a comprehensive assessment of their key skill competencies at enrolment and this is used to set general targets for achievement in key skills. Results of the IT test are fed back promptly to tutors and used effectively to prioritise students requiring immediate training in IT skills, but many students and tutors are unclear about how key skills will be developed and assessed.

11. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. They have a good knowledge of their subjects, and most draw on this effectively in lessons. Over 95% of full-time teaching staff are graduates and have teaching qualifications. There is also good technician support. New staff undertake a thorough induction which includes weekly briefing meetings during the first year. The college supports staff in appropriate professional development, for example, in the development of ICT skills, which benefits teachers and learners.

12. The college provides a wide range of mainly academic level 3 courses which meet students' needs well. The college offers 51 subjects at GCE AS/A level and 11 GCSE subjects. It is a regional centre for GCE AS/A level in electronics, textiles, dance, history of art, and philosophy. AVCEs are offered in business and health and social care and an NVQ level 2 horse care is offered in partnership with a local equestrian centre.

13. With the successful implementation of Curriculum 2000, students have greater choice in the combination of subjects which they can choose to study. Course flexibility within programmes enables students to make changes at the end of their first year to match their career aspirations. Students following a programme to improve their GCSE grades are now able to study a GCE AS qualification. This programme includes career planning and personal and skills development and prepares some students well for progression to level 3 courses or for employment. The overall impact of the programme needs to remain under close scrutiny. All students are able to study for

awards in the key skills of application of number, communications and IT.

14. There is a comprehensive range of additional enrichment activities that benefits many students. In 2000, the college was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for science and technology enrichment. However, for some students, the demands of Curriculum 2000 have reduced the amount of time that they have available for enrichment activities, though the majority participates actively in more than one option. Students have the opportunity to further develop their personal skills, take part in recreational and competitive sports, work in the community and undertake work experience. Wide-ranging national and international study visits broaden the student's personal and educational experience. There is an extensive range of clubs and societies, a successful college council and a radio station run by the students which broadcasts daily. The college does not make arrangements for collective worship, but there is an active Christian Union organised by students.

15. There is effective liaison with schools. Prospective students are well informed about the college and its provision through presentations at careers events in schools and open evenings in college. There are good opportunities for Year 10 pupils to sample college courses and activities through a series of awareness raising days. All students are interviewed. Considerable care is taken to ensure that pre-entry guidance and advice is impartial and students are fully informed about their subject choices.

16. Pre-enrolment induction sessions in July ensure that students are placed on the most suitable programmes and individual subjects. Students are allocated a personal tutor and introduced to the college, their course and the range of additional studies and enrichment activities available. These activities help students settle into college life quickly when they start their studies in September. From pre-entry to enrolment, appropriate procedures enable students to change the subjects and courses they have chosen. At the end of their first year GCE AS students undertake an intensive three-day programme on career options. This helps them make informed decisions about their choice of second-year subjects and additional studies linked to their career aspirations.

17. The college provides effective support to meet the individual needs of students. There are appropriate mechanisms in place to identify students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students who need support are identified by their schools at interview, at induction, or by their teachers, or they may refer themselves for support. Most students take advantage of the additional support offered. Attendance is high and students benefit from these sessions. Communication between teachers and support tutors is good. The college takes great care to ensure that students with a physical disability are not disadvantaged or excluded and it often purchases specialist equipment to support students. Additional lessons are provided for students who want to improve their grades, for gifted students and for those who need examination support. Students are able to apply for financial assistance to enable them to participate fully in field trips or enrichment activities. A confidential counselling service is well used. The accommodation used for individual support sessions and by the counsellor is unsatisfactory.

18. All students have a weekly tutorial with their tutor group. The tutorial programme is well planned, but many students take a narrow view that some aspects are not relevant to their current studies. At morning registration tutors disseminate academic items of college news, monitor student attendance and routinely follow-up absences. Tutors deal with pastoral and other matters relating to their students. Personal tutors hold regular individual progress review meetings with their students, at which performance is closely monitored. Parents or guardians receive copies of the progress reviews and in addition they are informed of attendance issues and other problems as they arise. Parents are supportive of the college; open evenings to discuss student progress are well attended. Teachers and tutors know their students well, are readily accessible and provide a great deal of help outside timetabled lessons. This help is highly valued by students.

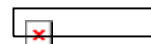
19. Students receive comprehensive careers education and guidance and speak positively about the help they receive. There is good guidance for students applying to HE. A lot of help is also available to students wishing to gain employment. The careers library is well resourced. Students have easy access to individual interviews provided by the college's own careers staff or by the local careers and business partnership. A regular and helpful bulletin keeps students up to date on developments in HE, employment opportunities and part-time jobs.

20. Resources for learning are good and, for the most part, well used. Considerable recent investment has taken place to improve IT facilities. There is a student to computer ratio of 8:1 and, in most curriculum areas, students have good access to high-specification workstations, with Internet access. In history, Internet links have been set up to help students with their coursework and there is imaginative use of IT in biology and physics. A wireless network has been installed in a large part of the college. Ten laptop computers are available for short-term loan in the library and these provide a useful space-efficient addition to desktop workstations. In computer teaching rooms and most staff workrooms the seating is not appropriate for using IT workstations. Increasing use is being made of the college intranet to support teaching and learning. There is a sufficient quantity of good learning materials available in most subjects, though there are few CD-ROM-based resources in biology and insufficient enlarging equipment in photography. The library provides good support for students and teachers. There are strong links between the library and subject departments.

21. Most accommodation is of a good standard although several teaching areas are overcrowded at times. Since the last inspection the college has continued to invest in improving teaching and administrative accommodation within a constrained budget. The main building is well maintained and is a suitable place for learning. In most rooms and common areas there is good use of display materials and students' work. An attractive new wing has been added which has increased the number of places the college is able to offer. Accommodation is used efficiently, although many social and studies areas become crowded at peak times. Some physics laboratories are too small for practical sessions. Study areas within corridors are sometimes used inappropriately for teaching.

22. Accommodation on the college's north site is very poor. There is a range of temporary and old brick buildings, which are in a dilapidated state. Although the college has maintained the interior décor to an acceptable standard, the buildings are not secure and are unsuitable for teaching and learning. Plans to build a new IT centre on the site of the worst buildings are included in the next phase of the college accommodation strategy. There are undated plans to improve the seriously inadequate facilities in physical education.

## Leadership and management



23. Leadership and management of the college are good. The quality of education provided for students is good overall and very good in many curriculum areas. Students make at least the expected rate of progress and the high standards reported at the last FEFC inspection have been maintained in most, though not all, areas. Overall, results have improved at least in line with improvements nationally. Teaching, while mostly of good quality, is not outstanding with more than a quarter of lessons graded either satisfactory or below. Opportunities for teachers to share good practice are undeveloped.

24. The principal leads an experienced and capable team of vice principal and assistant principals who form the senior executive management group. Lines of responsibility are clear and there is a strong emphasis on students' welfare and attainment. All senior staff undertake a number of administrative roles across the college while maintaining a teaching commitment. This helps to ensure that many curriculum and student related issues are properly understood.

