



Wakefield College

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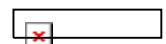
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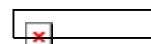
Basic information about the college



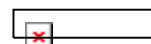
Name of college:	Wakefield College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Heather MacDonald
Address of college:	Wakefield College Margaret Street Wakefield

	West Yorkshire WF1 2DH
Telephone number:	01924 789789
Fax number:	01924 789340
Chair of governors:	Peter Claydon
Unique reference number:	130549
Name of reporting inspector:	John Phipps HMI
Dates of inspection:	4-8 February 2002

Part A: Summary

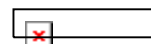


Information about the college



Wakefield College is a general further education (FE) college serving the Wakefield Metropolitan District and adjacent communities. Its mission is 'to provide the very best opportunities for everyone to learn and succeed'. There are three main sites: one in the city centre; a second about one and a half miles from the centre, and the third eight miles away at Castleford. In addition, there are 39 community centres where the college offers programmes, often in partnership with other organisations. At the time of the inspection, the college had enrolled 14,400 students, 80% of whom lived in the Wakefield District. Over three-quarters of the students were over 19 years of age. Courses are offered in most curriculum areas. About 20% of the courses are at foundation and pre-foundation level, 25% at intermediate level and a 33% at advanced level. The remainder consists of higher education (HE) and leisure courses. In 2000/01, 20% of the learners were full time and 80% part time. Of the 18 schools in the city, 5 have sixth forms. Within 25 miles of the college, there is a sixth form college at Pontefract and FE colleges at Barnsley, Dewsbury, Doncaster and Leeds. Wakefield District has a population of about 310,000. The unemployment rate ranges between 1.7% and 7.0%; the average of 3.1% is slightly below the national rate. The district comes 62nd out of the 354 most disadvantaged areas in the index of local deprivation of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Some 39% of the adult population has a low, or very low, level of numeracy and about 17% has a poor level of literacy. The main employers are working in the fields of public administration, education and health, distribution and hotel industries. Manufacturing industries, although small in terms of the size of the workforce, remain important locally. The proportion of students aged 16 to 18 gaining five A* to C grades in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations was 44.8% in 2001, approximately 5 percentage points below the national average.

How effective is the college?



The college is highly effective in delivering programmes to students at the college and in the community. Inspectors judged teaching and students' achievements as good in seven curriculum areas and satisfactory in seven. One curriculum area, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ESOL, was judged to be outstanding. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- many pass rates above national averages
- much good teaching
- well-kept premises and good equipment
- wide and appropriate range of courses
- good opportunities for progression
- effective curriculum and pastoral support
- effective management of the curriculum
- extensive and effective partnerships with community groups.

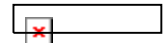
What should be improved?

- teaching across the full ability range in some classes
- poor retention rates
- work experience for students and staff
- provision for student involvement in enrichment activities

- accuracy and use of centrally held information on students' performance
- college's financial status.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

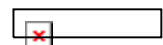


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Satisfactory. Practical lessons are well planned. Teachers do not check sufficiently that students are understanding the work. Retention and pass rates are good on electrical installation and construction plant courses, but poor on many building craft courses. Adult students attain good standards.
Engineering - general	Good. Teaching is good. Students reach high levels of competence in practical skills. There is a wide range of courses. The retention and pass rates since 1999 have been above national averages. There is some poor accommodation for theory-based lessons and poor information and communications technology (ICT) facilities in some engineering classrooms.
Engineering - motor vehicle	Satisfactory. There is a wide range of courses which are well taught by experienced staff. On-course support for students is effective, but there are some poor retention and pass rates. Accreditation of prior learning and work experience is not always effectively managed.
Business	Good. There are good courses in business, management and professional studies. Students achieve well and enjoy their work. Teachers check carefully that students are making appropriate progress. They give additional help outside lessons to students who are falling behind. Retention rates have declined on a few courses.
Computing and information and communications technology	Good. The full-time vocational courses are well managed. Teams of staff design and plan courses effectively. Pass rates and retention rates are good. Students progress very well at all levels. Resources for teaching and learning are good.
Computing and information technology applications	Good. Much of the teaching and the work of students are good. There is a wide range of good and appropriate learning materials. Teachers give effective support to individual students. Some students do not achieve their qualifications within the agreed time.

Sport, travel and tourism	Satisfactory. Teaching is effective in most lessons on courses in sport, travel and tourism. Most retention and pass rates are good. Leadership and teamwork are good in travel and tourism courses, but less effective in sports-related programmes.
Hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapy	Good. There is good teaching and effective learning in practical lessons. The standard of practical work produced by students is good. There is some unsatisfactory teaching and less effective learning in theory lessons. Although many retention and pass rates are good, there are unsatisfactory retention rates on hairdressing courses. Salons are well equipped and maintained.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Most teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. Target setting is effective and motivates students. Several courses have good pass rates but some have poor retention rates. Managers are very committed to improving standards and are making many appropriate changes.
Childcare	Satisfactory. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some students attain very well at foundation level. Staff help students to learn effectively and involve them fully in the assessment of their work. There are high pass rates on many courses, but poor retention rates on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2.
Performing arts and music	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on full-time courses. Retention rates are improving. The quality of the teaching is very uneven. There is some good teaching and effective learning in dance and drama, but some weaker teaching in music and theatre. Students enjoy their courses and relish the opportunities to perform.
Visual arts	Satisfactory. Pass rates on the level 3 art and design course are very good, but some retention rates are poor. Students' practical work is of a high standard. Practical workshops and IT facilities are good, but some accommodation is cramped and unkept. There are effective quality assurance procedures. There are insufficient opportunities for adult learners.
Humanities	Good. Teaching is good or very good. Many students aged 16 to 18 are achieving better results than had been predicted on the basis of their GCSE scores. Effective managers and teachers have improved the provision and are trying to improve the low retention rates.
Foundation studies - basic skills	Good. Teaching and learning are good in a well-managed programme area, which is effectively responding to students' needs. Learning support in basic English and mathematics is raising students' achievements. There are good retention and pass rates on adult community programmes. Some feedback to students on their progress is ineffective.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ESOL	Outstanding. Teaching is well planned, appropriately demanding, challenging and effective. Students' work is of a high standard. Retention and pass rates are good, and students progress well to higher level courses. Resources to support teaching and learning are excellent. The leadership and management of the curriculum area are highly effective.

How well is the college led and managed?



restructured managerial responsibilities. Faculty and programme managers are well aware of their responsibility for improving standards, and carry out their duties well. Self-assessment processes have been strengthened and contribute to improved performance. Significant investment has further improved the accommodation. Governors display high levels of commitment to the achievement of the college's mission. Together with managers, they set a clear direction for the college. The quality of the provision in the curriculum areas inspected ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. Most teaching is good or satisfactory. Pass rates on many courses have risen since 1996 and are now well above national averages for FE colleges. Retention rates in many subjects are low and targets have not been met. There have been significant fluctuations in the financial position of the college; there was a large funding unit shortfall in 2000/01. Effective partnerships have resulted in good community provision.

To what extent is the provision of the college educationally and socially inclusive?

Students receive good advice and guidance about the opportunities that are available to them at the college. They are well supported by personal tutors and teachers. Staff and governors are committed to the college's mission, which reflects the college's desire to be an inclusive institution. Teachers and managers focus effectively on helping each individual student to learn and to make appropriate progress. Students are assessed on entry and individual targets are negotiated from the start. Their progress is closely monitored through regular reviews. Additional support sessions benefit students who need more help with their learning. Advice on progression opportunities is good, and many students take advantage of the opportunities to progress to higher level courses within the college. The college draws its students from an extensive area and a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of students enrolling from minority ethnic groups is greater than the proportion of these groups within the local community. The college has an effective equal opportunities policy. Some action has been taken to address the uneven distribution of minority ethnic students across curriculum areas.

