

Telford College of Arts and Technology

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Basic information about the college

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Name of college: Telford College of Arts and Technology
Type of college: General Further Education College

Principal: Douglas Boynton Address of college: Haybridge Road

Wellington Telford

Shropshire TF1 2NP

Telephone number: 01952 642200
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Chair of governors: Michael Lowe CBE

Unique reference number: 130796
Name of reporting inspector: Nigel Flood

Date(s) of inspection: 07-11 January 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

Telford College of Arts and Technology is a general further education (FE) college situated in the unitary authority of Telford and Wrekin. Within the authority there is also a sixth form college. Telford College has two sites, a main campus in the Wellington area of Telford and another campus two miles away in the Oakengates district. The college recruits most of its students from 12 partner schools, local companies and communities located in Telford and the surrounding area. One course recruits students nationwide. Most of the students and trainees are funded by the Shropshire Learning and Skills Council.

The college is a major institution for vocational education in Telford and Wrekin. It provides an extensive range of courses both on and off campus. In six areas of learning, the number of students is substantial. In two other areas, student numbers are very low. Some 36% of its courses are run at venues in the community and in the premises of local employers. In addition to this significant provision for local communities, it offers training courses in crowd control to football and rugby clubs across England. In 2000/01, the college enrolled 12,869 students, of whom 89% were part time. About 83% of students were aged 19 and over. Some 7% came from minority ethnic communities. The proportion of residents in Telford and Wrekin from minority ethnic communities, according to the 1991 census, was 3.5%. Modern apprenticeship training is provided for 168 learners. The proportion of young people participating in education and training in Telford and Wrekin in 2001 was 68% at 16 and 56% at 17 years of age. In 2001, 47.3% of pupils in the authority achieved five A* to C grades in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, against a national average of 50%. The unemployment rate for Telford and Wrekin in September 2001 was 3%, just above the national average.

The college's mission is `to sustain and continually develop an inclusive learning environment for the whole community that encourages wider participation and enables our students and staff to achieve their full potential.'

How effective is the college?



The college is very effective. Achievement and standards and the quality of education and training are outstanding in one area of learning, good in five and satisfactory in two. Leadership and management are good. The standard of the very small amount of modern apprenticeship work is unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- good teaching on most courses
- good leadership and management
- good resources

outstanding links with employers and local comm	nunities
extensive and appropriate range of programmes	
effective promotion of equal opportunities	
 significant widening of participation in FE. 	
What should be improved	
declining retention rates	
inadequate additional learning support for part-tire	ne students
 ineffective management and quality assurance as programmes 	rrangements for modern apprentice
some unsatisfactory course reviews	
 insufficiently thorough verification of assessment. 	
Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are in subjects and courses in the full report.	dentified in the sections on individual
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational a	areas
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The table below shows overall judgements about provision	on in subjects and courses that were

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
Engineering and manufacturing	Good. Retention and pass rates for courses taught on college campuses are high. Teaching and training and resources are good. The college is responsive to employers' needs and provides an extensive range of courses. Retention rates are poor on courses provided on employers' premises.
Business administration and management	Good. There is a wide and appropriate range of courses. Well-planned lessons and good teaching meet the needs of students and employers. Pass rates are high. Arrangements for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) assessment and verification are poor.
Information and communication technology	Good. There are high pass rates on full-time courses. Teaching and training and the support for students are good. The standards of achievement on the modern apprenticeship programme are poor.
Sports, leisure and travel	Satisfactory. Teaching is good on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation and first diploma courses. The standard of students' vocational skills is high. Management of some of the provision is ineffective. There is a lack of vocationally qualified and experienced staff for employer-based provision.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Much of the teaching and learning is good. Pass and retention rates on most foundation and intermediate courses are high. The pass rates on some other courses and the arrangements for training in key skills are unsatisfactory.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good. Pass and retention rates are high. Teaching and the standard of students' work are good. There is low attendance at key skills classes.
Teacher training and access to higher education	Good. The pass rates on access to nursing and teacher education courses are high. Teaching is good and the standard of students' work is high. On the access courses, there are low retention rates and some poor records of punctuality and attendance.
Basic skills	Outstanding. Most teaching is very good or outstanding. The achievement of individual learning plans is high. Arrangements for assessment are thorough and comprehensive. Accommodation is very good. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) across all programmes is highly effective.

How well is the college led and managed?



The management of the college is good. Academic performance is monitored regularly. Governors are enthusiastic and work well with managers. Communication is good at all levels. Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted. Curriculum management is mostly good. However, the management and quality assurance arrangements of some employer-based and modern apprenticeship provision are poor. Some course reviews are unsatisfactory and there is insufficient analysis of retention and pass rate data at course level. Some retention and pass rate targets are unrealistically high. Performance indicators and targets in the annual operating statement are insufficiently precise.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college provides good opportunities in education and training for people from a range of educational backgrounds and experience. An increasing number of students are recruited from areas of high deprivation and from groups that have traditionally not taken part in FE. There is a wide range of courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many courses have been designed specifically to attract people back into education and training. The college offers courses away from the college campus at over 70 different venues. Links with the community are strong. Successful projects have helped members of minority ethnic groups, young mothers, and other adults to learn more about citizenship. Free childcare places are widely available in the college and in the local communities. There is excellent liaison with local and national employers. College training centres have been established on the premises of five employers and, in addition, the college works with a number of companies to help their employees improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Over the two years since 1999, the college has helped nearly 4,000 redundant workers to improve their skills; most subsequently gained employment. The college promotes equal opportunities and does not tolerate discrimination.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Initial guidance prior to enrolment is good. Induction arrangements are effective. Most students receive effective support. During classes and at additional support centres, learning support is good. Working within an effective system, tutors provide good tutorial help on academic, personal and social issues. Students value this help. The college regularly celebrates its students' achievements. Careers education and guidance are thorough and help students progress to appropriate higher education (HE) and employment. Part-time students and trainees are not included in the initial assessment screening and their support needs are not adequately identified.

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

- · welcoming atmosphere
- adult environment
- supportive and helpful staff

effective tutorial support	
effective learning support.	
 What they feel could be improved prices for purchase of food and drink at the college 	
smoking being allowed in the refectory; students do not like it	
social areas for students	
arrangements for parking	
less crowding and appropriate heating in teaching rooms.	
Other information	
The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues ra The governors must agree the plan and send copies of it to the Learning and Sk and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).	ised in the report.
Part B: The college as a whole	
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Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	68	22	10
19+ and WBL*	78	21	1
Learning 16-18	61	29	10
19+ and WBL*	76	24	0

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



1. The overall pass rates between 1998/99 and 2000/01 were high. Most pass rates were above the national average for general FE and tertiary colleges. Although most retention rates were declining in the same period, they were at, or above, the national average. Trends in pass rates over the three years to 2001 are variable. Some have remained at the same level, others have risen and others have declined. Although the number of learners was low, the pass and retention rates for modern apprentice provision were very poor. Only one student has achieved a modern apprenticeship since the programme started. However, of those who started the programme, just over a third have attained a NVQ.

16-18 year olds

- 2. Overall, most retention rates between 1998/99 and 2000/01 for students aged 16 to 18 were at, or above, the national average. All rates, however, have declined during that period. For level 1 NVQ, foundation GNVQ and other foundation and pre-foundation qualifications, the retention rates over the last three years have declined, but remained above the national average. Retention rates for level 2 NVQ, intermediate GNVQ, GCSEs and other qualifications also fell between 1998/99 and 2000/01, but these rates also remained above the national average. Level 3 retention rates for NVQ, advanced GNVQ, General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A level) and GCE Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) and other vocational qualifications declined significantly between 1998/99 and 2000/01, but in 1998/99 and 1999/2000, they were still above the national averages.
- 3. Most pass rates for students aged 16 to 18, between 1998/99 and 2000/01, were at or above the national average. Trends in pass rates for this age-group have varied over this period. At level 1, the pass rate for NVQ, foundation GNVQ and other foundation and pre-foundation qualifications rose sharply between 1999/2000 and 2000/01. At level 2, the pass rates for NVQ, intermediate GNVQ, GCSEs and other qualifications rose slightly between 1998/99 and 2000/01. The level 2 pass rate remained above the national average in 1998/99 and 1999/2000. Pass rates at level 3 for NVQ, advanced GNVQ and precursors, GCE AS/A level and other vocational qualifications declined sharply between 1998/99 and 2000/01. In 1998/99, the pass rate for level 3 was significantly above the national average, but by 1999/2000 it was below.
- 4. The number of students aged 16 to 18 in Telford and Wrekin who achieve five GCSEs at grade A* to C is just below the national average. However, the college recruits many of its students aged 16 to 18 from areas where the number of pupils achieving five GCSEs A* to C is below the national average, and in some instances significantly below. Most of these students aged 16 to 18,

^{*} work-based learning

particularly those on programmes at level 1 and 2, make good progress beyond their previous levels of attainment during their time at the college. At level 3, progress is not as good. However, the standards of students' work, both practical and written, is satisfactory or better. In courses for sport, leisure and travel at level 1 and 2 and visual arts and media at all levels, most students are able to apply theoretical principles well in practical work. In basic skills in particular, and in most of the other areas of learning, students' development of independent learning skills is good.