25. The college is well organised. Students are supported well and are responsive to the advice and guidance they receive from their personal tutors and subject specialists. Progress in relation to the college's mission statement is reviewed annually by governors and this process helps to further the college's commitment to inclusive learning. Strategic planning is also thorough and involves staff at all levels. The college has implemented Curriculum 2000 successfully. Most curriculum managers lead their departments well. Performance data is selectively used to help in curriculum planning, but cross-college analysis of emerging trends to identify areas for development in strategic planning is not undertaken systematically or effectively.

26. Communication among staff and students is good. The college recognises the importance of consulting staff at all levels in helping to maintain a sense of common purpose and commitment. Awareness of cross-college and operational issues are developed through a comprehensive network of meetings, working groups and internal electronic and written bulletins. Though not all meetings at departmental level are recorded, lines of reporting and accountability are mostly understood and lead to appropriate action being taken when necessary. The staff development programme has helped many teaching and non-teaching staff to become better informed about the Curriculum 2000 initiatives and how they are to be addressed at the college. However, the development and staff appraisal scheme has yet to play an effective role in improving teaching and in promoting the sharing of good practice. While most teachers find the process of lesson observation helpful at a general level, the schedule lacks detail and gives little attention to the impact of teaching on learning. The process is not emphasised sufficiently in the annual course review.

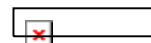
27. The college takes its commitment to equal opportunities seriously, and the policy is subject to regular review by a representative working group. The recent recruitment of an officer for equal opportunities has enabled the development of more coherent monitoring. There is little involvement of the student body in policy development and, at departmental level, staff understanding of equal opportunities practice is not always evident. Effective systems are in place to respond to appeals and complaints.

28. Governors bring a good range of skills and expertise to the college, and attendance at corporation and committee meetings is good. They have had effective oversight of the college's curriculum areas, and have established formal individual links between governors and areas of college activity. Governors receive weekly updates on college activities, events and management information. Corporation business is effectively administered and a number of policies in respect of openness and accountability have been prepared. Some of these, however, are in need of revision. The corporation has established a broad range of committees, including a curriculum and standards committee. The corporation has not always explicitly approved some recommendations made by its committees. It has assessed its own performance and a formal governors' training policy has been established.

29. The college's financial position is sound though it has made its funding concerns widely known. It is forecasting operating deficits over the period 1999/2000 to 2002/03. A subsequent forecast of an operating surplus in 2003/04 is dependent on receiving more generous funding allocations or other government payments. The finance team is led by a qualified accountant, and provides good support for the budget holders. College management accounts are produced in good time, and are widely distributed to both managers and all governors.

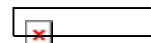
30. In terms of the number of qualifications learners achieve in relation to the monies spent, the college, as one of the largest sixth form colleges in the country, gives very good value for money. Resources and staffing are deployed effectively. The decline in levels of funding for each student has restricted opportunities to develop the accommodation. The range of courses available at GCE AS and A level is comprehensive and the additional studies programme provides students with many worthwhile opportunities for enrichment of their learning.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



---

### Mathematics



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

### ***Strengths***

- good achievements in most examinations
- good teaching
- well-led and managed department
- good systems for assessing students' attainment and progress
- good accommodation and resources.

### ***Weaknesses***

- too little opportunity in lessons for students to take initiative or responsibility
- under use of computers in teaching rooms.

### ***Scope of provision***

31. An appropriate range of courses is offered. There are courses at GCE AS and A level, covering aspects of pure and applied mathematics, including statistics taken by over 700 students. Further mathematics is also offered both at GCE AS and A level. There is a GCSE course for those students who have previously attained a low grade.

### ***Achievement and standards***

32. For the last three years, pass rates at GCE A level have been similar to, or above, the national average. Pass rates have been above average on the GCSE and further mathematics courses. Pass rates for GCE AS have been similar to the national average in 1999 and 2000, and were well above in 2001. Retention rates have been good, except in further mathematics. Overall standards in mathematics have improved in the last year. The standards of work seen in lessons were commensurate with the good results achieved in public examinations. Most students on GCE AS and A-level courses develop good mathematical skills and techniques. They are numerate and are able to calculate, interpret results and represent them in graphical form. Students are developing a good understanding of the elements of calculus and mechanics. Most tackle problems with reasonable confidence and the higher-attaining students are fluent and confident in higher

mathematics, for example when working in three dimensions. GCSE students have a satisfactory understanding of the application of statistics and most have a good attitude to their work. Overall, students attain well and achieve their potential.

***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	191	159	162
		% retention	86	91	83
		% pass rate	90	90	93
GCE A-level further mathematics	3	No. of starts	17	12	13
		% retention	57	63	54
		% pass rate	100	92	85
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	237	234	271
		% retention	77	78	77
		% pass rate	87	84	93

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

***Quality of education and training***

33. Most teaching is good. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced. In most lessons, there is an initial exposition by the teacher followed by the setting of written work. Exposition is clear and suitably demanding, and teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and teachers supplement the content with appropriate written material, either from textbooks or good quality notes of their own. Teaching proceeds at a good pace and effective use is made of lesson time. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and ensure that lessons are taught in a pleasant and civilised atmosphere. Students are keen to learn, willing to listen and work well on written tasks. However, on occasions, the teaching is too didactic and does not give students enough opportunity to learn on their own, for example, in practical work or discussion of their work. The range of teaching methods is insufficiently broad to enable students to take initiative in their learning.

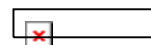
34. The department has sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff. Arrangements for their professional development are satisfactory. For example, they have attended recent training related to newly introduced courses and the use of graphic calculators. There is a need for further training and in the use of IT, an issue that is recognised by the department. The department has very good accommodation. There are seven grouped rooms that are well furnished, each with a computer and a projector. In addition, staff have the use of a well-equipped staff workroom. The mathematics area has a good display of interesting posters and information. Resources are in good supply. The library provision is adequate, but could be improved to encourage wider reading. Textbooks are in good supply and condition and all students have suitable books for their course. There is a satisfactory range of software, which is available on the college network. The departmental web site also contains useful mathematical sites for students to explore, as well as information on HE.

35. There are good systems for assessing students' attainment and progress. Students are given a diagnostic test on entry to the college and weak performance on this leads to a re-sit and additional support lessons. Homework and tests are given regularly. The department keeps a helpful database of students' scores in the course modules and also their predicted grades. Reviews of students' progress take place twice a year. These are sent to parents and record students' attendance and grades, as well as comments from subject and personal tutors and agreed targets for improvement. Most teachers mark students' work clearly and helpfully.

### ***Leadership and management***

36. The department is well led and managed. The head of department is new to the college, but has quickly established a clear view of current standards and what needs to be improved. Two teachers have joint roles as assistant heads of department and they make a valuable contribution to the running of the department, but they do not have sufficient responsibility for tasks which affect the work of the whole department. The monitoring of the work of the department is good. Analysis of data, for example that relating to students' attainment, is effective. Teachers are observed teaching and any emerging points are taken into account when planning their professional development. However, these observations need to be more sharply focused on how teaching might be improved. The department has a developing expertise in the use of ICT, but is not yet fully effective. Few lessons at present involve practical activity and the department has not reviewed sufficiently the place and value of practical work in its teaching. This is a good department with the potential to become very good.