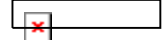
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Potential students are well informed of the programmes available and the entry requirements for specific courses. Initial assessment of students' additional learning needs is effective. However, some students identified as requiring this additional help fail to take up the support offered. The college recognises the value of on-course support for students and commits considerable resources to this service. For example, financial and welfare issues are identified very early, in some cases, during the initial interviews with a potential student. For students with problems, expert advice and guidance in these and other fields are readily available. A team of support workers gives effective on-course additional support. There is excellent support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of induction to the college for students and of their subsequent tutorials varies significantly. Some students receive a much higher standard of service than others.

Students' views of the college

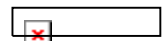
is presented below:

What students like about the college?



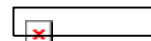
- caring teachers, generous with their time
- effective on-course support
- wide range of appropriately timed courses
- friendly, relaxed atmosphere
- respect for positive action on students' views
- well-maintained buildings and some excellent resources.

What they feel could be improved?



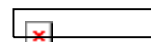
- some inappropriate accommodation
- shortage of up-to-date equipment
- relevance of some key skills teaching.

Other information

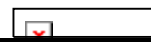


The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what action it will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors must agree the plan and send copies to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

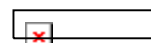


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	60	31	9
19+ and WBL*	81	17	2
Learning 16-18	58	33	9
19+ and WBL	80	20	0

Key: Inspectors grade three aspects of lessons: teaching, learning and attainment. The range of grades includes: Excellent (Grade 1), Very Good (Grade 2), Good (Grade 3), Satisfactory (Grade 4), Unsatisfactory (Grade 5), Poor (Grade 6) and Very Poor (Grade 7).

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Wakefield College has a wide range of courses that covers all of the Learning and Skills Council's areas of learning. Most courses can be studied on a full-time or part-time basis. Work-based training is offered primarily in construction, engineering, business, hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapies. Retention rates for the college as a whole have declined and are at, or slightly below, national averages. Pass rates have improved substantially and are now above the average for the sector. Targets for retention and achievement are set on a college-wide basis. Targets set in 1999/2000 were, in many cases, below rates achieved the previous year. In 2001, more demanding targets were set, but a number of them were not reached.

16-18 year olds

2. Approximately two thirds of students aged 16 to 18 are studying on courses at levels 1 and 2. The numbers starting on courses at these levels have increased by about 15 percentage points since 1999. Approximately 45% of students are studying science and humanities based subjects. The retention rate at level 1 is at the national average, but at level 2, it has fallen below the national

figures. On level 3 courses, the retention rate has remained close to national averages. Pass rates improved consistently and substantially in 2000. For example, between 1998 and 2000, the pass rate at level 1 increased from 45% to 74%, at level 2 from 56% to 78% and at level 3 from 73% to 80%. All of these rates are now well above the national average for FE colleges.

3. The number of students studying General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) subjects fell by 45% between 1998 and 2000. Over this period, the retention rate declined by ten percentage points whilst the pass rate increased by five points. Overall, between 1999 and 2001, students steadily improved their level of achievement at GCE A level. On average, however, the grades achieved had barely reached the level predicted for them based on their GCSE scores on entry. The number of students studying GCSE subjects at the college has remained at about the same level. Retention rates have declined slightly whilst pass rates have improved considerably.

4. Considerable numbers of students are on GNVQ or GNVQ precursor courses, such as British Technology Education Council (BTEC) diploma courses. GNVQ foundation courses have small numbers of students, but both retention and pass rates have remained at high levels. Between 1998 and 2000, GNVQ intermediate courses maintained high retention rates, and pass rates have improved from 59% to 69%. Over the same period, retention rates on GNVQ advanced level courses improved to 82% and pass rates improved slightly. Students who complete BTEC national diploma courses generally succeed, for example, in 2000 nearly 90% of these students passed their course.

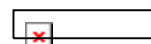
5. Work-based learning that is directly under the control of the college involves small numbers of students mainly on advanced modern apprenticeships. These courses have not been running long enough for any conclusions to be drawn on retention or pass rates.

Adult learners

6. Many adults study on science and humanities courses. However, there are also large numbers on business, health and community care, art and design, and basic education courses. Two thirds of the adult students are on level 1 and level 2 courses. Retention rates have declined over the three years from 1998 and are now below national averages. Retention rates on short courses have also declined from 96% to 86% in the same period. Pass rates have improved and are now well above the national averages for FE colleges. The best improvement was at level 2, where pass rates rose from 61% in 1998 to 76% in 2000.

7. Large numbers of adults students take short courses run by the college. Over three-quarters of the students on short courses study at level 1. The retention rate on these courses dropped from 91% to 84% between 1999 and 2000, but the pass rate improved from 64% to 86% over the same period.

Quality of education and training



8. Teaching and learning were graded by inspectors in 229 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 68% of the lessons observed, satisfactory in 26 % and less than satisfactory in 7%. Some good teaching was observed in all the areas of learning, but the most effective teaching was in humanities, computing applications and foundation programmes.

9. Most teachers are qualified to degree level and 92% have a teaching qualification. However, although most staff have up-to-date commercial experience, some do not. Part-time staff are well supported. Teachers are knowledgeable and have good technical expertise. Staff/student relations are good and conducive to learning. Teachers know their students well and readily encourage them to succeed. Extra support is willingly offered and is appreciated by students who quickly develop the

confidence to contribute to classroom discussions. Overall, students display a high degree of commitment to their studies.

10. Lessons are generally well planned. Good schemes of work identify the teaching methods to be used, the resources needed and the nature and extent of students' involvement. Most lesson plans have clear objectives and identify suitable activities to promote learning and hold students' interest. The quality of handouts and other teaching materials is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers regularly check that students understand the work. They set tasks that match students' differing abilities. For example, most classes on IT applications are particularly well structured to meet the individual needs of the students. In a well-organised computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) evening course for adults, all learners were able to get straight down to work on individually planned programmes. In the more advanced theoretical lessons, teachers paid good attention to the development of the language, concepts and skills that are essential for making informed critical judgements. Staff frequently employ imaginative, effective, step-by-step methods to overcome the poor literacy skills of many students. Lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are sensitively managed. Teachers succeed in helping students to think carefully about their behaviour and their effect on others.

11. In the less effective lessons, insufficient consideration is given to the needs of individual students in a group. Students' interest is then lost. For example, where students at levels 2 and 3 were taught together, teaching activities often failed to ensure that sufficient and appropriate demands were made on level 3 students. Where the teaching was geared to the slowest learners, the momentum of these lessons was too slow. Lack of opportunities for work experience in several vocational areas restricts students' ability to relate their studies to the world of work. The effectiveness of key skills training delivery depends upon the commitment of individual teachers. Students and some staff attach insufficient importance to work on key skills and the quality of the teaching is very uneven.

12. The college has invested significantly in good specialist accommodation and resources. However, some accommodation has been poorly planned. For example, some groups are in classrooms that are too small for them or are in rooms where it is difficult to move the furniture to enable group work or one-to-one tuition to take place. Some of the book stock is dated and there are insufficient copies of useful texts. The college works closely in partnership with local agencies to aid planning and make the provision more cost effective. Programmes in performing arts, motor vehicle, hair and beauty, construction, sport, travel and tourism and childcare are well equipped. Basic skills workshops have excellent resources. Community centres have good IT facilities. There is good access to most areas of the college for students with restricted mobility. Reception and communal areas are welcoming and well maintained. Most teaching rooms are in good decorative order and have a clear subject identity. In most cases, classrooms provide sufficient space, which when used flexibly, provides for a range of learning activities. Good use is made of learning centres. There is good administrative and technical support for teachers.