Adult learners

- 5. Overall, most retention rates for adult students declined between 1998/99 and 2000/01, but remained at, or above, the national average. In 1998/99, at level 1, the retention rate for NVQ, and other foundation and pre-foundation qualifications was significantly above the national average, but by 1999/2000 it was just below. In 2000/01 at level 1, there was a very slight improvement on 1999/2000. The retention rate at level 2 for NVQ, intermediate GNVQ, GCSEs and other qualifications remained the same in 1998/99 and 1999/2000; both were well above the national average. In 2000/01, the level 2 rate declined slightly on the two previous years. The retention rate at level 3 for NVQ, advanced GNVQ and precursors, GCE AS/A level and other vocational qualifications, between 1998/99 and 2000/01, declined slightly. In 1998/99 and 1999/2000, the pass rates were above the national averages. Retention rates for higher-level NVQ and other higher-level professional and vocational qualifications declined significantly between 1998/99 and 1999/2000, but rose sharply in 2000/01. In 1999/2000, the rate was substantially below the national average. The numbers on higher-level programmes are low when compared with other qualification levels.
- 6. Between 1998/99 and 2000/01, the pass rates for adult students were good with the exception of those for higher qualifications. Most pass rates were stable and remained above the national average. The pass rate at level 1 for NVQ, and other foundation and pre-foundation qualifications, rose between 1998/99 and 2000/01, and in 1999/2000, was significantly above the national average. At level 2, the overall pass rates for NVQ, intermediate GNVQ, GCSE and other qualifications remained stable between 1998/99 and 2000/01 and above the national averages. At level 3, the overall pass rates for NVQ, advanced GNVQ and precursors, GCE AS/A level and other vocational qualifications increased between 1998/99 and 2000/01, and remained above the national average. The pass rates for higher-level NVQ and other higher-level professional and vocational qualifications declined significantly between 1999/2000 and 2000/01, but remained above the national averages.
- 7. The college recruits adult students from a wide range of educational and training backgrounds. In many instances, these students come from areas of high deprivation and from groups who traditionally have been underrepresented in FE and whose vocational and learning skills are not well developed. In most areas of learning, students improve on their prior levels of attainment significantly and develop their personal and learning skills well. However, the progress of some adult students on vocational programmes has been slow and, although they achieve the targeted award for their programme of study, the award has been at low level and there is no significant development of vocational skills. The standards of practical and written work of adult students are satisfactory or better. In basic skills and access to HE and teacher training, the standard of students' work is very high. There is slow progress by some students on employer-based provision where other activities take priority over training and assessments. The overall retention rate for short courses rose slightly between 1998/99 and 2000/01. The pass rate in the same period increased significantly.

Quality of education and training

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8. Most teaching and training is of a high standard. Inspectors observed 168 lessons and visited 45 work places to interview employer-based students, modern apprentices and employers to assess

is satisfactory and 5% is unsatisfactory. Teaching on courses for adults is better than on courses for students aged 16 to 18. Some 78% of the teaching for adult students was graded good or better, and only 1% was unsatisfactory compared to 68% graded good or better and 10% graded unsatisfactory for students aged 16 to 18. The most effective teaching was in visual arts and media, access to HE and teacher training, and basic skills, where over 80% was good or better and where very little was less than satisfactory. Some 52% of teaching in basic skills was graded very good or outstanding. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was in sports, leisure and travel where 12% of lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching at level 2 is weaker than at other levels; here, 10% of teaching was unsatisfactory.

- 9. Where teaching is good, lessons have clear aims and objectives. Most teachers, particularly with adult students, use an appropriate variety of effective methods and styles, which challenge, interest and motivate students. In most lessons, students are able to gain knowledge and skills which improve their understanding. In some lessons, teachers make good use of humour to gain and maintain students' attention. Most teaching takes careful account of the individual learning needs of each student, this is less effective for students aged 16 to 18. Lessons are well planned and use clear schemes of work. In the few poorer lessons, teachers often fail to gain or hold the interest of students. They make poor use of resources and do not check students' understanding. Occasionally, there is poor class management.
- 10. The high standard of marking and feedback provides students with an accurate picture of their progress and of what they need to do to improve. Teachers are effective in encouraging students to work well by themselves. Initial assessment of college-based students leads to the formation of useful individual learning plans against which progress is monitored. In visual arts and media, and basic skills, teachers make good use of initial assessments and individual learning plans to help students during tutorials. Most working relationships between students and teachers are positive. Academic support is good. Students on access to HE courses particularly value the support given to them by teachers during and outside normal lesson time.
- 11. The development of training for key skills for modern apprentice programmes is poor. In a few areas, key skills have been introduced at a very late stage in the students' programmes. In some curriculum areas, there is little co-ordination between work-based training and off-the-job training. This shortcoming is particularly evident where employers and trainees are not briefed on key skills qualifications or on the objectives of the key skills training.
- 12. Most teachers are well qualified, knowledgeable and technically competent and up to date. They have relevant commercial or industrial experience and over three quarters have more than 10 years industrial experience. Some 89% of teachers have teaching qualifications and the remainder, with one exception, are working towards the qualification. All teachers who work with students on employers' premises have assessor awards and over 75% have internal verifiers' awards. Most teaching staff, responding to encouragement from their managers, undertake staff development which includes opportunities for professional updating during short industrial secondments. For example, a motor vehicle lecturer took up a secondment with a motoring organisation working with a mobile breakdown and recovery unit. The college's well-qualified technicians provide a high standard of support, which is highly appreciated by staff and students. The level of occupational experience and competence in the areas of sports, leisure and travel, is inadequate.
- 13. The college makes effective use of work-based assessors, especially in the area of food and drink manufacturing. Work-based assessors are also being trained and developed in other engineering and manufacturing areas and in sport and leisure. Currently, the area of business administration does not make use of work-based assessors. In one area of learning, the internal verifier does not have appropriate vocational experience.
- 14. The Wellington and Oakengates campuses are very well maintained. Common areas display the work of art students. Most classrooms are spacious and well equipped. Some have interactive whiteboards and overhead projection units for use with computers. Most college-produced teaching and training materials are well designed and informative. The library and resource centre provide an extensive range of services and facilities. A good range of books and other media, including videos, audiotapes and computer-based packages, are available to students. There are 75 computers for

use by students in the resource centre, which is open during the day, in the evenings and at weekends. Six computers are dedicated to Learndirect provision. There are over 450 student workstations in the college complete with appropriate hardware and software. They are well maintained and regularly updated. Students have access to the college intranet where many learning materials and notes for lessons are available. Students not based at the college can gain access to this information using the college extranet and the college e-mail system.