### **Science**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on GCE AS courses
- good pass rates in GCSE science
- good progression into HE
- good use of ICT on most courses
- effective development of investigative skills.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor attainment in GCE A-level human biology
- much inadequate accommodation



- failure of some teachers to take enough account of some individual learning needs.

### **Scope of provision**

37. The college provides full-time GCSE and GCE AS and A-level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry and physics to full-time students aged 16 to 18, together with GCSE science. There are no courses for part-time students. There is a choice of specifications for advanced level chemistry. Courses are popular and well suited to the progression and career aspirations of students. GCSE science (re-sit) programme students can only progress to study GCE AS in science subjects in exceptional circumstances.

### **Achievement and standards**

38. Pass rates for most science subjects are equal to or above the national average. GCSE science and technology pass rates have been consistently good, at least 20% above the national average. GCE AS physics, chemistry and biology have pass rates above 90% and higher-grade levels above national averages. Achievements in advanced level physics are good and have shown a consistent improvement over each of the last three years. The percentage of higher-grade passes in advanced level chemistry and human biology is below the national average and in the latter the pass rate has been below the national average for the past two years. Retention rates on most courses are in line with the national averages for sixth form colleges. The numbers completing the advanced level physics course have been below the national average for the last two years. Analysis of student GCSE grades on entry to the college and their achievements after two years on advanced courses shows that their achievements are in line with or below expectations. In human biology, students' achievements are well below expectations.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in science, 1999 to 2001**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	51	54	64
		% retention	88	85	83
		% pass rate	58	61	60
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	120	128	124
		% retention	81	79	81
		% pass rate	95	87	86
GCE A-level human biology	3	No. of starts	87	101	91
		% retention	66	74	78
		% pass rate	81	68	74
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	99	102	103
		% retention	81	65	74
		% pass rate	79	89	95
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	136	131	111
		% retention	80	80	83
		% pass rate	93	78	87

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

### **Quality of education and training**

39. Most teaching is satisfactory or better and enables students to make appropriate gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers are well qualified. In the best lessons, teachers gave students appropriately demanding tasks to complete and checked their learning regularly. On occasions, well-devised role-play was used to good effect to illustrate important scientific principles, as in electron transport in biology. Often teachers fail to take into account the widely differing starting points or needs of individual learners. Students are not helped by the lack of any initial assessment to identify individual learning needs or their preferred learning styles. This limits the progress that all students make. In a few lessons, students spent too much time copying notes from the board.

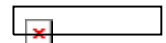
40. Many science staff use ICT well. There is a college science intranet site which students find useful and which can be accessed from home computers or from staff laptops with radio communication. All physics students are given a CD-ROM which contains data and questions to help in their studies. Teachers' assessment of homework and coursework is carried out well. Internal moderation of coursework takes place, but the method used is informal and there is no systematic recording of results. Students receive prompt, detailed and useful feedback on their coursework. Good, electronic records of students' assessment marks are kept by most staff and some use is made of these in the development of individual learning programmes. Parents are regularly informed of learners' progress.

41. There is an appropriate range of equipment which is good for practical work, coupled with resourceful technician assistance. Most laboratories are too small for practical work for the number of students and preparation space is limited; on occasions this adversely affected learning. In a lesson on photosynthesis, students were working so close together that their light sources interfered, affecting the readings and measurements taken and the conclusions drawn. Some classes took place in a corridor. Practical sessions are well organised. Safe working practices are used and attention is given to risk assessment. Students work conscientiously. There are many enrichment activities for students including visits to universities and industry, lectures and science Olympiads. The college Science and Technology Enrichment Programme resulted in the college being awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2000.

### **Leadership and management**

42. Responsibilities are delegated effectively and all members of staff have opportunities to contribute to decision making. In the self-assessment review process, student achievement, attendance and retention data are analysed thoroughly. The teaching observation scheme recognises strengths effectively, but is poor in identifying weaknesses. Observation records were accurate. There is only informal sharing of good practice and the preferred teaching methods of staff are given priority over and above students' learning needs.

## **English**



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

### **Strengths**

- very good pass rates

- much excellent teaching
- excellent monitoring and assessment of students' work
- wide range of enrichment activities
- good course management
- effective additional subject support.

### ***Weaknesses***

- inadequate planning and preparation of a minority of lessons
- failure of classroom observation to identify weaknesses in teaching.

### ***Scope of provision***

43. The college offers three GCE A-level courses in English language, English language and literature combined and English literature. There are two GCSE courses in English and English literature for re-sit students. There are currently 1,020 students enrolled on English courses. At the time of inspection, approximately half the students at the college are following an English course.

### ***Achievement and standards***

44. Pass rates in GCE A-level English have been consistently well above the national average for sixth form colleges with a similar pattern of achievement at grades A to C. This consistently good performance at level 3 has been maintained with the introduction of the new specifications. English language, English language and literature and English literature showed GCE AS pass rates of 96% with an overall entry of some 468 candidates. Retention rates are high and continue to improve year on year. Nearly all students progress from GCE AS to A level, helped by sensitive support and guidance from their teachers.

45. The standard of students' work was good. Students approach written and practical tasks with thought and application, and generally organise and present their work well. Continuous development of their knowledge, understanding and a range of skills is evident. Students on both GCE AS and A-level courses display good note-taking skills and are developing their own style and opinions as they acquire essay-writing skills. In most lessons students work well, whether when

working on their own or in pairs and small groups. Most make thoughtful and perceptive comments in discussions.

***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	101	79	77
		% retention	88	86	81
		% pass rate	72	66	56
GCSE English literature	2	No. of starts	27	16	16
		% retention	81	75	88
		% pass rate	100	92	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	87	115	140
		% retention	85	87	94
		% pass rate	97	100	98
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	125	124	140
		% retention	74	81	81
		% pass rate	100	94	96
GCE A-level English language and literature combined	3	No. of starts	186	164	119
		% retention	93	83	88
		% pass rate	85	96	86

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

***Quality of education and training***

46. The quality of teaching is very good. In the best lessons, imaginative planning ensures that students have a scholarly and stimulating experience. In most lessons, teachers make effective use of a wide range of methods to make students think and reflect, and use their growing expertise. By considering performances and interpretations by celebrated actors over three centuries, students enrich their understanding of the dramatic possibilities inherent in the characters they are studying. Many teachers give time outside the classroom to ensure that coursework is covered. Teachers display enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. They are aware of their students' individual strengths and weaknesses and take them into account as appropriate. However, in a number of lessons teachers did not provide appropriate material and students were not given work which was demanding enough.