13. The college has a carefully planned IT infrastructure. A large range of applications and tools has been developed to provide information for students and staff. Good IT resources are available in most areas of learning. IT training for staff has long been a priority at the college and most now have good IT skills.

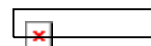
14. Strategies for improving retention and pass rates have led to a more thorough assessment of students' performance. Effective diagnostic screening identifies the basic skills needs of all full-time students. Learning support is then arranged for those identified as needing further help. Performance targets are negotiated with them based on their average GCSE scores on entry. These targets are then included in the students' individual learning plan. Progress against these targets is systematically monitored each term. Most assessment of students' written work is thorough and constructive. Most courses use cover sheets to indicate the level of achievement against a set of predetermined criteria. The quality of the written feedback on students' work is especially good in some subjects, such as psychology and business. Data on students' progress are recorded systematically in most curriculum areas. Recording is particularly effective for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All full-time students receive formal reports and parents of students aged 16 to 18 are invited to consultation evenings. Prior learning and basic skills needs

of part-time students are not routinely assessed on entry.

15. Good opportunities for progression are a feature of most programme areas, including construction, engineering, performing arts and visual arts. A number of these schools have established a clear qualification framework that leads through to higher national certificate and higher national diploma programmes. For example, there are good progression routes for students on travel and tourism courses from level 2 to level 4. However, there is no discrete entry or level 1 provision for sports students. An effective pre-foundation programme, introduced for students with basic skills needs, helps them tackle a level 1 vocational course. There is good progression through General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) routes to HE in specialist IT. A new foundation degree has recently been introduced in multimedia. A successful and expanding range of community-based programmes is offered in 39 outreach centres. The college provided Learndirect to 641 students in 2001. It has developed some imaginative provision for long-term unemployed adults. Liaison with schools is effective. There is a good range of provision for those with severe, moderate and mild learning difficulties. A wide range of basic skills provision is available in a variety of campus and community locations. Many programmes have flexible arrangements and offer courses with a choice of attendance patterns. Enrichment opportunities are underused. Some students are not able to take part in the enrichment programme because of timetabling difficulties. Work placements are not always available for students who would benefit from them.

16. The college recognises the importance that successful guidance and support services make in ensuring the success of individual students. Students' support and guidance are well organised and co-ordinated centrally. Students' support needs, including financial and welfare advice, are identified early using a variety of methods, for example, a comprehensive initial assessment, self-identification opportunities and referrals by tutors. Often, students' needs are identified before they enrol at the college. Learning support workers take part in the reviews of potential students while they are still at school. Additional learning support is effective. In the best examples, learning support tutors work closely with teachers to plan learning activities. A particular strength is the successful development and deployment of a team of dedicated support workers. However, learning support is not sufficiently promoted for students of all abilities. Students with learning disabilities receive excellent support. There are procedures for the provision of an induction and tutorial entitlement for all students. However, in practice, the quality of tutorials varies considerably. Some students receive far more than the minimum entitlement, whilst others do not get sufficient effective tutorial support. The self-assessment report recognised this weakness. Childcare provision is available at the college and at private nurseries. A college youth worker supports the student union in the organisation of activities such as international visits, student elections and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. One of the youth workers also supports students and their families in the community.

Leadership and management



17. Leadership and management are good. College managers provide a clear direction for the college. The management structure was changed in 1999, when eight academic faculties were established. The faculty structure provides a good framework for the management of the college's work across a number of sites. Staff feel well informed. Teamwork is strong in many areas. However, there is insufficient sharing of good teaching practice amongst staff.

18. Quality assurance procedures are well established and effective. Staff understand the framework and are committed to the success of quality assurance activities. Lesson observations are carried out regularly and are used to identify staff development needs. However, in some curriculum areas, the grade profile of observations did not accord with the profile of grades established by the inspectors. The proportion of lessons judged to be good or outstanding during the inspection was higher than that obtained during the inspection in 1996. The college makes strenuous efforts to obtain and analyse students' views on the quality of teaching. The course

review process is thorough. Action plans arising from the reviews are monitored regularly. The self-assessment process involves all staff and governors. Quality assurance processes for work-based learning are less effective. There is insufficient attention to assuring the quality of on-the-job training.

19. In addition to the targets set at college level, course teams set targets for retention and pass rates. Pass rates have improved since 1998 and have exceeded targets and national levels in many cases. However, college targets for retention rates have not been met. Low retention rates were identified during the last inspection and remain an issue for the college. New procedures were introduced in 2000. Data indicate they are beginning to have an impact in improving rates.

20. Details of the college's comprehensive equal opportunities policy are made widely available to staff and students. The policy is monitored regularly. Recruitment, achievement and retention data relating to gender, ethnicity and age are collected and used by course teams to aid planning. Equal opportunities issues are promoted well in most curriculum areas, but not given enough attention in work-based learning. The complaints procedure is well used and effective. Complaints are investigated and acted upon quickly. Clear records are kept of action taken and senior managers receive monthly reports of outcomes.

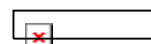
21. The system of professional review is effective and identifies the staff development needs of individuals. Staff development activities to improve teaching and learning and to consider equal opportunities issues have been well attended. Training for managers is effective in giving them the skills needed for their role. Procedures for the induction of new members of staff are good. Mentors effectively help new teachers to settle into their role. In some curriculum and occupational areas, there has been insufficient updating of industrial or commercial experience for teachers.

22. Governors display high levels of commitment to the college, to its mission and to the local community. They are appropriately involved in setting the college's strategic direction. Their knowledge of the local community and their breadth of experience have assisted the college in meeting local needs and in developing the estate. Governors are kept well informed about students' performance. When courses fall below a defined level of performance, the quality and standards committee monitors the course team's action plan closely. Governors also act quickly when financial issues are brought to their attention. For example, prompt action was taken to improve the financial position of the college when a unit shortfall became apparent in 2001. They now receive sufficiently frequent financial reports and have recognised the need for closer monitoring of expenditure on capital projects.

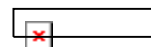
23. The college is a key participant in the life of the local community and works closely with a wide range of local and regional partners to develop outreach provision. There are many well-managed community venues that offer good opportunities for learning. The college has been particularly successful in meeting its targets for recruitment to adult basic skills courses.

24. Since 1993, the college's financial position has fluctuated significantly. At the time of the inspection, its financial status was self-assessed as category C. The college has failed to meet funding unit targets in the past, and in 2000/01, had a very large shortfall. Measures have been introduced to address weaknesses. The college has made a thorough analysis of the issues that led to the shortfall. The inaccuracy of data was identified as a significant weakness and action was taken to improve accuracy. Inspectors found that there were still instances where data were unreliable. Another measure introduced in the recovery plan was a new method of resource allocation. It is proving effective. Budgets to support teaching are allocated fairly and the methodology gives sufficient scope for managers to respond to need.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on construction plant and electrical installation courses
- well-planned practical lessons
- careful monitoring of students' attendance and progress
- good attainment by adult students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on building craft courses
- low pass rates on wood occupations courses
- insufficient checking of students' understanding in lessons
- lack of work experience for full-time students.