- 15. Most resources and facilities are of a very high standard, especially in the areas of health and social care, arts and media, engineering and manufacturing. The excellent centre for basic skills and additional learning support is a modern, well-designed facility, which provides a consistently welcoming atmosphere and flexible arrangements for learning. The centre's outstanding resources and learning materials are also used by staff in their teaching in company learning centres and community centres. There are five well-equipped training centres on employers' premises and seven more were in the process of being established. In addition, the college has five learning centres for groups in the local community. The accommodation and equipment at the centres are of a high standard. The college works closely with many partner organisations and is involved in over 70 community-based projects for which it supplies equipment and staff. Students based on employers' premises have good working and learning environments. The college has achieved the British Safety Council five star award.
- 16. Some lessons take place in classrooms that are not suitable for the types of activity being carried out in them. The college's temporary accommodation is unsuitable. A few classrooms are too small and do not provide enough space for all the information technology (IT) equipment. The temperature in classrooms cannot be adequately controlled. Many of the older classrooms are to be replaced later in 2002 when the new building, which was under construction at the time of the inspection, is completed.
- 17. Initial assessments are carried out for all full-time students based at the college. Diagnostic assessments are used to develop individual learning plans for those students who require additional learning support. Initial assessment is not systematically carried out for part-time students or for students based at employers' premises. Assessment methods do not adequately identify individual training needs or additional support requirements. There is no effective accreditation of students' previous experience and achievements, and some students are taking qualifications which make insufficient demands on them.
- 18. Assignments are mainly well designed and the subsequent assessment of students' work is fair and accurate. Assessments carried out on employers' premises are generally good for engineering and manufacturing, where the students and their managers are fully involved in planning assessments. The feedback following these assessments is appropriately detailed and clearly sets out what still needs to be achieved and the activities to be undertaken. In other curriculum areas, where assessments take place on employers' premises, they are often unsatisfactory; the planning is inadequate and employers are not fully involved. A narrow range of evidence is often used for assessment. Internal verification procedures are mostly satisfactory and are conducted on a regular basis. In some vocational areas, internal verification is not carried out until the end of the qualification and issues relating to poor assessment practices are not identified. There are inadequate arrangements for internal verification in sports and recreation.
- 19. The systems used to monitor full-time students' progress are good. Each student has a progress file, which is used effectively to track progress and plan further learning activities. A useful occasional feature of the college year occurs when the teaching timetable is suspended for a week. Instead of lessons, the time is set aside to allow students who are falling behind to catch up and receive additional help from their teachers. Those students not requiring additional time and help are enrolled on useful short courses to improve their range of personal skills. In media studies, an innovative computer-based system is used effectively to record and monitor students' work. The monitoring of progress for modern apprenticeship students is not effective, however. Their reviews are not conducted at regular intervals and do not always involve the employers.
- 20. The college provides an extensive range of programmes to meet most local needs. Employers' links are highly developed. The college is extremely responsive to local businesses. Call centre

training, which was set up to meet local demand, also provides extra opportunities for full-time students to gain additional qualifications. The college offers local employees who become redundant specialist retraining which is well developed and highly considered by local industry. Some 9% of total college enrolments in the two academic years 1999 to 2001 were for re-training. A substantial part of the college's course provision is provided on employers' premises, including ICT, engineering, food manufacture, business administration and basic skills. The college is a major national provider for spectator control training for sporting events.

- 21. The college is succeeding in widening participation. It is recruiting an increasing number of adult learners from areas of high deprivation and from underrepresented groups. Community education links are especially well developed to meet local needs in curriculum areas, such as IT and family literacy and numeracy. In 2000/01, 36% of total enrolments were for community-based education. The college plays an active part in the local lifelong learning partnership, providing guidance and input in the Children's University and the introduction of GNVQ into schools. There are collaborative links with the local sixth form college and good links with local HE institutions. The college has deliberately left some gaps in its provision, including, for example, courses in catering, construction and hair. This strategic decision was based on the fact that another college within easy travelling distance offers this provision.
- 22. The well-established links with local schools are strong and extensive. The college has designated admissions tutors who visit their schools regularly. Potential students have regular contact with the college before enrolling. Current students praised the pre-entry taster days for pupils from schools. Potential adult students are able to attend community-based programmes to see if they are suitable for their needs. Pupils who require support for their transition from school to college and others who might be at risk are identified and well supported. Vulnerable students who might not choose to study at the college receive additional and effective support for at least their first six weeks. GCSE advice sessions, held when results were received, helped many pupils make sound decisions about courses. Part-time students are provided with course guidance, but many rely on the comprehensive promotional guidance materials.
- 23. Full-time students receive a diagnostic assessment of their numeracy and literacy skills. The assessments are marked quickly and results are given to personal tutors by the time students start courses. Late starters are also screened. Some 43% of those screened required support and most took up the opportunities that were offered. Part-time students and trainees are not included in this screening process and their support needs are not adequately identified. Some refer themselves for support, but the numbers doing so are small. Good support is offered to students both individually and in groups whether in lessons or in support centres in the college, at employers' premises or in community locations. A variety of specialist equipment meets the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An e-mail-based support line was started in November 2001. Little work has been carried out to analyse the impact of additional learning support on retention and pass rates. There is a well-structured induction programme and late starters attend weekly general induction sessions run by student services.
- 24. Full-time and part-time students value the tutorial system and receive strong support from tutors. The system is well organised within a common format across the college. Effective action planning and monitoring of attendance are key parts of tutorials. Progress files are updated at individual tutorials. Any students whose attendance gives cause for concern, or who have problems of any kind, are referred to student services for help.
- 25. Students receive good careers and progression guidance from tutors and staff at student support services. There is a comprehensive careers library that includes CD-ROMs and web-based materials. Students appreciate the help provided by these college services. Job vacancy boards are displayed throughout the college. Careers service staff have regular appointments with students in the college. Programmes are enhanced by additional off-site activities for students, including study tours abroad, and a variety of extra short-course qualifications. A team of three part-time counsellors provides drop-in or booked counselling services for anyone connected with the college. Help with childcare, including the college crèche and a network of childminders, is a deciding factor for some adults when they are considering whether or not they are able to attend college. Certain facilities, such as a prayer room, are provided on request.

Leadership and management



- 26. Leadership and management are good. The management structure is well understood by staff. Senior management responsibilities and accountability are clear. Staff consider that managers are easily accessible and supportive. Communication between staff, managers and governors is good. A calendar is published for all meetings held across the college and for major events. Staff are clear about their individual roles in the college and what is expected of them. However, management responsibility for some aspects of employer-based provision and modern apprentice programmes is unclear.
- 27. Governors set a clear strategic direction for the college. The college's strategic aims are clear and measurable. Progress towards achieving the aims is closely monitored by governors and managers. Governors receive regular briefings and reports on key strategic objectives and on the financial performance of the college. The strategic plan was developed after extensive consultation between governors, senior managers and staff. The college's mission and values are reflected well in the strategic plan, and in all college documentation. The annual operating statement, based on the strategic plan, covers all aspects of the college's work. However, the performance indicators and targets against which the college can measure progress towards achieving its objectives are insufficiently precise. Governors are enthusiastic and work well with senior managers. Both fully understand their respective roles. Governors are well informed about the academic performance of the college. There is a firm focus on students and on how they can achieve their full potential. A strong emphasis is placed on increasing retention and pass rates. The training for new governors is good. Managers provide governors with regular updates on local and national education and training initiatives.
- 28. Courses are organised in departments and team leaders are responsible for a cluster of courses. Overall, management of the curriculum is good. Courses are well planned and organised. Curriculum areas are subject to annual review and evaluation, and under-performing courses are identified and actions taken to resolve any issues. The college and individual course teams have implemented a number of initiatives to help improve retention rates, but these have not been fully effective on all courses. There is insufficient rigour in the analysis of retention and pass rate data and in the completion of annual course reviews by some course teams. The retention and pass rate targets set by a few course teams are unrealistically high. Courses on which students' pass rates are poor are closely monitored, but targets for improvements are often imprecise. Attendance is closely monitored and absences routinely followed up. The management of modern apprentice programmes is poor and the quality assurance procedures are inadequate.
- 29. Quality assurance procedures, based on self-assessment, have been steadily improved since the last inspection. The self-assessment process involves all staff, managers and governors and covers all areas of the college's work. Appropriately detailed action plans are compiled to address the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Action points are given an order of priority and progress is closely monitored. There is a schedule of quality assurance activities covering teaching and support areas, which are audited by an internal quality assurance team. Appropriate remedial action is taken where procedures have not been followed.
- 30. The observation of lessons is well established and the outcomes are used to make judgements on teaching and learning. The findings also contribute to staff appraisal, individual training needs and the college's staff development plan. Staff mentors are used effectively to support teachers and help improve the quality of teaching and learning. The college's profile of lesson observations for 2000/01 closely matches the profile established by inspectors.
- 31. The college's equal opportunities policy is regularly reviewed and governors routinely receive reports on its implementation. Equal opportunities is a standard agenda item at all college meetings. Equal opportunities are effectively promoted and there is careful monitoring of the targets set. A

series of informative leaflets are distributed to staff and students to promote awareness of equal opportunities, racial and other forms of harassment and bullying. Curriculum teams have taken positive action and developed codes of practice relevant to their vocational area. Complaints are taken seriously and there are appropriate procedures to deal with them.

- 32. The quality of management information is mostly good. Managers and staff have on-line access to the management information system and have confidence in its reliability. Some course teams do not analyse the data sufficiently thoroughly when setting targets for retention and pass rates.
- 33. Financial management of the college is good. Budgets for course teams are based on student numbers and budget holders receive regular and accurate information on income and expenditure. There is efficient deployment of resources. The college operates with a slightly lower than average class size. The financing of a new teaching block has been planned thoroughly to make best use of the college's financial reserves. The college gives good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Engineering and manufacturing



Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Contributory grade for work-based learning is Unsatisfactory (grade 4)

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for courses in college
- good teaching and training
- good resources
- an extensive range of courses relevant to local needs
- well-planned and thorough assessments.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates for courses on employers' premises
- no qualified teachers of key skills for modern apprentices
- ineffective initial assessment arrangements.