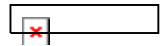
47. Students work well in lessons. They are articulate and confident. Teachers treat them with respect and give due recognition to their opinions. Schemes of work for GCSE students are imaginatively conceived to give students a stimulating range of texts and tasks for coursework. Students who had previously found difficulty in presenting written work were absorbed by 'Moments of Reprieve', the work of Primo Levi. They use the departmental intranet site well to answer work sheets, quizzes and to receive guidance on further reading. The key skills room is available for them to use and in an English language and literature lesson, students examined with interest resources on Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'. Students value the opportunity to test their knowledge regularly through well-planned assignments and e-mail their answers around the class. Many take good advantage of enrichment activities, including the editing and production of a magazine, Shakespeare Club trips and visits of literary and cultural interest. An expedition to India is organised every other year to enable students the opportunity to stay in an Indian school and teach English.

48. Homework is set regularly and teachers keep careful records of students' progress. Students express considerable confidence in them. The department has partially addressed some problems with students' retention by making available additional tutorial support and re-sit lessons. These lessons are timetabled within the college day. However, these lessons are not always well attended.

### ***Leadership and management***

49. The leadership is capable and energetic. A head of department leads a large team of twenty teachers. Between them they have an impressive record of experience and expertise. Teachers ensure that there are appropriate procedures to guide students onto the right course. Day to day management is of a high standard. Accommodation is well maintained. The maintenance of quality and continual improvement is high on the departmental agenda. There is careful and consistent attention to targets in enrolment, retention and outcomes. The schedule for classroom observation is not sufficiently detailed and has not identified weaknesses in teaching in some lessons.

### **Media studies**



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

### ***Strengths***

- excellent pass rates in all media courses
- most students achieve well given their starting points
- good retention rates for GCE AS and GCSE
- good use of practical facilities
- effective course management
- good teaching and assessment.

### ***Weaknesses***

- some insufficiently demanding lessons

- some poor accommodation.

### **Scope of provision**

50. The provision consists of GCE AS and A-level media studies, and GCSE media studies. There are also opportunities for students to be involved with media outside lessons, in the college radio station and a radio journalism course offered through the enrichment programme. There are currently 154 students enrolled on GCE AS courses, 91 on GCE A-level courses, and 39 on GCSE courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

51. Achievement has been consistently good over the last three years, with 100% pass rates for both GCSE and GCE AS in 2001 and 97% at GCE A level. A high proportion of students pass with high grades: in 2001, 65% on GCE A level courses, 90% on GCE AS courses and 100% on GCSE courses. Most students have achieved well and many have achieved more than might be expected given their starting points.

52. Retention rates are very good in GCE AS media; well above the national rate for sixth form colleges. Retention rates in GCSE media have fallen below the national average in the last two years.

53. Students display good skills across a broad range of work and they work well on both practical and theoretical tasks. They produce good, often very well presented, work which shows a firm understanding of media issues and processes, often together with creative flair. A GCE AS group, investigating the working of the Press Complaints Commission (PCC), produced their own newspapers in which stories were creatively written to break the PCC's rules. In a GCSE class lesson about the marketing and promotion of films, students had devised a campaign to market an imaginary film for a chosen audience, and using a computer designed a poster for it during the lesson.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in media studies, 1999 to 2001**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE media studies	2	No. of starts	54	31	14
		% retention	83	71	71
		% pass rate	87	86	100
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	124	143	101
		% retention	80	77	77
		% pass rate	99	96	97

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

### **Quality of education and training**

54. Most teaching is good, although some lessons are too tightly directed and as a result have few opportunities for independent thinking. Where lessons are well prepared and planned students make good progress towards their learning goals. Teachers work to very clearly structured schemes

of work. They are knowledgeable and help students during and outside lessons. Teachers make effective use of a range of resources such as paper-based learning materials and videotaped programmes. In the best lessons, teachers effectively integrate practical and theoretical elements to help students to understand the structure of their courses and appreciate the importance of detailed preparation and planning. In these lessons, teachers show students how to combine analysis and creativity. Students learn about media techniques by experimenting with them. In one session, students viewed and analysed title sequences from a selection of British soap operas in preparation for creating a title sequence of their own. In some lessons, teachers gave too few opportunities to think for themselves.

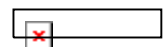
55. There is a detailed and well thought out assessment scheme for use across all media courses. Students' work is accurately and helpfully marked to appropriate external standards. Most students make good use of ICT in their work. However, insufficient attention is paid to the assessment of key skills: the many opportunities for students to produce evidence of communication skills through work in media are not made explicit when the work is set. Following initial assessment on entry, subject staff receive useful information on any individual learning needs and act on them effectively.

56. Resources are good. Recently acquired cameras, a digital-editing suite and information learning technology (ILT) facilities, though dispersed around the site, are well used by students. Students make video documentaries and produce technically adventurous short films for external assessment. Media teaching areas are accessible and pleasant, though heavy student demand means that they become crowded at times. Students make good use of library resources, and have access to computer workstations there and around the college.

### ***Leadership and management***

57. Management is good. Organisation and management of courses are thorough and efficient. The media team is a sub-section of the department of media and performing arts and the large majority of media staff, including the head of media, are new appointments for this academic year. Communication within the team is good and there are effective arrangements for supporting new staff, two of whom are currently undertaking teaching qualifications. There is a common concern in the team for continuous improvement. Demanding targets for retention and pass rates are set, and they were mainly met or narrowly missed last year. The latest self-assessment report (2000/01) did not refer to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in media and arrangements for doing so are insufficiently thorough.

### **Art and design**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- very good pass rates on all courses
- good retention rates on all courses
- high standard of practical work

- good development of students creative and conceptual abilities
- much good teaching
- rigorous monitoring of work
- attractive and well equipped art studios
- a well-led curriculum area.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient space for photography classes
- little use of subject-specific new technology.

### ***Scope of provision***

58. The college offers a broad range of GCE AS and A-level courses in art and design, offering painting, sculpture, printmaking, history of art, and photography. The courses are popular currently attracting some 500 students. Some art and design students also take Open College Network (OCN) courses in ceramics and pre-foundation art as additional enrichment subjects. All students are full-time and aged 16 to 19.

### ***Achievement and standards***

59. Students achieve very good results. Pass rates are consistently high, between 97% and 100% in all GCE AS and A-level subjects for the last two years. The proportion of students achieving A to C grades is very good in GCE AS photography, where, in 2001, 89% and in 2000 83%, achieved these grades. In 2001, over a third of the very large cohort GCE AS art gained an A grade. The proportion of high grades are satisfactory in GCE A-level art, good in GCE AS art history, but are not matched at GCE A level. Retention rates are high in all areas, apart from a slight dip in art in 2000. More than half of the students who take art subjects progress to art foundation or art-related degree courses.