Scope of provision

25. Full-time and part-time building craft courses are available at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, both during the day and in the evening. The college is a regional centre for construction plant courses. There is a good range of courses for technicians. Enrolments have increased on craft courses by nearly 40% over the last three years from 1998, but remain low on technician courses. At the time of the inspection, 612 students were enrolled, of whom approximately half were aged 16 to 18. Of these, only 79 attended full time. Most students study at intermediate level. The college is responsible for 42 modern apprentices, 29 at foundation and 13 at

advanced level, on work-based training programmes. The college also runs a few profit-making courses. A small number of school key-stage 4 pupils attend link courses.

Achievement and standards

26. Retention rates on most courses have risen over the three years from 1998. However, they remain low on building craft courses particularly at levels 1 and 3. For example, on wood occupations at level 1, the retention rate was 18 percentage points lower than the national average. Some retention rates are above the national average, for example, construction plant at both levels 2 and 3 and electrical installation at level 3. Of the 18 students on the level 3 construction plant course who started their course in 2001, 15 achieved the qualification. Retention rates for advanced level technician courses have improved from 20 percentage points below the national average in 1999 to just above in 2001.

27. Pass rates on level 1 and level 2 building craft courses have improved since 1998 and most are now at the national average. The pass rate of 91% on the level 1 trowel trades course was significantly above the national average of 76%. However, pass rates on level 1 and level 2 courses in wood occupations are poor. Pass rates on electrical installation at level 2 and building crafts at level 3 have declined over the same period. Pass rates for the small number of students who study national certificate and diploma in construction have improved since 1998 from below to just above the national average. At the time of the inspection, modern apprentices' programmes were too new for the achievements of trainees to be assessed.

28. Students' progress relative to their prior attainment is good for adult students, particularly those on evening craft courses. They listen carefully to the teacher and work hard to complete their tasks. The progress of students aged 16 to 18 is satisfactory; most of them demonstrate appropriate practical skills and work safely. However, some do not always understand technical terms or concepts. Students gather evidence effectively from their workplace for their portfolios. Many of those on building craft courses also gain additional qualifications, such as certificates in first aid and fire fighting.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ trowel trades (1 and 2 year)	1	No. of starts	40	49	37
		% retention	48	57	68
		% pass rate	*	*	91
NVQ wood occupations (1 year)	1	No. of starts	28	20	25
		% retention	54	40	56
		% pass rate	87	100	*
NVQ wood occupations (1 and 2 year)	2	No. of starts	37	68	46
		% retention	70	63	39
		% pass rate	*	*	*
NVQ plumbing (2 and 3 year)	2	No. of starts	12	26	44
		% retention	67	62	45
		% pass rate	*	*	*
NVQ plant maintenance	2	No. of starts	8	26	20
		% retention	100	88	100
		% pass rate	100	81	95

NVQ install and commission electrical systems and equipment	3	No. of starts	9	16	14
		% retention	78	94	100
		% pass rate	57	93	57

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

* unreliable data

Quality of teaching and learning

29. The quality of teaching in most lessons is good. Most workshop activities are well planned and organised. Students can work at a pace that suits them individually. Tools, equipment and materials are ready for use at the start of lessons. Teachers highlight the need to work safely and insist that students make appropriate use of personal protective equipment. They provide effective support when students are undertaking their practical work. However, during practical lessons, teachers do not help students to improve their theoretical knowledge of the subject sufficiently or encourage them to share their experiences of work. In theory lessons, although teachers question students, the questioning does not always check that all students understand the topic. Students are not trained to make additional notes on the issues raised. Some overhead transparencies are poorly produced and poorly used.

30. In electrical installation lessons, the teaching and assessment of key skills is successfully integrated within the work of the courses. Specialist teachers of key skills provide additional support. Most key skills are not an integral part of the building craft course and most students do not see the need to study them. There is a lack of enrichment activities for full-time students. They do not have the opportunity to take part in work experience to help them understand industrial practices. Few teachers arrange visits to construction sites or the manufacturers of building products.

31. On joining the college, most students take an initial assessment to establish whether they need any additional learning support. To improve retention rates, since the summer of 2001, all prospective full-time students have taken a selection test to determine the most appropriate level of course for them to follow. Data on attendance since September 2001 show significantly better in-year retention than in the previous year. At the time of the inspection, the average attendance in the lessons observed was 82%, which is higher than the national average for the programme area. A well-planned induction and an appropriately detailed student handbook introduce students to the college and their course. Students' progress and attendance are carefully monitored and reports are regularly issued to employers and the parents of full-time students aged under 18. Progress reviews of work-based trainees involve employers, trainees and a college representative. However, few trainees have their work assessed in the workplace.

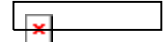
32. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Some have recent industrial experience. Others make good use of the college's staff development opportunities to undertake short placements in industry. Technician support is adequate. Workshops have sufficient tools, equipment and consumable materials and provide realistic working environments. A large external area provides good opportunities for drainage and paving work. Most classrooms contain technical displays and information on the course and the college. However, there are significant shortcomings in the provision of accommodation. Workshops are located at different parts of the campus making it difficult for them to be used efficiently. There is insufficient space in one workshop for woodworking. There is no internal area where students of different crafts can work together on large-scale projects. The materials-testing laboratory is poorly maintained.

Leadership and management

33. The management of construction is satisfactory. There are regular course team meetings and course review documents are carefully completed. The programme area self-assessment report identified most weaknesses. Targets are set for retention and pass rates, but on many courses they have not been met. Many data on students' achievements were unreliable. There are two industrial

liaison committees but they meet infrequently.

Engineering - general



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on some courses
- good teaching
- strong links with industry
- wide range of programmes
- well-managed courses.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on some level 1 courses
- some poor teaching accommodation
- some poor ICT facilities.

The scope of the provision

34. In general engineering, there is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses. These include electrical, electronic, mechanical, production plant engineering, fabrication, welding, computer-aided design and manufacture, and quality assurance programmes. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 340 students enrolled on these programmes, half of whom were aged 16 to 18. Most full-time students are enrolled on GNVQ intermediate or Advanced Vocational Certificate of

Education (AVCE) in engineering. Many full-time students study for a NVQ in performing engineering operations at level 2 in addition to their main programme of study. There are small numbers of work-based learners who are following an advanced modern apprenticeship or a foundation modern apprenticeship programme. Most part-time learners are adults and young people studying on day-release courses. They are supported by their employers. The school has very good relationships with local and national employers. They provide on-and-off the job training for groups of apprentices from several major companies, as well as professional development opportunities for qualified engineers. Many employers make good use of the part-time courses for training their employees.

Achievement and standards

35. Retention and pass rates on most engineering programmes are good. Pass rates in some areas are well above the national average. For example, in NVQ engineering manufacture foundation programmes, 89% of students who completed the course in 2000/01, achieved the qualification. The GNVQ advanced level course in engineering achieved pass rates in 2000 and 2001 well above the national averages. Pass rates on City and Guilds 2240 and 2010 programmes are poor and below the national average, although most learners who fail to achieve the full award pass many of the units. Key skills training and assessment have improved since 2000 when the staff developed occupationally specific materials. These materials maintain students' interest and increase motivation and achievement. The standard of students' work is very good in practical sessions and good in theory-based sessions. The standard of trainees' work produced in the workplace was particularly good. Most students are keen to learn and they make good progress. Students are well prepared for progression to higher level courses or to jobs in the local engineering industry.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 2010 basic engineering competencies	1	No. of starts	15	20	11
		% retention	87	70	55
		% pass rate	77	57	67
City and Guilds 2240 electronics servicing part 1	1	No. of starts	8	7	11
		% retention	100	86	55
		% pass rate	63	83	17
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	16	20	14
		% retention	69	85	100
		% pass rate	82	47	93
NVQ engineering manufacture (foundation)	2	No. of starts	41	31	34
		% retention	93	77	82
		% pass rate	95	88	89
GNVQ advanced engineering	3	No. of starts	22	17	20
		% retention	77	76	65
		% pass rate	65	100	92
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	62	51	40
		% retention	90	73	73
		% pass rate	58	94	76

Quality of teaching and learning

36. Teaching is good in all programmes, both in theory and practical lessons. Lessons are well planned and many include an appropriate range of learning activities that helps to motivate students. In class discussions, students are encouraged to relate their studies to engineering and manufacturing industries. In practical lessons, students work in a realistic working environment and develop good industrially relevant skills. A major local employer spoke highly of the level of practical ability that students reached at the college and valued the full-time AVCE course as a source from which to recruit technician apprentices.

37. Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. Most have relevant technical qualifications at degree or higher level and only one does not have a recognised teaching qualification. Teachers use their experience well, relating their teaching to realistic industrial practices. This approach maintains students' interest and motivates them. Resources are particularly good for practical classes. Mechanical engineering and computer-aided design facilities are of an industrial standard. However, in some theory-based classrooms, the standard of accommodation and resources is poor. For example, overhead projectors could not be used effectively in some classrooms because the blinds were missing. This shortcoming impaired teaching that was based on well-prepared overhead transparency learning materials. In a few cases, the IT facilities were poor. Older, low specification computers were unable to run up-to-date simulations.

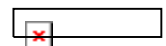
38. Students are given initial assessments to determine any additional support needs. Those students with identified needs receive additional support from specialist staff. It is mainly provided through workshops, but some effective help is also provided in lessons. Assessments are well planned and are an integral part of the learning process. Feedback to students is uneven. Written feedback on practical performance tends to be confined to documents that are maintained and retained by staff for the purposes of monitoring performance. This feedback does not contain sufficient detailed information to help students to improve their work. Regular reports inform both students and employers of overall progress. There are insufficient enrichment activities for full-time students. They are mainly offered at sites remote from the engineering provision. This is little or no take-up from students.

39. Clear advice and guidance are provided for students joining new programmes. Tutorial support is effective on full-time programmes. Group tutorials are given to help students to improve study skills and time management. Tutors are well informed on their students' progress. Formal tutorial support is not included in the timetables for part-time students although each part-time course has a nominated course tutor.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are good. Staff are highly motivated and work well in teams. Course teams undertake effective course reviews which are used in the self-assessment report. Targets for retention and pass rates are realistic. Although teaching staff have extensive experience, they have insufficient opportunities for industrial updating.

Engineering - motor vehicle



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

Strengths

- good teaching by experienced staff

- wide and appropriate range of courses
- good resources
- effective on-course support.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 vehicle servicing and repair courses
- insufficient accreditation of prior learning
- insufficient work experience for students
- exposure of students to some poor industrial practice.

Scope of provision

41. There is a wide range of courses to suit the needs of the community. These courses include school link courses, full-time foundation programmes, progression awards and vehicle restoration courses. Courses leading to NVQ levels 2 and 3 in body and paint, vehicle service and repair, and vehicle mechanical and electronic systems are also available. Motor cycle and vehicle maintenance programmes are taught in the evenings. NVQ programmes are open to employed learners or to those with a work placement. At the time of the inspection, there were 218 students aged 16 to 18 and 24 students over 19 on full-time or NVQ courses.

42. Full-time NVQ level 1 courses were replaced in 2001 by foundation programmes, progression awards, and vehicle renovation courses. There are clear progression opportunities for students who may wish to progress from foundation programmes through to NVQ level 3.

Achievement and standards

43. Retention rates on NVQ level 2 body fitting and NVQ level 3 body repair programmes are below national averages. Pass rates are high on both of these programmes. The NVQ level 2 vehicle mechanical and electronic systems courses have had declining retention and pass rates since 1998. In 1999, 78% of students were retained but only 40% passed. In 2001, the retention rate declined to 39% and the pass rate to 33%. These figures are well below the national averages. The full-time motor vehicle studies course had good retention and pass rates in 1999 and in 2001. Although the retention rate dropped in 2000, all the students who completed the course passed.

44. Students are highly motivated during practical lessons. They developed new skills quickly and analysed the problems that they were set logically. For example, students made good progress in diagnostic testing of vehicles and quickly identified faults and ways to carry out repairs.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering - motor vehicle, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Introductory motor vehicle studies	1	No. of starts	25	11	91
		% retention	96	45	91
		% pass rate	61	100	80
NVQ vehicle maintenance-service replacement	1	No. of starts	54	32	*
		% retention	39	55	*
		% pass rate	100	82	*
Certificate of professional competence	2	No. of starts	70	37	18
		% retention	98	92	94
		% pass rate	27	62	53
NVQ vehicle mechanical-electronic systems	2	No. of starts	47	13	25
		% retention	78	54	39
		% pass rate	40	43	33
NVQ vehicle body fitting	2	No. of starts	57	55	53
		% retention	76	53	45
		% pass rate	74	40	86
NVQ body repair	3	No. of starts	29	20	12
		% retention	83	75	75
		% pass rate	79	93	89

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001) * replaced by another course

Quality of education and training

45. Teaching is satisfactory or better. Lessons are well planned and have clearly defined objectives. Staff have good working relationships with students. In one lesson, students were taught about vehicle cooling systems. The students enjoyed the experience and learnt how a thermostat should be tested. Questioning was effective. There is no system in place to accredit prior learning. Adults on motor vehicle programmes are, or have been, employed and their previous experience should allow them to progress more rapidly. Students on full-time courses are asked to find their own work placements. Sometimes students leave this too late and it becomes progressively more difficult for them to find appropriate work experience places. There are insufficient work placement opportunities to enable all students to gain this experience at an appropriate stage in their programmes.

46. All staff are competent and have many years of industrial and teaching experience. All are qualified assessors; five of the six teachers have internal verifier awards. Although there are opportunities for staff development, no member of staff has applied for industrial secondment to help acquire new skills and grow more familiar with modern technology. Workshop resources are good and meet modern industrial requirements. However, in some practical areas there are no chairs and tables where students can write up reports once the practical task is finished. The body workshop has modern equipment but lacks basic dust extractors for hand held orbital sanders. This

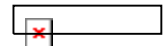
shortcoming resulted in the workshop being covered in dust when learners were dry sanding panels. There is good classroom accommodation. The student learning centre is comfortable, well furnished, and has a wide range of resources.

47. An initial assessment test devised by the college together with an interview help to ensure that students are placed on appropriate courses. During the induction period students are also tested to find out if they need additional learning support. Where this is needed, additional support tutors give these students individual help. All students' progress is reviewed at termly intervals. Progress reports are sent to employers and parents when appropriate. Parents' evenings are held every term so that staff can discuss the progress of students aged 16 to 18. Modern apprentices have an occupational review of progress every 12 weeks as well as interim pastoral visits. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. Standardised documentation is used by agreement with the awarding bodies. Practical assessment is carried out on a regular basis. Students are given oral feedback on their performance and receive written evidence of the outcomes of any assessments.