Scope of provision

34. The college offers a very wide range of full-time and part-time programmes in automotive, electrical and mechanical engineering, manufacturing and food technology. Courses are available both during the day and in the evening. The college provides a significant and extensive variety of courses on employers' premises, which constitutes nearly two thirds of the provision in engineering and manufacturing. A broad range of short courses is available both at the college and in the work place. There is a small amount of modern apprentice provision. The many specialist courses include food manufacture, computer-aided design and pneumatics and hydraulics. Qualifications are available from foundation level to level 4 including NVQ, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), GNVQ, national and higher certificates and diplomas. They provide students with a variety of progression routes. The inspection covered all full-time and part-time courses, programmes provided in the college, on employers' premises and the modern apprenticeship programme.

Achievement and standards

- 35. There is no significant difference between the pass and retention rates for adults and students aged 16 to 18. The overall retention rate for all engineering and manufacturing programmes, although declining slightly, has been high for the three years to 2001. However, the retention rate for the national certificate in engineering has declined significantly over this period. Several of the retention rates for courses on employers' premises are poor. There have been major changes in production methods and a significant number of redundancies at local factories. Most pass rates for college and employer-based courses are high and above the national average. For example, the NVQ in engineering manufacture (foundation) at level 2 has maintained high pass rates for the three years to 2001. No modern apprentices in engineering have achieved a key skills qualification and none, therefore, have been able to complete the framework. Some 23%, however, have achieved NVQ awards. Progress towards some NVQ awards is slow. For example, some adult students take four years to complete a level 1 manufacturing operations qualification.
- 36. The standard of students' work ranges from satisfactory to good, both in college workshops and the classroom, and on courses at employers' premises. Most students' portfolios are of a high standard, and well presented. They provide a good range of evidence. Students' awareness of health and safety issues is good and their knowledge of the arrangements for NVQ is thorough.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ food and drink	1	No. of starts	247	287	304

manufacturing		% retention	91	77	63
operations		% pass rate	97	97	90
NVQ performing	1	No. of starts	129	459	515
manufacturing operations		% retention	84	26	23
		% pass rate	92	62	96
NVQ food and drink	2	No. of starts	104	284	515
manufacturing operations		% retention	96	75	34
		% pass rate	16	99	83
NVQ performing	2	No. of starts	19	136	55
manufacturing operations		% retention	50	34	20
		% pass rate	50	80	100
NVQ engineering	2	No. of starts	43	17	19
manufacture (foundation)		% retention	98	88	63
(roundation)		% pass rate	81	100	95
National certificate in	2	No. of starts	90	66	74
engineering		% retention	93	78	52
		% pass rate	67	89	87

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

Quality of education and training

- 37. Teaching in engineering and manufacturing is mostly good or better. Teachers plan lessons carefully and take account of individual learning needs. In lessons, there is good use of group work to stimulate students' interest. Teachers are good at developing students' understanding of the work, and their learning skills. College staff have developed comprehensive work instructions for courses on employers' premises. On-the-job training is of a standard that meets the needs of industry effectively. Teachers at college and at employers' premises place a significant emphasis on issues involving health and safety. For example, in a lesson on testing the strengths of materials, the risks in the process were clearly explained to students. The regular health and safety and food hygiene courses maintain students' knowledge and understanding. Risk assessment documentation is displayed in all areas where teaching and training takes place. Throughout the college, there is prominent display of health and safety statistics, which has helped to develop a strong awareness of the importance of all aspects of safety.
- 38. Assessment is thorough and rigorous. It is based on good documentation. Students are well prepared. Within food manufacture, assessment arrangements are particularly flexible and appropriate. The working relationship between assessors and students is positive and close. The assessment process is used effectively to identify further training needs. Feedback to students on the standard of their work in the college is provided promptly and is rapidly followed by a written commentary. Progress by students on the meat manufacturing NVQ course is slowed by the absence of a qualified internal verifier. Initial assessment is only available for full-time students. The results of initial assessment are not always acted upon. There is no formal initial assessment of students on courses on employers' premises. Their support needs are often discovered by chance.
- 39. There is excellent specialist accommodation and equipment in the college, including control technology and computer-aided design suites, hydraulic and pneumatic equipment and a 12-station mobile fluid power laboratory. A number of major local employers, in collaboration with the college, have established learning centres dedicated to providing training, basic skills support and additional company training for employees. Staffing and some resources are provided by the college and,

combined with company investment, have contributed to the improvement in the skills of the local workforce. There are no qualified key skills teachers for modern apprentices. However, the college is addressing this issue.

40. The range of courses is extensive in meeting the needs of school leavers, adults and employers. Employer-based courses, using a wide and relevant range of NVQ programmes, focus on specific company training requirements. The college has strong links with a wide range of organisations, including large international companies and small and medium-sized businesses. Many of these organisations have invested in good training rooms and facilities which the college uses to train staff from these businesses and companies.

Leadership and management

41. Managers set a clear direction for college-based courses. There is a well-established procedure within the college for the assessment and monitoring of programmes which contributes to the improvement of pass and retention rates. Team meetings and department meetings are held on a regular basis, and focus on pass and retention rates and support of learners. The management of courses on some employers' premises and on the modern apprentice programme is unsatisfactory. There are thorough and effective arrangements to promote equality of opportunity and to widen participation.

Business administration and management

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Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Contributory grade for work-based learning is Unsatisfactory (grade 4)

Strengths

- good pass rates
- well-planned lessons
- good feedback to students
- wide and appropriate range of courses
- good accommodation and resources for learning in the workplace.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory modern apprenticeship provision
- poor NVQ assessment and verification practices.

Scope of provision

42. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses for students aged 16 to 18 and adults in business administration, management and professional studies. Qualifications offered include GNVQ, AVCE, NVQ and professional awards. The area has three sections: college-based work; provision on employers' premises; and modern apprenticeships. Some 10% of the provision in business administration, management and professional studies is provided on employers' premises. Some 3% of the provision is modern apprenticeships in business administration and accounting. The employer-based students and apprentices are employed or are on placements, which range from large multinational companies and public sector organisations to small private enterprises. The inspection covered a sample of the above programmes.

Achievement and standards

- 43. Most pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 and adults are high. Pass rates on NVQ business administration at level 2 have risen substantially over the three years to 2001, to well above the national average. Although there has been some decline in the pass rate of the AVCE in business studies in 2000/01, the pass rate is still significantly above the national average. The pass rate on NVQ supervisory management, a programme for adults mainly provided on employers' premises, is very high. The low retention rate is due to redundancies. Across all courses, most retention rates are similar to, or above, the national averages. Training for key skills has not been implemented for modern apprentice programmes, which has prevented apprentices completing the modern apprenticeship framework. Retention rates on these programmes are also weak, but 28% of apprentices have achieved NVQ awards.
- 44. The standard of students' work is good and most make satisfactory or good progress towards their learning goals. The standard of written work is good. Folders and portfolios are well presented, organised and clearly indexed and, in a number of cases, make good use of photographs and ICT.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration and management, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	18	28	6
business		% retention	94	75	83
		% pass rate	100	71	100
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	85	67	55
(one year)		% retention	71	88	84
(one year)		% pass rate	75	68	78
NVQ business	2	No. of starts	43	54	27
administration	dministration	% retention	77	87	85
(one year)		% pass rate	72	73	83

AVCE business studies	3	No. of starts	46	45	41
		% retention	78	62	68
		% pass rate	72	89	82
Certificate in	3	No. of starts	46	33	37
management studies		% retention	70	82	86
		% pass rate	87	85	81
NVQ supervisory	3	No. of starts	54	56	59
management		% retention	47	43	61
(two year)		% pass rate	88	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