60. The standard of practical work in lessons is high, with stimulating, lively work in both art and photography displayed extensively around the college. Students in art develop very good conceptual skills and confidently explore creative ideas. They are able to work independently,



handle a wide range of materials, use colour well, and experiment with media in two and three dimensions. History of art students display excellent written, verbal, and research skills. In one lesson, students enthusiastically took part in a high-level critical debate about the merits of the Turner prize winner, expressing well-informed opinions on installation work, Dadaism and other historical precedents. Photography students quickly develop good practical skills, but critical research is sometimes limited and unexciting, and presentation in project workbooks is weak, often spoilt with irrelevant decoration which detracts from the power of the images presented.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in art and design, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	160	172	170
		% retention	86	76	89
		% pass rate	97	98	98
GCE A-level history of art	3	No. of starts	16	5	19
		% retention	94	80	89
		% pass rate	88	100	100

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

***Quality of education and training***

61. The quality of teaching is good. Staff are enthusiastic and work well together to ensure good planning of courses and lively demanding projects. Teachers are well qualified, knowledgeable and skilled in their subjects, with professional art and design experience. Some teachers lack subject-specific knowledge in new technology, particularly in photography. Art teachers are highly skilled in stimulating students to experiment confidently with materials and explore individual creative ideas. They sensitively establish students' individual interests and enthusiasms, directing them to appropriate references and areas of work, and incorporate regular individual interviews into lessons to ensure that students are clear about their progress and direction. Most students show high levels of involvement and interest in their work, and work enthusiastically in lessons. Occasionally some students are allowed to spend too much time copying images for the critical studies element of project work with little real purpose or learning.

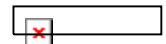
62. Art studios are attractive and well equipped. The recent addition of six networked computers, giving access to the Internet, and a scanner and colour printer, easily accessed by students, has improved learning, particularly in the development of critical studies research skills. Photography space is too small for the numbers of students in this increasingly popular subject. Conditions are crowded both in the dark room and the classroom, and this affects the quality of the students' experiences and makes it difficult for staff to manage their learning. Traditional photographic equipment is good, but there are no digital photography facilities. The two recently installed computers have appropriate imaging software, but there is no Internet access.

63. Students' progress is, with few exceptions, thoroughly assessed. Excellent weekly individual interviews are incorporated into the art teaching programme, where progress and development of projects are discussed and recorded. Project assessments in art and art history are thorough, jointly marked by staff using examination board criteria, and provide good feedback. Photography assessment sheets are too brief and not sufficiently informative or related to examination criteria. However, work is well monitored and students are clear about their progress. The department has an inclusive admissions policy, with no prior examination requirements. Additional art and design support, previously offered by staff on a voluntary basis, is now timetabled daily in the department for students who require extra help with work. Only 37% of students in the curriculum area are male, but staff are taking positive measures to increase the take-up by boys.

### ***Leadership and management***

64. The department is well led. Responsibilities are effectively divided between full-time staff, and there is a strong team ethos. Staff meet regularly in department and course teams, set targets effectively and monitor the progress made towards meeting them. They also liaise to standardise the assessment of work and share course planning and resources. The recent movement of photography into the department (it was previously in media and performing arts) has been welcomed by all involved in the transition.

### **Performing arts**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- very good achievements at GCE A level
- very good teaching and a third of it outstanding
- imaginative assignments
- good resources
- significant contribution to the additional studies programme
- well-managed curriculum area
- lively and exciting learning environments.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- no significant weaknesses.

### **Scope of provision**

65. Full-time students wishing to study at advanced level are offered GCE AS/A-levels in drama, dance, performance studies, music and music technology. A significant contribution in time and resources is made to the additional studies programme, through the band, the orchestra, the choir, dance club, drama club, the learn to sing group and music classes. There are also important curricular links with arts centres, local theatres, colleges and schools. Courses are popular and taken by some 250 students.

### **Achievement and standards**

66. Students achieve outstandingly well on nearly all courses. All students taking GCE A levels in dance, music and music practical have passed in the last three years, most with high grades. In theatre studies, students have performed less impressively but in line with national averages. Retention rates in GCE A-level dance, music, music practical and theatre studies are above the national average for sixth form colleges.

67. Students work industriously and with confidence. They have a determination to succeed and take full advantage of the many opportunities to relate theory and practice in their studies. Their listening skills are well developed, as are their skills in performance. Additional studies activities are well attended. Group work is well co-ordinated and individuals also have opportunities to excel in solo performance. Progression rates to HE are good and of late students have gained places at the prestigious institutions.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in performing arts, 1999 to 2001**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GCE A-level dance	3	No. of starts	11	14	12
		% retention	73	86	75
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level music	3	No. of starts	22	16	33
		% retention	76	70	87
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level theatre studies	3	No. of starts	74	58	62
		% retention	78	72	85
		% pass rate	86	86	81
GCE A-level music practical	3	No. of starts	10	4	14
		% retention	91	100	88
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

### **Quality of education and training**

68. Most of the teaching was good and over a third was outstanding. Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and expertise that they use effectively to develop students' interest in and understanding of the subject while taking full account of learners' individual needs. A practical session in drama of touch games led to a theory session exploring theories of tempo and rhythm in which students were both physically and mentally challenged. Most lessons are very well planned

and teachers use good handouts. Teachers use a range of imaginative learning methods and many staff regularly design and use their own original learning materials. In theatre studies, a unit checklist had been devised to help students focus on specific actions in dramatic performances, and students who attended theatre trips used a performance analysis checklist. In dance, video recording helps dancers evaluate their own performance with the teacher. The impressive contribution from peripatetic staff is also greatly valued by students.

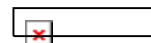
69. Formal and informal assessment of learning during the courses is very effective. Students' folders and files show that assessments are frequent and thorough. Staff comments are constructive and suggest what learners need to do to improve their performance.

70. Students benefit from the well-planned use of a range of up-to-date equipment. A classical software programme was well used on music courses involving learners e-mailing their homework to the teacher and receiving comments in return by e-mail. Many students word process their assignments. Displays of work by students decorate corridors and classrooms walls. New productions are richly illustrated with historical context material, the history of costume and the social background of the plays. An evening performance of extracts from 'Hamlet' was put in by the Monday lunchtime Shakespeare theatre group. It was very well received. A band practice session showed how effectively this area contributes to the additional studies programme of the college.

### ***Leadership and management***

71. The performing arts are well led and efficiently managed. Improving the quality of individual students learning is at the core of plans for further improvement. Communication is good. Departmental meetings are held regularly, and records are well kept. Teams often join forces for combined performances. Good practice is often shared. The staff teaching observation, review and appraisal system has not yet effectively addressed areas of known weakness.

### **Business studies and economics**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates and high levels of achievement at GCE AS and A level
- high levels of student progression to appropriate courses in HE
- excellent students' achievements in economics
- much well-planned teaching
- strong development of students' examination skills

- excellent personal support from tutors
- thorough monitoring of student performance.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor GCSE business studies results
- some inadequate classroom accommodation
- insufficient opportunities for students to display initiative and responsibility in lessons.

### ***Scope of provision***

72. The department's curriculum includes accounting, business studies and economics courses, which are offered at GCE AS and A level. Students also take business studies as an Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and at GCSE level. Ten-week IT courses are provided for students as part of the college's key skills programme. Over 600 students studied courses in the department during 2000/01. Most were enrolled on GCE AS and A-level courses with about 45 on the AVCE single and full awards and about 35 on the GCSE course. The department also contributes to the college's additional studies courses through courses in shorthand and 'Young Enterprise'.