Leadership and management

48. Courses are well managed. Each member of staff has responsibility for a particular programme of study. Documentation is standardised. Targets for each course are set on an annual basis. Staff make a full contribution to the production of the self-assessment report. Managers know the courses that have low retention rates. They have planned to improve these rates by tightening up on initial course entry requirements and by making the teaching of key skills more relevant to students' work and aspirations. It is too early to judge whether these improvements are having the desired effect.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- good teaching
- thorough monitoring of students' progress
- high quality of feedback on students' written work
- good subject support for students

- effective work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- insufficient sharing of good practice
- low retention rates on GCE A-level and GNVQ intermediate courses
- lack of understanding of basic business terms among some students.

Scope of provision

49. Business courses for full-time students are offered at GNVQ intermediate, GCE AS and A level and AVCE. Business administration is offered for full-time and part-time students and work-based learners. A wide range of management, professional and accounting courses is provided for part-time students.

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates are good on most courses, but were low for GCE A level in 2000 and 2001. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate course fell substantially in 2001 to below the national average. Pass rates are high. All students on the GCE A-level business studies and the Certificate in Personnel Practice courses passed in 2000 and 2001. Pass rates for the GNVQ intermediate and NVQ administration courses were substantially higher than the national average over the same period. Results for NVQ accounting courses at all three levels have improved since 1999 and are now substantially higher than national averages. The proportion of students achieving a high grade on the GCE A-level business course has improved steadily since 1999, and is now about a third higher than the national average.

51. The standard of students' work in lessons is satisfactory or better. Students are attentive. Those following professional courses make good, relevant and thoughtful contributions. They relate their learning effectively to their workplace, and similarly, theory to practice. In a lesson about motivation in organisations, students were able to pool examples from their own workplaces to clarify and apply the theories being considered. However, students on business courses have gaps in their understanding of basic business terms and techniques. Much of the students' written work is of a high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	19	27	18
		% retention	79	85	67
		% pass rate	64	96	91

GNVQ advanced	3	No. of starts	37	33	39
		% retention	81	79	77
		% pass rate	66	73	77
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	23	30	31
		% retention	78	67	65
		% pass rate	94	100	100
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	45	39	47
		% retention	100	92	89
		% pass rate	98	100	100
National Examination Board Supervisory Management (NEBSM) management certificate	3	No. of starts	52	31	34
		% retention	92	97	88
		% pass rate	96	100	*
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	48	42	39
		% retention	92	90	95
		% pass rate	51	*	56

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001) * unreliable data

Quality of education and training

52. Much teaching was good or very good. Most lessons are planned thoroughly, build upon students' previous learning and develop their skills and understanding. However, teachers plan lessons individually, which restricts opportunities to share good practice. For example, some lessons were for different groups of students following the same course. The groups were taught by different teachers whose approaches to the course differed significantly even though students were working towards the same outcome. One lesson was effective in stimulating students' interest, holding their attention and helping them to learn. In another, students were inattentive and they learned little. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subject and explain new concepts clearly. They have a good working relationship with their full-time and part-time students. Help is provided outside lessons to students who have been absent or need extra support for other reasons. In the most effective lessons, teachers use methods such as small group work and case studies that maintain the students' interest. Handouts are good. Practical tasks are carefully planned to build on and further develop an understanding of the theory. In the less effective lessons, students are not given work to match their abilities. In some cases, insufficient demands are made of students who become bored and let their attention wander. Students' progress is reviewed thoroughly and plans to help them improve are implemented. Students' written work is marked promptly and returned with comprehensive comments. There are clear and effective procedures for internal verification.

53. Management courses are effectively linked to modern commercial practices. Groups of students undertake projects, with teacher support and supervision, for several local companies. Work placements for full-time administration students relate well to the work done in college. On other full-time business courses, there is no organised work experience and teachers make insufficient use of the work experience of individual students.

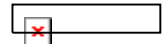
54. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Most have a teaching qualification and hold assessor awards. Few have recent relevant commercial experience. Several classrooms have poor facilities for use of overhead projectors. Students have good access to computers for their independent work. However, students on full-time business courses have insufficient opportunities to use computer suites. The learning centres hold too many out-of-date books and too few multiple copies of popular texts.

55. There are 27 work-based learners following business administration programmes. The pass rate for work-based learners is good. Learners' progress is checked regularly. They have frequent opportunities for assessment based on evidence from their workplace. With guidance from college staff they manage their own progress effectively. They value their time in college both for the structured opportunities to learn and for the chance to work alongside their peers. Trainees are not sufficiently aware of the complaints procedure or of health and safety issues at work.

Leadership and management

56. Courses are well managed. Teachers review the effectiveness of the courses they teach and together they work on areas that need improvement. They work well together in course teams to develop joint schemes of work and assignments.

Computing and information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- thorough planning of teaching and learning on full-time vocational courses
- good provision of vocational courses
- good progression
- high pass and retention rates on full-time vocational courses
- effective use of good resources.

Weaknesses

- some unimaginative teaching
- declining recruitment and low retention rates of GCE A-level students

- insufficient contact with industry and commerce for students on vocational courses.

Scope of provision

57. Most courses are for students who wish to study computing and ICT as a specialist subject. The main provision is a full-time vocational scheme for 16-18 year olds. It consists of GNVQs in ICT at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. At the time of the inspection, more than 300 students were enrolled. The scheme attracts a wide range of students. Many are from disadvantaged backgrounds and often have identified additional learning needs. Some students have physical, hearing and visual impairments. The scheme also recruits well from minority ethnic communities. The academic GCE A-level course is much less popular. At the inspection there were 23 students enrolled on the first year and 7 in the second year. The college provides routes to HE through a higher national certificate and diploma in computing and a higher national diploma in business IT.

Achievement and standards

58. Across the ability range the vocational programme has had success in raising the standard and achievements of the students recruited. Almost all students' retention and pass rates since 1999 are above average for the sector. Pass rates have significantly improved. For example, from 1999 to 2001, the pass rates at foundation level rose from 78% to 100%, at intermediate level from 86% to 98% and at advanced level from 68% to 98%. In 2001, almost all those recruited, many with additional learning needs, succeeded in gaining their qualifications. At foundation and intermediate level, the proportion of learners gaining the higher grade passes in 2001 was also well above the national average. Recruitment for the GCE A-level course has declined since 1999 and retention rates have been low. Numbers recruited dropped from 39 who finished in 1999, to 7 who finished in 2001. In September 2000, the course changed from GCE A-level computing to a GCE AS in ICT. Some 40 students were enrolled, but of these only 7 chose to progress to the full GCE A level. Recruitment to the GCE AS dropped to 23 in 2002.

59. Students show good levels of attainment and contribute well in most lessons. They tackle practical tasks enthusiastically. They work well by themselves and are also effective at helping each other to improve. Sometimes they do not have an understanding of the scale and complexity of ICT as used in industry. There are insufficient links with industry. The college does not provide work experience for full-time students. Some assignments link well to work situations. For example, last year some students designed web pages for a local company. Attendance during the inspection was good at 85%. There are good progression rates for vocational learners. For example, up to half of those studying at intermediate level progress to the advanced certificate. College records show that last year at least half of the students completing the AVCE entered HE and many others found related employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	53	46	63
		% retention	87	91	89
		% pass rate	78	83	100
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	46	58	67
		% retention	91	81	87
		% pass rate	86	72	98
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	39	32	7

		% retention	51	75	57
		% pass rate	50	67	75
GNVQ advanced ICT	3	No. of starts	53	58	91
		% retention	70	98	71
		% pass rate	68	88	98

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

Quality of education and training

60. Lessons for students on vocational programmes are thoroughly planned and well designed. The courses consist of separate units of study. Each unit has a unit leader who co-ordinates the staff who teach on the unit. Together, these small groups of staff plan the scheme of work, develop related teaching materials and keep the success or failure of the subsequent learning under continuous review. Graded and learning materials and practical exercises have been developed that meet the needs of students who have widely differing abilities. Opportunities for team teaching are identified and operate effectively. There are large numbers of students on each GNVQ level. They are divided into several groups. The thorough planning of teaching ensures that each group benefits consistently. In addition, the groups are timetabled so that a student who is absent from one lesson can join another group to catch up on the missing work. Students speak highly of the effective and helpful organisation of their courses. New staff also find the arrangements very supportive. Assessment and monitoring of progress is thorough. Course units have assessment plans and specified dates by which tasks are to be completed. The progress of learners is checked against these deadlines. Those falling behind attend extra sessions to help them catch up. Work is marked and returned promptly. Feedback is constructive and contains clear guidance on how students can improve.