- 45. The quality of most teaching is good. Lessons are usually well planned. Most courses in college have appropriately detailed schemes of work, which link effectively to lesson plans. These schemes are adapted well to take account of the specific needs of individual students and their different learning styles. Lesson plans are evaluated regularly to improve planning. A wide and suitable range of teaching methods is used to motivate and maintain the interest of students. Teachers regularly check that students understand the work and, in college, detailed and constructive feedback helps students to improve and progress. The college ensures, through careful planning and analyses of occupational roles, that the jobs for students on employers' premises are appropriate for the NVQ qualification. The rapport between teachers and students is excellent, there are high levels of support and guidance from assessors and teachers, which are valued by students. ICT is not used sufficiently on full-time courses in college to aid teaching. All students on full-time and part-time college courses receive regular tutorials. Accounting students do not receive work-place assessment visits. Students based with employers do not receive full information on college facilities and services.
- 46. There is a lack of planned training and learning for modern apprentices. Individual learning plans for modern apprentices are unsatisfactory. Some modern apprentices do not receive regular reviews of their progress. There is no initial assessment of additional support needs for modern apprentices or for students on dedicated employer provision, and there is little accreditation of prior learning.
- 47. The standard of accommodation and resources on employers' premises and at the college is high. The college has received a Beacon Award for its call centre training school. Employers are supportive and enthusiastic. They provide good opportunities for students to collect evidence and gain experience, and to progress into or within employment. Teachers make effective use of a wide variety of good resources. Students can access college materials via the intranet. There is a wide range of programmes and qualifications to meet students' needs and local requirements. The college has well-established relationships with many organisations.
- 48. NVQ assessment and verification arrangements are poor. There is an over-reliance on personal reports and work products which are not authenticated. Company forms in NVQ portfolios are often left blank. Little consideration is given to students' individual assessment needs. There are some delays in formative assessments and most internal verification takes place at the end of a programme of study. In business administration, assessment does not take account of individual students' progress. Recording documents are ineffective. For college-based NVQ courses, the collection of evidence is based on simulated activities, which is contrary to national guidelines. Some internal verification documentation is not fully completed and feedback to assessors is too brief. There is no observation of assessors or candidates by internal verifiers in the work place. There are no internal verification sampling plans, and procedures are out of date.

Leadership and management

49. Managers in business administration, management and professional, set a clear direction to improve the pass and retention rates of students and the quality of teaching and learning. They are largely successful in achieving their objectives, except in some areas of retention and achievement on the modern apprentice programme. Management responsibilities are mostly clear, except for the modern apprentice programme. For example, accounting modern apprentices attend the college for off-the-job training, but no one takes responsibility for the provision of their key skills work or the planning of work-place assessments or reviews of their progress. There are too few opportunities for sharing good practice between sections. College part-time courses do not use the expertise and contacts of those responsible for courses on employers' premises. Managers have not addressed poor NVQ assessment and verification practices.

Information and	communication	technology
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Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Contributory grade for work-based learning is Unsatisfactory (grade 4)

Strengths

- · high pass rates on full-time courses
- good teaching
- good training on employers' premises
- high level of support for students.

Weaknesses

- poor standards of achievement on modern apprenticeship programmes
- some unsatisfactory teaching rooms.

Scope of provision

50. Most full-time courses are for students aged 16 to 18. Part-time courses are mainly for adults. Courses are available from foundation to level 3 including programmes leading to NVQ, AVCE, GNVQ, national certificates and diplomas and other vocational qualifications. Some 43% of courses is provided at the premises of employers and in local community centres. Modern apprentice provision in ICT is just over 1%. The inspection covered all full-time and part-time courses, provision on employers' premises and in the community, and the modern apprenticeship programme.

Achievement and standards

- 51. The pass rates for full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18 are high and are above the national averages. Pass rates for GNVQ intermediate IT have risen significantly between 1998/99 and 2000/01. Most pass rates for part-time courses are above the national average. The pass rate for the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) programme, has risen significantly from a very low figure in 1998/99, to above the national average in 2000/01. The pass rate for NVQ at level 2 using IT has declined sharply between 1998/99 and 2000/01. Most retention rates are similar to, or above, the national average. The retention rate on the integrated business technology (IBT) programme has remained very high for the three years to 2001 and is significantly above the national average. Standards of achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework in ICT are poor, at 15%. There has been no achievement of key skills qualifications by apprentices, but a number have achieved a NVQ.
- 52. Students' practical skills and theoretical knowledge are good. Project work by full-time students is imaginative. They use the Internet well to research projects and assignments. Students are punctual for lessons and attend regularly. Many students progress to higher-level courses at the college. Modern apprentices make good use of their work placements to collect evidence for their portfolios.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	585	624	524
(one year)		% retention	97	81	84
(One year)		% pass rate	36	59	63
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	42	41	41
		% retention	79	93	78
		% pass rate	79	87	88
IBT	2	No. of starts	24	167	76
		% retention	100	90	97
		% pass rate	62	44	67
NVQ using IT	2	No. of starts	47	26	14
(short)		% retention	94	72	93
(SHOT)		% pass rate	77	38	31
European computer	2	No. of starts	*	*	94
driving licence		% retention	*	*	98
		% pass rate	*	*	71
National certificate in	3	No. of starts	33	43	36

computer studies

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

Quality of education and training

- 53. Courses are well planned. Schemes of work are appropriately detailed and lesson plans are good. Teachers make evaluative comments on their lesson plans to improve their own performance. They make effective use of their experience to provide vocational relevance to lessons. Most teachers make good presentations, give clear explanations and use questions effectively to confirm that students understand the work. Teachers compile detailed profiles of their students and respond well to individual learning requirements. Assignments are planned to take account of the interests of students. Teachers provide good guidance for assignment work. The links between key skills and vocational teachers are good. In some evening classes, students have insufficient opportunities for practical work and some course units are inappropriate for their needs.
- 54. Teachers make effective use of good learning materials for full-time students. However, students in the local community centres have difficulty in understanding the workbooks. In most lessons, the use of IT helps to improve students' learning. The college intranet is used to provide lesson notes and details on assignments. Students can download programmes and information to use at home, including anti-virus software. Assignments are well designed, contain clear grading guidelines and are at an appropriate level for the students. Feedback to students is accurate, and comprehensive, and helps them to improve their work. Full-time students' progress is closely monitored. Reviews are well managed and target setting for individual students is good.
- 55. ICT equipment is continuously updated to reflect developments in local industry and to establish new ways of learning. Teachers are well qualified, or experienced IT practitioners working toward teaching qualifications. There is a good programme of staff development. Some of the computer rooms used for large groups of students are too small, and quickly overheat, affecting learning adversely. The well-equipped learning centres within employers' premises have up-to-date hardware and software. The college brings its own good mobile equipment to those employers without these resources. Computer equipment is adapted for students with a disability. The companies employing modern apprentices provide them with good training, work experience and opportunities for assessment.
- 56. Many adult students have good opportunities to learn new IT skills through a wide range of courses at several community centres, at college and in the learning centres at the premises of local employers. The location, pattern of attendance and the facilities offered are well suited to the students' requirements. In some cases, childcare facilities are available.
- 57. Support for students is good. Teachers have appropriately detailed knowledge of students' abilities, interests, social and home backgrounds. They use this comprehensive knowledge to improve rates of retention and patterns of behaviour. Incentives for attendance have been introduced. In many lessons, vocationally competent learning support teachers provide additional support. These teachers are well qualified to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a strong and effective tutorial system. Informal, friendly staff give the adult students, who have often left formal education early, the confidence to return to study.

Leadership and management

58. In most areas, managers provide an effective lead to ensure that good standards of teaching and achievement are maintained. Most quality assurance arrangements have been successful in improving pass rates. Where there are problems, action plans are prepared to address the issues involved. There is good e-mail communication. The management of the modern apprenticeship programme is not satisfactory. Managers fail to monitor the progress of apprentices effectively. The

^{*} course did not run

college has recently taken steps to resolve shortcomings by appointing an ICT co-ordinator.

Sports.	leisure	and trave	
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Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- high pass rates on GNVQ foundation and the national diploma course
- good teaching on GNVQ foundation and first diploma courses
- effective and responsive partnerships with employers
- good vocational skills of students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for GNVQ intermediate and advanced qualifications
- some ineffective management
- ineffective initial assessment of employer-based students
- lack of appropriate staff for employer-based provision.

Scope of provision

59. The college provides a broad range of full-time courses at levels 1 to 3, including a GNVQ foundation and intermediate in leisure and tourism, first and national diplomas in sports science, and AVCE in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism. Enrolment on these courses is mostly by students aged 16 to 18. There is significant provision based on employers' premises which includes a national NVQ programme in spectator control. Over 1,600 students have enrolled since

September 2001. There is a range of NVQs in sport and recreation from levels 1 to 3. In September 2001, 13 foundation modern apprentices in football coaching were recruited. Short courses are offered at levels 2 and 3 in leisure options. The inspection covered full-time and part-time courses, programmes provided in the college, on employers' premises and the modern apprenticeship programme.

Achievement and standards

60. In 2001, the pass rates for GNVQ foundation in leisure and tourism and the national diploma in sports science were very high and significantly above the national average. The standard of achievement for short course provision for the Welcome All, Host and Management qualification was outstanding and above the national average. The pass rate for the GNVQ advanced remained low for the three years from 1999. The pass rate for the GNVQ intermediate was low during the same period, apart from in 1999/2000. Retention rates declined on many courses in 2001, but most remained at, or close to, the national average with the exception of the advanced GNVQ course, which declined sharply between 1998/99 and 2000/01.