### ***Achievement and standards***

73. Students' achievements are generally very good. Pass rates on GCE A-level accounts, business studies and economics are consistently high, and above the national average for sixth form colleges. Most students gain high grades in examinations. For example, 70% of the passes in GCE A-level business studies and over 85% of the passes on the GCE A-level economics in 2001 were between grades A to C. Results in economics have been sustained at a high level for several years. Analysis shows that most students achieve better results than those predicted from their achievements at GCSE. The first set of results on the GCE AS courses, introduced as part of the 'Curriculum 2000' reforms, confirm that high levels of attainment are being sustained. Students' attendance rates are high. A significant number of students continue their study of business and economics in HE. Over half of the students gaining advanced level awards went on to business-related courses in 2001.

74. Students develop good examination techniques; they practise working through multiple-choice and data-response questions in class and are confident in tackling timed exercises. Work experience is not offered to students. However, students are able to gain practical skills in running small business through taking part in 'Young Enterprise'. On the vocational courses, students benefit from visiting local companies to undertake basic research for their coursework. Many students also improve their IT skills through pursuing short courses provided by the department as

part of the college's key skills programme. Pass rates in key skills IT examinations were well above the national average in 2001. However, as the self-assessment report acknowledges, few students have completed the course element of the key skills IT unit. In contrast to the high level of achievements on GCE AS and A-level courses, pass rates in GCSE business studies have been poor. Many students taking GCSE business studies as part of a full-time GCSE programme have difficulty in relating concepts covered in lessons to real business situations.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in business studies and economics, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE business studies	2	No. of starts	29	35	36
		% retention	69	80	75
		% pass rate	40	61	41
Computer literacy and information technology	2	No. of starts	412	398	*
		% retention	89	94	*
		% pass rate	83	90	*
GNVQ business	3	No. of starts	22	30	16
		% retention	86	67	75
		% pass rate	100	80	92
GCE A-level business studies (2 year)	3	No. of starts	119	146	120
		% retention	82	79	81
		% pass rate	97	99	96
GCE A-level business studies (1 year)	3	No. of starts	73	75	53
		% retention	99	89	98
		% pass rate	90	98	83
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	48	40	44
		% retention	98	97	100
		% pass rate	100	97	100

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

\* CLAIT course replaced by provision of key skills IT in 2000/01.

***Quality of education and training***

75. Teaching is well planned. Students receive comprehensive subject handbooks, which provide extensive guidance on content, reading and other sources such as relevant web sites. Teachers display very good knowledge of their subjects and the examination requirements. Many have experience as external examiners and give students good advice on examination techniques. In the best lessons, teachers engage students in analysis and debate through skilful questioning. For example, in a GCE AS lesson on the topic of breakeven analysis, every student was asked to draw graphs on the white-board to illustrate the relationships between costs and revenue. This helped all students to identify the breakeven point. In the weaker lessons, teachers fail to give sufficient emphasis to making students think and learn for themselves. Students are too reliant on the provision of material from teachers and teachers do not draw upon students' own research and investigations, question them enough about their work or engage them in a discussion.

76. Students gain confidence and practical business experience by participating in the Young Enterprise option on the additional studies programme. Students set up their own businesses with

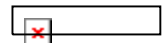
help from external advisers. In the teaching of economics and accounting, students use the Internet to investigate real business problems. For example, in a second-year economics class, students were analysing economic solutions to traffic congestion in western cities by making use of relevant web sites. Although teachers make good use of the resources available, some of the classroom accommodation is too small for the size of classes and neither the students nor teachers have direct access to modern IT and audio-visual aids within the classroom. On the main campus, rooms are often overcrowded and this inhibits the use of group work. On the North Site, where about half the lessons take place, heating is sometimes inadequate and there is no access to computer workstations in the classroom.

77. Assessment practice is regular and thorough, with close monitoring of students' progress and careful recording of achievement against learning goals. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and well documented. Teachers follow a common departmental policy on marking and grading. Assignments are marked promptly and feedback is thorough. There are effective arrangements to introduce students to the college and identify any initial learning support needs. Students benefit from excellent personal support from teachers. Careers education and guidance is strong, and students appreciate the range of support available.

### ***Leadership and management***

78. The department is well managed. Students' performance is thoroughly monitored. Targets for student retention and pass rates are set, progress made towards achieving them checked and areas of low performance, such as GCSE business studies are carefully investigated so that corrective action can be instigated. The resources available to the department are efficiently deployed; the average class size at 16.1 in 2000/01 was higher than the college average. Regular meetings take place at both subject and departmental level and high priority is given to addressing curriculum planning and to monitoring students' progress. The department recognises that greater emphasis needs to be given to the analysis of learning styles and has undertaken some preliminary work on this area. Changes arising from the introduction of 'Curriculum 2000' have been skilfully managed.

## **Geography**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates
- very good research and analytical skills of students
- good teaching in geography and geology
- effective use of ICT by students

- extensive opportunities for fieldwork.

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective arrangements for additional subject support
- unsatisfactory management of the curriculum in environmental science
- lack of rigour in assessing and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Scope of provision**

79. The provision comprises GCE AS and A-level courses in geography, environmental science and geology. There are currently 233 students enrolled on GCE AS courses and 143 on GCE A-level courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

80. Retention and pass rates are good and have been maintained at high levels for the last three years. In 2001, the retention rate for GCE A-level geography was above the national average and the pass rate of 96% was high. Students achieved outstandingly well in geology. The retention rate was high and all students completed the course successfully. In both geography and geology at GCE A level, large numbers of students achieve high grades in their final examinations. For example, in 2001, some two thirds of the successful GCE A-level geography students were awarded a pass at grade A to C and a similar pattern was in evidence at GCE AS in the first year of the course. The pass rate in environmental science, a course where the teaching is shared between the geography and science departments, was 97%. Most students achieve the GCE A-level grades that would be expected of them in relation to their GCSE results at entry. The numbers of students progressing to HE to study geography is low.

81. Most students' work is of a high standard. Their analytical and research work is very good. For example, students engaged in an interesting research project on the effect of trampling on footpaths in Dorset were able to identify the measurements they needed to test the effects, conduct their research, and produce detailed pictorial and statistical results to support their conclusions. Personal skills are effectively developed through well-planned discussion and group activities.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in geography, 1999 to 2001**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	137	122	123
		% retention	84	86	88
		% pass rate	94	86	96



GCE A-level geology	3	No. of starts	37	39	29
		% retention	89	85	90
		% pass rate	97	94	100

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

### **Quality of education and training**

82. Teaching in geography and geology is good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and students make good progress towards achieving their learning goals. Lessons are well planned and provide a range of different activities which engage and maintain students' interest. Group work is skilfully managed. In the best lessons, teachers provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge in new and challenging contexts. A group of GCE A-level geology students in studying the ways in which the ages of rocks could be measured by radiometric dating or by the relative ages deduced from fossil evidence displayed a good geological awareness. The exercise was well planned, stimulating and required students to draw information from a wide range of sources to support their conclusions. Similarly in geography, in an exciting lesson on global hazards, a group of students gave a presentation to the rest of the class on tsunamis, using computer graphics and a video clip to illustrate their points. They prepared the presentation well and were able to talk confidently and knowledgeably about the topic. Some lessons in environmental science were less successful. Learning objectives were not clear and students did too much copying and note taking.