61. The more effective lessons are successful in promoting student discussion. They include an appropriate variety of teaching methods, such as group work and student presentations. Practical classes allowed students to proceed at a pace that suited them individually. Fast learners, for example, were given additional tasks. There is widespread and effective use of additional learning support for those with specific learning needs. For example, signers are available for those with a hearing impairment. There is some uninspiring and unimaginative teaching. For example, in some classes, the teacher talks too much and the students lose concentration. Sometimes teachers fail to check that students are undertaking the work. There is some ineffective monitoring of students in practical classes.

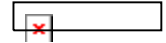
62. Teachers have an industrial or commercial background in ICT and a programme of secondments has been established to update them. Resources are good and well used. Accommodation is attractive. Computing and IT facilities are up to date and housed in modern open-plan IT suites. Extensive use is made of IT projectors to demonstrate software. Students spoke highly of the college intranet which they use to access learning materials. They can also gain rapid access to the Internet. Students are able to access materials from home or work through a Learning Gateway. However, occasionally resources hindered learning. For example, the GCE AS course in ICT originally enrolled 29 students, had 23 still on the register at the time of the inspection, but was timetabled for individual practical work in a room with only 18 computers. Also the sharing of large IT rooms by several groups of students inhibited teachers wanting to give presentations.

Leadership and management

63. The vocational scheme is well managed and characterised by strong and effective teamwork. Course teams hold regular minuted meetings and planned actions are subsequently followed up. Courses are effectively reviewed and progress on action plans monitored. Course folders are well maintained. Summaries of destination surveys are well used. The management information system provides data that managers find are consistent with their own records and assist them in their decision making. The GCE A-level course is separately managed. The outcomes of meetings on

this course are sometimes dealt with ineffectively. For example, a course review in January 2001 described a need to improve access of GCE A-level students to computers. This weakness remains an issue in 2002.

Computing and information technology applications



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

Strengths

- much good teaching
- high pass rates
- good IT resources
- good access to IT courses in many community centres.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some courses
- failure of many students in 2000/01 to achieve their qualification in the agreed time.

Scope of the provision

64. The college offers an appropriate range of courses to meet the needs of individuals and the community. Most students are adults on introductory courses that include practical IT, level 2 courses in computer literacy and IT applications, computer-aided design, telematics and the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). Courses are offered at numerous community centres, some a significant distance from the college, as well as at the college sites. Only a few courses are offered at level 3. Overall, enrolments have declined since 1998, except on ECDL courses, where interest has grown. The college has withdrawn its offer of NVQs in IT owing to low demand. A particularly innovative development to meet local needs is the West Yorkshire Information Superhighway centre (WISH). This initiative was in part funded by the European Community and offers training for local people and employers in state-of-the-art digital Internet technologies.

Achievement and standards

65. Some courses have good pass rates. For example, the popular computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) programme has had a good pass rate since 1998, reaching 82% in 2001. Pass rates are good in computer literacy and IT, NVQ in the use of IT at level 2, and NVQ in the use and support of IT at level 3. The computer-aided design courses have high retention and good pass rates. Retention rates on NVQ in the use and support of IT courses at level 3 and CLAIT are poor. The pass rate for ECDL courses in 2000/01 is low at 40%. In 2000/01, the pass rate for IT key skills across the college at levels 1 and 2 was very low.

66. Most students have low prior achievement or are returning to study to improve their skills. Most are set targets for qualifications and learning goals which match their aspirations, needs and previous experience. They enjoy their studies and work enthusiastically together to solve problems. However, some students have the potential to attain at a higher level or progress at a faster rate. Students develop good personal and learning skills, and produce work of an appropriate standard. A large number of students in 2000/01 did not achieve their qualification in the agreed time.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 7261 computer applications certificate	1	No. of starts	**	369	288
		% retention	**	51	51
		% pass rate	**	97	*
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	2458	1567	656
		% retention	87	83	80
		% pass rate	46	70	*
Certificate in practical IT Skills	1	No. of starts	291	360	364
		% retention	79	81	83
		% pass rate	78	89	*
NVQ in using IT	2	No. of starts	95	41	53
		% retention	79	76	79
		% pass rate	80	70	*
Integrated business technology stage 2	2	No. of starts	387	417	357
		% retention	87	83	83
		% pass rate	51	43	61
City and Guilds 4351 computer-aided draughting and design	2	No. of starts	124	179	60
		% retention	96	89	100
		% pass rate	38	76	75

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001) * course not running ** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

67. Most teaching is good. Schemes of work are thorough. Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet individual needs. Many classes enrol students to study for a number of different qualifications. This arrangement is of particular value to students attending classes in local community venues. A range of teaching methods is used to help students to work individually and to develop practical IT skills.

Learning materials are good. They include textbooks, workbooks, CD-ROMs and access to the college intranet. These materials are carefully designed to enable students to work independently with minimal teacher intervention. Teachers use an effective initial assessment to determine students' IT skills and then allocate them to appropriate courses. However, they do not have a reliable method of testing for the literacy skills that students need if they are to take full advantage of text-based materials. Teachers provide effective support and encouragement to individual students. They keep individual progress records that enable students and teachers to monitor and measure progress together. Students are encouraged to help each other. Teachers make good use of data projectors to demonstrate computer techniques or to make short presentations. Students on some courses, such as the ECDL, can access learning materials on the college intranet from their homes via the Internet. Teachers monitor attendance in lessons well and absence is followed up by the curriculum administrator. Attendance at lessons is high.

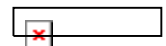
68. On many courses students do not have individual learning plans with interim goals or targets. Such an approach to learning might enable them to see the expected rate of progress necessary to complete the qualifications in the agreed time. In some lessons, too much emphasis is placed on individual learning materials, too little on teacher exposition, explanation and demonstration. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, teachers did not allow students sufficient time to carry out one set of instructions before giving further instructions which students then had difficulty in following. Students' work is assessed regularly. Teachers explain errors and give reasons for the loss of marks to enable students to improve their work.

69. Teachers are appropriately qualified and knowledgeable about their subjects. Many teachers from agencies teach courses at community locations. They are given effective support to develop skills and qualifications that are appropriate for the courses they are able to teach. The college has good specialist IT resources. On occasions, the college network has been unreliable. It often slows down to such an extent that students' attention is lost. Most lessons take place in well-equipped rooms that are comfortable and have good IT equipment. The furniture and décor are uniformly good on the college sites and at all community centres. Some accommodation and equipment at a number of community centres, while not reaching the standard in college, are nevertheless satisfactory.

Leadership and management

70. Two curriculum leaders share responsibility for managing IT applications for both college and community-based courses. They work well together. Communication between staff by the course teams is effective. Staff operating in community locations are well supported. There is a formal programme of meetings for staff. Lines of communication are good. Schemes of work, assessment plans and standard administrative procedures are also good. The self-assessment carried out at faculty level was comprehensive.