61. Many students and trainees have good practical skills and knowledge. Students on foundation and first diploma in sports science understand theory well and apply it effectively to practical tasks. The standard of their vocational skills is high. These students approached their studies with enthusiasm, maturity and confidence. Students on employer-based provision use their significant experience and knowledge of their vocational area well in training sessions.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sports, leisure and travel, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	10	9	12
leisure and tourism		% retention	80	89	67
		% pass rate	75	63	100
NVQ in spectator	2	No. of starts	85	21	201
control		% retention	100	100	73
		% pass rate	80	62	73
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	37	27	32
		% retention	78	67	77
		% pass rate	64	83	61
GNVQ advanced	3	No. of starts	33	25	36
leisure and tourism		% retention	85	75	56
		% pass rate	54	61	65
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	*	*	19
science (sport studies)		% retention	*	*	68
		% pass rate	*	*	100
Welcome All, Host and	3	No. of starts	*	*	130
Management		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	100

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

^{*} course did not run

Quality of education and training

- 62. The quality of teaching and learning for GNVQ foundation in leisure and tourism and the first diploma in sports science students is good. For these courses, teachers use a range of stimulating methods. Teachers address the variety of students' needs well. They pay particular attention to developing the specific vocational and learning skills of each student. Lessons are carefully planned. Some teachers fail to maintain students' interest. For example, in a leisure and tourism lesson, the teacher talked for most of the time, did not ask sufficient questions to check students' understanding or give them the chance to discuss and develop their knowledge.
- 63. The standard of training and teaching on employers' premises and for modern apprentices is inconsistent. Training for spectator control is mostly well structured and makes good use of the Football Association training materials to provide the relevant theory. In one session, football stewards discussed the appropriate procedure for undertaking a body search. They were able to share their experiences and colleagues undertaking training were provided with information to improve their future practice. However, one-to-one sessions on many courses run on employers' premises are ineffective. Trainees talked about their work in relation to objectives and targets. But teachers neither tested whether students really understood what they were talking about nor discussed theoretical aspects of the topic with them.
- 64. Assessment for full-time students is mostly well planned. The standard of feedback to students is, however, erratic. The more effective teachers provide clear detail on students' strengths and how work can be improved. Some feedback is insufficiently precise. Full-time students undertake initial assessment and guidance and many take up additional learning support. These students also receive effective support from their tutors. Students on the GNVQ foundation in leisure and tourism benefit from monitoring and frequent review. Often the extensive prior achievements and experiences of employer-based students is not taken into account at initial assessment. Some of these students have been guided to NVQ at a level lower than their ability warrants.
- 65. College-based teachers are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience. Many teachers and assessors for employer-based provision courses do not hold appropriate qualifications or have relevant experience. Teaching and learning resources are uneven in quality. There are effective displays on walls in sport and recreation base rooms and other specialist areas. Access to computers is good, but the use of information and learning technology (ILT) is underdeveloped. There are indoor and outdoor facilities on site. Equipment for sport is adequate. However, the sports hall has no heating or ventilation and was very cold at the time of inspection. There are no travel agency facilities.
- 66. Responsiveness to the needs of employers and students is good. Staff meet with an employers' consultative panel. This arrangement has many benefits, which include effective work placement for students and the use of business materials for case studies. Managers have good links with local and national employers. Teachers have created individual teaching, training and assessment materials to help students to learn, and employers to understand the content and level of the awards.

Leadership and management

67. The management of most courses provided on college premises is effective. Teams have a formal cycle of meetings, the outcomes of which are appropriately recorded. There are insufficient staff to deal with provision on employer-based programmes. Since September 2001, although this provision has grown significantly, there are no occupationally competent staff involved in the management of courses, the training of assessors or internal verification. There is only one internal verifier for all the spectator control provision. The college is addressing this shortcoming, but had not found a resolution at the time of the inspection. Quality assurance procedures do not address the issues relevant to employer-based programmes. Some course reviews fail to identify a sequence of low pass rate on, for example, the advanced GNVQ in leisure and tourism.

Health and social care

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Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most foundation and intermediate level courses
- good response to community needs
- · good range of resources.

Weaknesses

- some poor pass rates on GNVQ advanced courses
- failure of many students to take up learning support
- unsatisfactory arrangements for training in key skills.

Scope of provision

68. The college offers a range of courses from foundation to advanced level that includes: the GNVQ foundation courses in health and social care and childcare; GNVQ intermediate health and social care; certificate in childcare and education; and the AVCE in childcare and education. The AVCE has three separate options, one in health, another in early years, and a third in social care. All these courses for students aged 16 to 18 are full time. Part-time courses for adults largely focus on childcare courses from foundation to advanced level and include introductory courses in working with children and childminding, and an established certificate in session crèche work. Other childcare courses focus on pre-school practice and playwork. The college also offers the Certificate of the Institute of Welfare Officers and a new certificate in community mental health.

Achievement and standards

69. The retention and pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate level courses in health and social care have consistently exceeded the national averages for the three years to 2001, and have risen each year. During the same period pass rates on the certificate in sessional crèche work were also good; 100% retention and pass rates were achieved in two of the last three years. The certificate in pre-school practice has been above the national average in its first two years of

operation. In contrast, pass rates on the certificate in childcare and education course, declined from outstanding results in 1998/99, to well below the national average in 2000/01. Pass rates on advanced level courses are uneven. The diploma in nursery nursing is just above the national average, whereas the national diploma in childhood studies is just below. The national diploma in health studies has excellent retention rates, but the pass rate has fallen to well below the national average. Achievements on the GNVQ advanced are poor. Retention rates on the diploma in preschool practice have declined while pass rates have risen to the national average.

70. Standards of students' assessed work are satisfactory. The best work shows effective development of students' research and analytic skills. Contributions from students in some lessons are often thoughtful and perceptive. Evaluative skills are not so well developed, although the work of some foundation level students is impressive.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	17	28	11
health and social care		% retention	76	75	82
nealth and social care		% pass rate	77	76	100
Certificate in sessional	1	No. of starts	25	10	11
crèche work		% retention	100	100	64
Crecile Work		% pass rate	100	70	100
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	27	23	22
health and social care		% retention	85	91	91
		% pass rate	78	80	85
Certificate in childcare	2	No. of starts	13	17	22
and education		% retention	100	71	68
		% pass rate	92	67	60
GNVQ advanced in	3	No. of starts	16	24	25
health and social care		% retention	88	71	68
		% pass rate	42	82	53
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	19	22	21
childhood studies		% retention	68	77	81
		% pass rate	78	100	85
Diploma in nursery	3	No. of starts	28	27	11
nursing		% retention	71	89	82
		% pass rate	90	83	89
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	21	15	22
science (health studies)		% retention	95	93	91
		% pass rate	100	86	59

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

Quality of education and training

- 71. Lessons are well planned. Schemes of work are thorough and appropriately detailed. Standards of teaching and learning are good in many lessons. Teachers use imaginative approaches to engage and sustain students' interest. In one lesson, students learned about fractions by slicing up a Christmas cake according to how many guests they were entertaining. The teacher related this method to work in a nursery by using building blocks. In another lesson, the teacher combined expressive inputs on the elements of dance and its relationship to the curriculum and early years programme with individual and paired work by students. Teachers regularly checked that students understood the work. In some lessons, however, the teachers' presentations went on for too long and students became bored and listless. In others, teachers did not communicate the learning objectives and students found it difficult to contribute appropriately. In a few lessons, one section of the student group was allowed to dominate while other students' attention wandered.
- 72. Assessment is appropriate and submission dates are well planned. Marking is mostly accurate and teachers provide constructive and helpful feedback. First year students value the well-planned tutorial programme, which includes progress reviews and target setting. Tutors track students' progress thoroughly. They take a great deal of care to ensure that students are placed on the right course at enrolment. The introduction of a mentoring scheme for new students has proved effective in improving retention rates. Many of the students identified as needing additional learning support fail to take up the opportunities available.
- 73. The number of learning programmes for early years is increasing as a result of involvement with the Early Years Partnership. Some courses are provided in community locations. The college also provides a course in community mental health in response to local needs. The curriculum for full-time students is broadened by the addition of key skills training and the opportunity to take a GCSE, GCE AS subject or a GNVQ part award. Arrangements for work on key skills and the relationship to the main course of study are unsatisfactory. Many students find it difficult to cope with this additional work. Work experience is well planned and monitored and is a valuable part of the curriculum.
- 74. Teachers are well qualified academically and vocationally. The curriculum support worker and placement supervisors provide additional valued support. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution in the classroom. The resource centre is well stocked with books, journals and audiovisual resources. The programme area has its own additional resource bank and a well-equipped childcare centre.