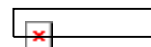
83. Resources are adequate. Most students make good use of ICT in their work. They are provided with the addresses of the most helpful web sites and use the information that they find appropriately. Computers are used effectively in analysis and the presentation of work. There is a good web site for geology students to use. However, students do not often make effective use of the library or geography study centre. Classroom accommodation is satisfactory, but the geology room is unattractive and lacks some basic equipment. There are extensive arrangements for fieldwork. Students benefit greatly from a wide range of opportunities to apply their knowledge in the field. In the last year 50 students attended a 10-day field course in Morocco, 13 studied volcanoes in Hawaii and a further 29 visited Amsterdam. The quality of the fieldwork reports is good.

84. Homework is set and marked regularly. In geography and geology, the assessment of students' work is thorough, accurate and contains helpful comments from teachers to enable students to improve their work. However, the assessment of work in environmental science is less rigorous. Some work is marked too generously and comments concentrate on the presentation rather than the content of the work. There are effective arrangements for providing support for students with specific learning difficulties. However, arrangements for additional subject support are unsatisfactory. Although teachers provide informal help to students outside of their lessons, the additional classes that are arranged do not focus on the needs of the students who most need help and are poorly attended. There are no additional subject support classes for students in the first year of their studies.

### **Leadership and management**

85. Leadership of geography and geology is strong. Management is effective. Part-time teachers are fully integrated within course teams. The management of environmental science is unsatisfactory. The departments of geography and biology share responsibility for the subject and although the subject teachers meet regularly to discuss their work, the quality and co-ordination of the course is not monitored effectively at department level. Most of the college's quality assurance arrangements are effectively applied in the department. For example, targets for course retention and pass rates are set at appropriate levels and are largely met. The department has produced a detailed self-assessment report, but it does not include a thorough assessment of the quality of its teaching and learning, or address in sufficient detail in the accompanying action plan how improvements are to be made. The process of lesson observation that is currently used to inform judgements is insufficiently thorough. Management of the department's finances is satisfactory.

## History, politics and classical civilisation



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on all courses
- good teaching
- good retention rates
- very good individual support for students
- rigorous assessment
- well-qualified, committed and experienced staff
- wide variety of advanced level courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- lack of differentiation in some lessons
- adverse effect of some small classrooms on teaching and learning.

### ***Scope of provision***

86. The department offers a wide range of choices at advanced level that meets students' needs well. Courses are popular. Provision includes three GCE AS and A-level history specifications in

modern, medieval, and Tudor and Stuart history. Government, and politics and Classical Civilisation are offered to GCE AS and A level. In addition, GCE AS archaeology, which was originally piloted in 1999/2000, is now a full part of the department's GCE AS and A-level programme.

### **Achievement and standards**

87. Students achieve well on nearly all courses and outstandingly well on some. In GCE A-level history, there are consistently good pass rates and the proportion of students gaining higher grades has improved steadily to 59% in 2001. In GCE A-level government and politics all students passed, 76% at grades A to C, well above the national averages for sixth form colleges. In GCE A-level classical civilisation, achievement is also very good with pass rates ranging from 88% to 100% over the last three years and the proportion of students gaining A to C grades varying between 57% to 69%. At GCE AS in 2001, students did outstandingly well on most courses. Most students do at least as well, or better, after two years of advanced level study than their GCSE achievements might indicate. Retention rates are either good or rapidly improving and are in line with national averages. Retention rates on the new GCE AS courses were high in all subjects. Average attendance for the groups observed was 80%.

88. Most students quickly make the transition from GCSE to advanced level work and in the process, develop high levels of fluency in their essay writing. Many use historical and political ideas with a growing confidence. An encouragingly large proportion of students read widely and use their reading to inform their understanding of important themes and questions. When given the opportunity they ask perceptive questions. Students' portfolios showed that the large majority had developed independent views on many questions and could distinguish fact from opinion well.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in history, politics and classical civilisation, 1999 to 2001**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE archaeology	2	No. of starts	20	34	*
		% retention	90	100	*
		% pass rate	100	97	*
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	156	162	156
		% retention	80	81	87
		% pass rate	89	92	85
GCE A-level government/politics	3	No. of starts	23	39	32
		% retention	78	77	91
		% pass rate	100	93	91
GCE A-level classical civilisation	3	No. of starts	16	19	19
		% retention	81	89	89
		% pass rate	92	88	88

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

\* course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**

89. There is a team of highly qualified and experienced teaching staff and most teaching is very good. In the best lessons, there was a clear structure and variety of activities. The teacher's

enthusiasm and commitment often inspired the learners, who responded well to the challenges set them. For example, in a classical civilisation lesson, a brief introduction to the lesson's aims was followed by a recap on earlier lessons. Probing questions then encouraged students to develop their analytical skills on whether 'Oedipus the King' is a classical masterpiece. This was followed up with work in pairs and a rapid-fire quiz to end the session. The work was conducted at a brisk pace, and the students were highly motivated, engaged and confident. In all lessons, teachers demonstrated expertise in their subject, but in a number of lessons, too little account was taken of the needs of individual learners and teachers talked too much leaving little opportunity for students to either ask or answer questions. Typically, lessons were based on friendly yet purposeful relationships in which students were able to show how far they had developed appropriate communication skills, a good level of subject knowledge and the ability to work co-operatively.

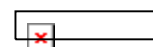
90. Resources for learning are good, but they are not always well used. Little use was made of learning technology in lessons apart from the occasional use of an overhead projector or short video clip. However, students are regularly referred to relevant web sites in all subjects. Politics students are encouraged to e-mail their work to the tutor outside of normal lesson times. There are good departmental and library resources, particularly current historical journals, which are well used by staff and students in their work. The department has a tradition of offering wide range of out of class opportunities including residential trips to Bayeux, Berlin, France and Greece as well as encouraging attendance at one-day conferences. Some departmental rooms are no longer large enough for the size of classes allocated to them and this has an adverse effect on students' learning. In one lesson, two students who were out of the line of sight of the teacher were unable to participate. While some subject rooms have attractive and stimulating displays of students' work, most do not.

91. In all subjects assessment is frequent, accurate and closely follows the requirements of the examining body. Students are given a detailed breakdown of the examiner's mark schemes to help them appreciate what is required. Some feedback on assessments give very detailed guidance indicating strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. Other teachers provide much less detailed comments. Teachers follow examining boards mark schemes strictly when marking formal assessments. Outside normal class times, teachers give help to students in their subject work. Most staff encourage students to ask for individual help. This is greatly valued by the students. Extension classes prepare students for the demands of the Advanced Extension Award, for HE interviews and to help students secure high grades.