Leadership and management

75. Course team leaders are conscientious in the management of courses. Communication between staff is good. Annual course reviews assess pass rate data thoroughly, but fail to address the distinctive nature of each course. The self-assessment report fails to identify some weaknesses. Equal opportunities issues are at the heart of the curriculum area and are taught effectively.

Visual and performing arts and media

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Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates
- much good teaching

- high standard of students' work
- well-designed and vocationally relevant assignments
- good progression.

Weaknesses

- over-long practical lessons for level 1 and level 2 students
- low attendance at key skills classes
- narrow curriculum in art and design.

Scope of provision

76. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in art and design and a small number of media courses. Courses in art and design are available at foundation, intermediate and advanced level and include: the GNVQ foundation and intermediate art and design; AVCE art and design; GNVQ intermediate media; and the AVCE media. There is a full-time adult access course in art and design. There are 150 full-time students in the arts area. Around 900 students are enrolled on adult community education programmes on a wide range of courses at numerous community venues.

Achievement and standards

- 77. Most pass rates are high; they are above the national average on many courses. In 2000/01, pass rates were 100% on a number of courses but retention rates varied. In 2000/01, the retention rate fell on the GNVQ foundation art and design course, but the pass rate rose slightly. Over the three years to 2001, retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate art and design course were consistently high and above the national average. The pass and retention rates for GCE A-level art have improved significantly and both reached 100%. From 1999 to 2001, the pass rates on the national diplomas in art and design and media were high, but the retention rates fluctuated. During the inspection, students were punctual, but, the average attendance at the lessons inspected was low at 69%. The attendance at key skills lessons was very poor at 23%.
- 78. Students' work is good. Their art work is colourful and exciting and is displayed extensively throughout the college. The student radio station is transmitted to the college refectory. Students' work is exhibited at a variety of community projects in and around Telford. Students have produced good and imaginative posters for a local fire and rescue service. There is good progression within the college. The range of courses enables students to progress from foundation through to

advanced level. Progression to HE is also good. In 2001, 95% of national diploma art students progressed to a related degree or higher national diploma (HND) programme. A high number of adult students starting on level 1 courses progress to higher-level courses at the college.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
National open college	1	No. of starts	115	118	140
network (NOCN)		% retention	97	91	81
(one year)		% pass rate	99	98	88
drawing and painting					
GNVQ	1	No. of starts	10	11	7
foundation art and		% retention	100	100	71
design		% pass rate	78	70	80
GNVQ	2	No. of starts	19	13	22
intermediate		% retention	95	85	95
intermediate		% pass rate	78	73	71
art and design					
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	*	7	8
media		% retention	*	100	100
media		% pass rate	*	57	100
Business technology	3	No. of starts	18	21	18
education council (BTEC) national		% retention	78	62	76
diploma in media		% pass rate	93	100	100
GCE A-level art	3	No. of starts	52	47	11
(one year)		% retention	77	77	100
(One year)		% pass rate	75	65	100
BTEC national	3	No. of starts	17	26	24
diploma in general		% retention	82	69	96
art and design		% pass rate	100	83	100
art and design					

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

Quality of education and training

79. Teaching is good. Schemes of work and lesson plans are good. In their introduction to lessons, teachers make the objectives clear. Lessons are lively, experimental and challenging. Teachers are good at developing students' ability to experiment with different techniques to improve their skills and understanding. Teachers explain tasks thoroughly. They make good use of students' own experiences to improve their understanding of a particular topic. The use of IT in media is good. Timetables in the curriculum area are mainly built up in three-hour practical studio sessions. This

^{*} course did not run

length of session gives good and appropriate opportunities for development among advanced students, but is too long for some level 1 and level 2 students. For example, in GNVQ foundation art and design, students worked well at the start of lessons, but lost interest as the lessons progressed. Teachers give significant help to students outside the formal lessons. Students consider that teachers support them well. They are less satisfied with the help provided from student services. Tutorials are helpful and informative, but students' attendance at them is low. Students who require assistance so that they can cope with a disability are well supported.

- 80. Well-designed industrial assignments are used on full-time courses to give realistic work experience. For example, media students are currently involved with a television company in making five-minute bulletins on the sunrise; these have been broadcast on local television. In media, there is good use of computer-based recording of students' work which includes, feedback, grading and action planning. Students are able to receive advice by e-mail from the tutor. Students' work is regularly assessed and often includes peer assessment. Grading is accurate and in line with awarding body requirements.
- 81. The curriculum in art and design is too narrow. Work is focused on fine art. There is little development in design, in, for example, graphics or textiles. There is insufficient specialist development of design options for students. Second-year, advanced level students are offered the opportunity to specialise, but still produce fine art-based work. Students are also offered a range of additional activities to add breadth to their programmes. They can take further qualifications such a GCE AS art, media, film studies, GCSE media, City and Guilds photography, first aid and health and safety. These courses are available to students on any college course, but are particularly relevant to arts students. Art and design and media students take part in numerous study tours and visits as part of their course. For example, art students visit Paris and Amsterdam to view great works of art to improve their understanding of the artistic process.
- 82. The specialist facilities are good and used effectively. Students take full advantage of the wide range of equipment and learning materials. Teachers make good use of space in the open-plan studios to improve students' learning and attainment. This was an area of weakness at the last inspection. The media studios are well planned and used effectively by students. Some rooms in community centres are not suitable for art activity. Staff are well qualified and there is a good level of technician support.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are good. Course teams work effectively together and share good practice. Communication is good. Courses are well planned and organised and course files are well documented. Additional permanent staff have recently been appointed to meet a growth in numbers. The planning of some teaching timetables fails to meet the needs of students.

Teacher training and access to higher education



Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Strengths

- high pass rates on access to nursing and teacher education courses
- good teaching

well-managed courses.	
Weaknesses	
low retention rate on the access certificate in HE	
some poor attendance and late arrival on access courses	
some unsatisfactory accommodation.	
Scope of provision	
84. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time access to HE and teacher education courses. There are options available in art and design, nursing and health, science, humanities an teacher training. At the time of the inspection, 266 students were enrolled on access courses. Teacher education courses, including the City and Guilds 7307 further and adult education teachers' certificate, are offered during the day, in the evening and by distance learning. Short courses for school-based classroom assistants and FE learning support staff are also available. At the time of the inspection, there were about 700 students enrolled, with further enrolments planned for later in the academic year. In 2000/01, about 30% of the students had no qualifications on entry to the course and a further 10% had low point scores at GCSE.	b t
Achievement and standards	
85. Overall, the achievements of students are good. Pass rates over the two years to 2001, on the access to nursing and health course, rose significantly and were well above the national average, although retention rates declined. The pass and retention rates for City and Guilds 7321 certificate	

in learning support are outstanding. The pass rate for City and Guilds 7307 further and adult education teachers' certificate rose sharply between 1999/2000 and 2000/01, but retention rates declined. Although the numbers were small, the pass rates on the access to science programme were low. Progression to HE from the access course is satisfactory. A significant number of students who are awarded the City and Guilds 7321 certificate in learning support find permanent

high standard of students' work

thorough marking of students' work

high level of academic and personal support for students

work in schools, and many progress to teacher training courses.

86. Students produce work of a high standard. Portfolios of work are well organised and presented. Students are articulate and perceptive and contribute effectively to class discussions. Their presentational skills are good. Students on teacher education courses develop good professional skills, while access students acquire the study skills and motivation necessary to succeed in HE. Students make good progress based on their qualifications at entry to their course. Late arrival by a small number of students disrupted learning in a few lessons. Attendance was poor at some lessons during the inspection.

A sample of retention and pass rates in teacher training and access to higher education, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Access to nursing and	3	No. of starts	*	33	39
health		% retention	*	100	78
(one and two year)		% pass rate	*	78	97
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	*	11	13
humanities		% retention	*	100	69
		% pass rate	*	73	100
Access certificate in HE	3	No. of starts	147	64	**
(and and two year)		% retention	61	56	**
(one and two year)		% pass rate	72	78	**
City and Guilds 7321	3	No. of starts	44	44	53
certificate in learning support		% retention	91	84	98
(one year)		% pass rate	100	100	100
City and Guilds 7307	3	No. of starts	*	47	199
further and adult education teachers		% retention	*	96	87
certificate		% pass rate	*	80	93
(one year)					

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

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching is good. Schemes of work are appropriately detailed and lessons are carefully planned. In the most effective lessons, teachers set challenging work which extends and develops students' skills and understanding. Students respond positively and enthusiastically to the challenge. On access courses, teachers bring together theory and practical work effectively. In teacher education lessons, teachers draw on their considerable subject knowledge and teaching experience to devise stimulating activities to engage students and develop their expertise. Students work well on their own and in groups and are encouraged by their teachers to learn from each other.

^{*} course did not run

^{**} data unavailable

In a few lessons, the teachers did not maintain students' interest and did not extend their knowledge of the subject. In a few instances, class time was not used effectively. For example, in an access lesson, the task was insufficiently demanding and students who had completed the activity spent time chatting while waiting for the teacher to continue.

88. The use of a wide range of resources, including well-designed worksheets and handouts, maintains students' interest and helps them to learn. Teachers prepare students well for paired and group work, and encourage independent learning where appropriate. Teachers are effective in developing students' capacity for making and receiving constructive criticism. Most teaching accommodation is satisfactory. However, some students have lessons in poorly heated and dilapidated temporary classrooms. Some groups are allocated to inappropriate rooms. For example, an access group was required to participate in group work and discussion in a lecture theatre, while a group of trainee teachers were in a hot and cramped room with no space for the group work that had been planned.

89. The well-designed assessments provide clear aims, objectives and criteria. They show students what they have to do to make good progress. Teachers monitor students' work thoroughly. Students receive regular and constructive feedback on their progress and on what needs to be achieved to improve. Students are provided with high levels of academic and personal support from teachers. Students appreciate the time given by teachers.

Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management are good. Courses are well managed by staff who have specific co-ordinating responsibility. Managers set targets for enrolments, retention and pass rates and monitor progress against these targets. Communication across the areas of learning is effective. Students benefit from enthusiastic and highly committed course leaders and teachers who work well together. Course teams meet regularly and deal effectively with issues raised at team meetings.

Basic skills

Overall provision in this area is outstanding (grade 1)

Strengths

- the high standard of teaching
- high achievement of individual learning plans
- good accommodation
- comprehensive range of teaching resources
- effective use of IT across all programmes

• thorough and comprehensive assessment.

Weaknesses

insufficient evening provision.

Scope of provision

91. The college offers a broad range of part-time courses on basic skills, which are available, either on the main college site, at employers' premises or in the community. College-based provision includes drop-in workshops and classes for adult basic skills, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), key skills and additional support for students on other college courses. The college has an established course for basic skills in the workplace, which is taught on employers' premises. Other off-site provision includes family literacy programmes and courses in 25 community centres. At the time of the inspection, there were just over 1,100 enrolments, 293 of which were ESOL or English as a foreign language (EFL) students. Of the total, 1,051 were adults and 67 were aged under 19. Most courses take place during the day. Evening classes are available on the college's main site.

Achievement and standards

92. Most students work towards individual learning goals or gain a profile of achievement. The college has developed strong and effective systems to verify these achievements internally. In addition, students have the opportunity to achieve other qualifications in, for example, IT and basic food hygiene. Eleven certificates are available to learners in literacy and numeracy. Pass rates for external qualifications are high.

Quality of education and training

- 93. The standard of teaching is high; much is very good or outstanding. Lessons are well managed and have a strong purposeful atmosphere. Students are fully engaged in their learning. Schemes of work and lesson plans are very thorough and consistent across all courses. Students have well planned individual programmes of work and clear learning targets. Teachers establish students' preferred learning styles and take these into account when planning lessons. They make effective use of ICT across all programmes to give appropriate variety and interest to the students' work. There is a thorough and comprehensive assessment process. Progression towards learning goals is carefully monitored and the destination of each individual is carefully recorded. Teachers are well qualified. Several have helped develop software and assessment materials for national programmes. Teachers have worked with the Race Equality Council to recruit community basic skills mentors and set up citizenship courses.
- 94. Accommodation and resources on the main college site and in the community venues are of a high standard. There is a comprehensive provision of teaching resources which includes an excellent range of books and a large number of computers. A wide range of software is available and is used by students for improving grammar, spelling, word processing and numeracy. Additional equipment is available to support students who are hearing or visually impaired. The college has five learning centres which it runs in partnership with local community groups. The accommodation and equipment is good. Free childcare facilities are available for children of students attending these centres and for students on many college-based courses. Accommodation in employers' premises is good and in small community centres, is often bright and attractive. Resources taken by teachers to outreach centres are comprehensive and include portable computers. Some of the vocationally relevant materials for full-time courses are unsatisfactory, and a few teaching and

learning materials are of poor quality.

95. The college has an effective, but small, ESOL provision which is offered both on the main college site and in community venues. The ESOL team has designed short courses to suit the needs of the local community, for example, an ESOL course which led to a basic food hygiene certificates for women who cooked in the local Sikh temple. Some 20% of the students are on employer-based or family literacy programmes. The courses are well established and are of a high standard. Short courses are also provided on employers' premises. The college is developing specialist vocationally based assessments for these courses. An imaginative family numeracy programme has recently been introduced. It is designed to engage young mothers in the development of learning materials for their toddlers and give them the encouragement to improve their own numeracy skills. There were no evening classes running in the community at the time of the inspection. These have been run in the past, but have been closed due to problems over security and concern for the safety of students. The college does, however, offer evening class provision at its Wellington campus together with Saturday morning workshops.

96. All full-time students, including those on level 3 courses, have initial screening to identify their learning needs. Students discuss their options for support with their tutor and are then referred to the learning support service. Of the 672 students screened, 284 were identified as needing support. In most cases, a support assistant working with students in the classroom gives this support. Nearly 250 students on 26 different courses are supported in this way. Basic skills students also take college-designed diagnostic assessments for literacy and numeracy. These identify learners' current levels of ability and future learning goals against the national standards in literacy and numeracy. The process is thorough, comprehensive, well documented and carefully monitored. Additional support is available in classes in the community; for example, a signer supports deaf students. All students are allocated a personal tutor, including those attending drop-in workshops.

Leadership and management

97. Basic skills courses within the college are well managed. There are clear lines of responsibility. The basic skills action plan is carefully monitored. New teachers are supported through a mentor system and there is a comprehensive and attractively produced handbook for tutors. The college has taken a positive role in addressing the needs of the community for basic skills courses and it is the main provider in the area. It has identified wards in Telford with the highest levels of need for basic skills and has opened three new learning centres within these wards. The college has also looked at the geographical spread of its community classes to ensure that all areas are well served by basic skills courses.

Part D: College data



Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	22	33
2	35	42
3	41	21



4/5	1	3
Other	1	1
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	1,488	4,412	23
Agriculture	24	22	0
Construction	1	123	0
Engineering	331	2,397	10
Business	531	2,503	12
Hotel and catering	307	3,465	15
Health and community care	260	824	4
Art and design	222	480	3
Humanities	1,040	4,130	20
Basic education	322	3,128	13
Total	4,526	21,484	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 3: Retention and achievement

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Level	Retention and pass rate	Retention and pass rate Completion year					
(Long Courses)		16-18			19+		
		1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000
1	Starters excluding transfers	579	533	958	2,421	3,406	3,220
	Retention rate (%)	91	91	83	93	87	78
	National average (%)	81	80	80	80	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	87	86	68	73	73	86
	National average (%)	59	62	66	62	63	69
2	Starters excluding	647	866	828	1,555	1,831	2,179

	transfers						
	Retention rate (%)	87	91	89	93	87	87
	National average (%)	76	76	77	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	61	67	68	82	76	79
	National average (%)	63	62	68	66	65	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	547	522	694	1,328	1,486	2,423
	Retention rate (%)	80	88	82	87	86	82
	National average (%)	77	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	74	82	69	77	76	75
	National average (%)	71	72	73	64	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	21	15	4	277	338	301
	Retention rate (%)	90	100	*	87	84	70
	National average (%)	83	84	80	84	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	80	92	*	69	71	83
	National average (%)	64	65	70	58	61	60

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

Sources of information:

- 1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.
- 2. College rates for 1997/8 1998/9: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.
- 3. College rates for 1999/2000 and 2000/01: provided by the College in spring and autumn 2001.

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level

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Courses	Te	No of		
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	sessions observed
Level 3 (advanced)	73.8	24.6	1.6	61
Level 2 (intermediate)	65.5	24.1	10.4	58

^{*} too few students to provide a valid calculation

Level 1 (foundation)	77.8	18.5	3.7	27
Other sessions	77.3	18.2	4.5	22
Totals	72.0	22.6	5.4	168

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