### ***Leadership and management***

92. The curriculum manager has effectively led the history department team through the implementation of Curriculum 2000. Part-time staff are fully integrated with the department. Teaching and learning have been prioritised over other issues. All staff have attended examination board meetings in the last year to learn about the new specifications and have shared this knowledge in their teams. INSET days in the past year have been devoted to teaching and learning issues such as rewriting schemes of work and moderating students' coursework. Team teaching is the norm in the department and leads to staff sharing ideas and resources on a daily basis. There are common schemes of work and communal teaching and learning resources to ensure consistency in the methods used and reduce workloads. Staff new to the department find this support invaluable. However, lesson observation feedback undertaken as part of the appraisal process is not used to contribute to course reviews.

### **Modern foreign languages**



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

### ***Strengths***

- very good achievements at GCE A level and GCSE maintained year on year
- very good teaching and learning
- very good subject knowledge
- students' progress well monitored
- good opportunities to start a new language with progression to GCE AS in year 2
- well-managed department
- good use of resources
- good access to native speakers (foreign language assistants) in three languages.

### ***Weaknesses***

- retention rates slightly below national average in French GCE A level
- no video facilities in a number of rooms dedicated to language teaching
- language element in additional studies withdrawn in 2001/02.

### ***Scope of provision***

93. The college offers GCE AS and A level in French, German and Spanish to full-time students. Since the last inspection, Spanish and Italian conversation classes for those not studying GCE language courses have been withdrawn, but the opportunity to start a one-year GCSE Spanish or Italian course remains. There are currently 166 students aged 16 to 18 enrolled. Good opportunities

are provided for foreign visits, although some of these have been curtailed due to the pressures of the Curriculum 2000 programme. This has also had a negative impact on the additional programmes where languages which used to feature prominently have been reduced.

### ***Achievement and standards***

94. Modern languages results in this college are outstandingly good. At GCE A level, the majority of language classes achieved 100% pass rates in French, German, Spanish and Italian in the last three years. Compared with national pass rates at grades A to C in these subjects, students achieve well above the national average. In the GCE AS examinations, all rates are above 94% in Spanish, Italian and German, with French at 87%. There was also a high proportion of higher grades in these new examinations. GCSE results in the one-year Spanish and Italian are also very good. Retention rates are very good overall. Pass rates in Spanish and Italian at GCE A level have been well above the national average over the last three years. Pass rates in GCE A-level French and German are also above national averages over the same period.

95. Most students achieve better after one and two years of advanced level study than their GCSE performances would suggest. The department is aware of students' scores on entry, which are higher than the college norm because of the departments insistence on a grade B at GCSE as a course entry requirement. The department sets great store by insisting on high standards of attendance and punctuality and this is effectively and consistently monitored. In class, students make a good transition from GCSE level and soon express themselves confidently and with increasingly accurate use of the languages they are learning.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in modern foreign languages, 1999 to 2001***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GCSE Italian	2	No. of starts	20	14	10
		% retention	85	93	90
		% pass rate	100	100	78
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	36	56	43
		% retention	86	84	81
		% pass rate	97	98	80
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	52	67	51
		% retention	69	69	75
		% pass rate	97	100	100
GCE A-level German	3	No. of starts	32	20	27
		% retention	77	85	67
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level Spanish	3	No. of starts	12	8	7
		% retention	100	100	71
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

### ***Quality of education and training***

96. Teaching and learning is very good. Students respond well to the demanding materials with which they are presented and there are many opportunities for them to ask questions and choose

topics for discussion. Not a moment is wasted in French lessons where students have to come prepared with a question or piece of information to share with the class almost as soon as they enter the room. A key element in the department's success is the integration of teaching and learning skills and guidance. Students are given good guidance on how to organise their files to make the most of learning opportunities presented by teachers. There is appropriate emphasis on developing a sound knowledge of grammar at the same time as strategies are suggested for vocabulary building. In a one-year GCSE Italian class, the students are bombarded with the language, with skilful explanation of new words without recourse to English. As soon as a student shows signs of difficulty, a tutor intervenes and suggests attendance at one of the support classes. These are much appreciated by students and have a very positive effect on the results of weaker candidates.

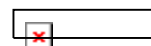
97. Students benefit from some good resources, but are handicapped in some lessons by unsatisfactory accommodation. All staff are well qualified and experienced with excellent subject knowledge. One is a native French speaker. All have had in-service training on the new GCE AS and A-level syllabuses. There is help from foreign language assistants in the three main languages. Modern languages teaching takes place in a suite of rooms adjacent to the library, with suitable arrangement of furniture to encourage communicative activities. The two rooms situated on the North Site are seriously affected by traffic noise. All rooms have tape recorders and projectors, but video recorders are in only two of the five rooms. There is good use of display in the rooms and adjacent corridors, giving a good continental backdrop to activities. The former languages resource room has been partially reallocated to key skills, to the detriment of the department.

98. Assessment in modern languages is efficient and effective with a high degree of correlation between estimated and actual grades in the final examinations. Students are well informed about their progress and have developed good relationships with staff to enable them to share areas of concern openly. The department has found it impossible to organise a French exchange, although a Spanish exchange has been arranged to Murcia. Two students of German took part in a work experience programme in Germany in 2000 which benefited them enormously. A member of the languages department organises the bi-annual expedition to Ecuador.

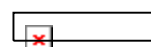
### ***Leadership and management***

99. The modern languages department is managed efficiently but unobtrusively. Many hours are put in to writing the self-assessment review, an accurate and honest document, and fulfilling all the other college administrative and quality requirements. Last year there were particular demands because of the introduction of Curriculum 2000. Many hours were spent resourcing the new course, downloading much material from the Internet. There are regular departmental meetings which are minuted and circulated. These cover staff development issues as well as administration and implementation of the new syllabuses.

### **Part D: College data**



**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	0	0
2	3	0

<b>3</b>	97	0
<b>4/5</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	2,327	0	20
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	140	0	1
Business	897	0	8
Hotel and catering	33	0	0
Health and community care	74	0	1
Art and design	1,496	0	13
Humanities	6,594	0	57
Basic education	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,561</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 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
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,236	652	635	2	2	1
	Retention rate (%)	77	61	67	*	*	*
	National average (%)	78	81	82	72	69	74
	Pass rate (%)	95	88	83	*	*	*
	National average (%)	69	71	77	67	75	76



<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	2,172	2,684	2,617	4	3	2
	Retention rate (%)	85	85	87	*	*	*
	National average (%)	79	80	82	71	71	75
	Pass rate (%)	97	94	92	*	*	*
	National average (%)	84	85	82	75	77	77
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	4,807	4,951	5,085	9	10	5
	Retention rate (%)	85	86	85	100	100	100
	National average (%)	77	78	80	62	65	69
	Pass rate (%)	89	90	89	78	90	100
	National average (%)	86	85	85	69	71	74

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

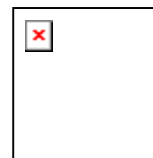
3. College rates for (1999/2000): provided by the college in spring 2001.

\* data not applicable

**Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection**

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	74.2	22.0	3.8	132
Level 2 (intermediate)	73.3	26.7	0.0	15
Level 1 (foundation)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other sessions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>74.1</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>147</b>

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2002. 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 website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).