Sport, travel and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses
- good specialist resources

- thorough internal verification
- good tutorial support
- effective leadership of travel and tourism courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass and retention rates on GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism courses
- some poorly-planned teaching
- insufficient current industrial experience among sports staff
- low participation in extra-curricular sport provision
- some poor teaching accommodation.

Scope of provision

71. The college provides a range of full-time courses and one part-time course. Courses in sports studies include the national diploma in science (sports studies) and City and Guilds in sport and leisure. There is a GNVQ at intermediate level and AVCE in travel and tourism, and professional travel industry awards in retail travel and for overseas resort representatives. At the time of the inspection there were 280 students all of whom, with the exception of 7 students, were aged 16 to 18 and full time.

Achievement and standards

72. Pass and retention rates on the national diploma in sports science are good. In their written work, these students demonstrate a good subject knowledge. The best student assignments have been thoroughly researched and display an ability to evaluate information well. Most students improve their career prospects by gaining qualifications that are additional to their main programme of study. However, in 2000/01, no students passed the community sports leaders award. The college has a successful football academy. A team reached the national semi-finals of the British

Colleges' League of Excellence competition.

73. The retention and pass rates for the courses leading to City and Guilds awards are good. Most students on these courses develop effective team working skills and their practical work is competent. Students apply their knowledge and skills well in a variety of practical contexts.

74. There are poor pass and retention rates on GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism courses. This qualification has been replaced with the AVCE travel and tourism. Most students on this course are attentive and responsive. They relate concepts effectively to industry situations. Pass rates for the GNVQ intermediate course have improved in 2001 to well above national averages. Students on this course have appropriate practical skills. They work well when studying in small groups and most have good communication skills. Their assignment work is well researched.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 4810-01 recreation and leisure industries	1	No. of starts	41	43	*
		% retention	85	88	*
		% pass rate	69	66	*
City and Guilds 4810-02 recreation and leisure industries	2	No. of starts	47	38	*
		% retention	62	95	*
		% pass rate	69	61	*
City and Guilds 6951 **progression award sport and leisure	2	No. of starts	*	*	38
		% retention	*	*	95
		% pass rate	*	*	86
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	36	44	50
		% retention	75	70	60
		% pass rate	83	70	46
City and Guilds Association of British Travel Agents Certificate (ABTAC)	2	No. of starts	37	51	39
		% retention	95	80	76
		% pass rate	75	83	86
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	17	18	13
		% retention	88	78	85
		% pass rate	67	50	91
National diploma in science (sports studies)	3	No. of starts	51	40	54
		% retention	80	70	70
		% pass rate	95	100	97

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

* course not running

** replacement course for City and Guilds 4810

Quality of education and training

75. In sports studies, students make a full contribution to practical lessons and often take the leading role. Schemes of work ensure that the syllabus is covered. Lesson plans, however, are not always clear on intended outcomes. Some lessons are not well planned and the time allocated to activities is inappropriate. In the less effective lessons, teaching is dull. Teachers do not demand enough of the students whose interest and concentration often wavers. In some theory lessons, the quality of overhead transparencies is poor.

76. In the more effective lessons, an appropriate range of activities, such as group work and presentations, maintain students' interest and help them learn. Students on the part-time ABTAC course work independently on learning materials, but with the benefit of tutorial support. This approach helps students to progress at an appropriate pace. There are good arrangements for monitoring students' progress. Individual learning plans and reviews are effective. Key skills are taught and assessed in the vocational areas. In travel and tourism, the assessment of key skills is effectively monitored through vocational assignments. During the inspection the average level of attendance at lessons was low at 68%.

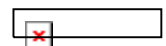
77. All students have the opportunity to take extra-curricular activities. However, there is low participation in the activities among students who are not in the sports curriculum area. Teachers of sports studies have developed close links with educational establishments in Sweden where some students are placed for their work experience. Others undertake work experience with local employers. Assignments are vocationally related. In travel and tourism, visits to United Kingdom tourist attractions and study trips to Spain and France are used effectively for assessment and to improve students' learning.

78. All teachers in sport, travel and tourism have appropriate specialist qualifications. Travel and tourism staff have recent experience in industry. However, some sports studies teachers do not have sufficient recent experience outside education. Contacts with industry are maintained through representation on local industry panels. Some of the accommodation is poor and restricts the learning activities. Overall, the specialist learning resources are good. There is an appropriate range of books in the library, but there are insufficient multiple key texts for the number of students wanting to use them. Some journals and magazines are out of date.

Leadership and management

79. Communication between staff is effective. Course tutors monitor individual students' progress regularly. Team meetings and course reviews, which include regular meetings with travel and tourism students, identify areas for improvement. Actions are agreed and implemented. The use of data to establish appropriate targets for students by the sports studies staff has been ineffective.

Hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapy



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

Strengths

- good teaching in practical lessons

- high standards of practical work

- well-equipped hair and beauty salons
- well-developed learning materials in beauty therapy
- good management of work-based provision.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching in theory lessons
- unsatisfactory retention rates on hairdressing programmes
- insufficient development of key skills.

Scope of provision

80. Full-time, part-time and work-based programmes are offered in hairdressing and beauty therapy. These lead to NVQ qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3. A BTEC national diploma in beauty therapy and a sports massage diploma are also offered. There is a range of qualifications in holistic therapies including Indian head massage, aromatherapy and reflexology. The beauty therapy section also offers short courses on advanced nail techniques. At the time of the inspection, there were 94 full-time students mostly between 16 and 18 years of age. Of the 173 part-time students, 27 were on work-based training programmes. Work-based trainees attend college one day a week for training and assessment, and are visited in the work place.

Achievement and standards

81. Retention rates on all hairdressing courses and on the Indian head massage course are unsatisfactory. The retention and pass rates on short courses, beauty and holistic therapy courses are very good. Pass rates on the college-based NVQ programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy are above the national averages. However, the pass rates on the key skills programmes are poor.

82. Within lessons, students work well in groups or independently. They show particular aptitude in practical lessons where their skills are frequently above those expected for the level and stage of the course. Beauty therapy students have particularly good practical skills. For example, in one lesson, students developed good body massage skills and clearly understood the properties and effects of using essential oils. Some students do not have the communication skills or sufficient confidence with numbers to enable them to reach the standards required for their course.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapy, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	93	58	92
		% retention	70	82	57
		% pass rate	48	87	83
Indian head massage	2	No. of starts	34	25	8
		% retention	85	88	78
		% pass rate	79	81	86
Diploma in reflexology	3	No. of starts	18	22	34
		% retention	83	100	87
		% pass rate	73	90	94
Sports massage certificate	3	No. of starts	11	29	23
		% retention	91	89	87
		% pass rate	60	96	80
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	109	119	30
		% retention	75	72	75
		% pass rate	80	85	83

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

Quality of education and training

83. Much of the teaching is good or better. The teaching in practical lessons was particularly effective. Students are attentive and concentrate throughout these lessons. Both hairdressing and beauty therapy students reach high standards in their commercial work. Students' work is generally well organised and portfolios are of a high standard. The work experience programme helps to set the learning in context and often leads to students finding permanent employment. However, some theory and key skills lessons are not well planned, designed or taught. For example, in a theory lesson, insufficient demands were made on students. Other lessons moved too slowly for the objectives to be achieved. Opportunities for students on reception duties to extend their understanding and to improve their communications are sometimes missed.

84. Staff are well qualified. They make effective use of the comprehensive staff development programme. For example, two teachers gained considerably from a week's industrial placement in summer 2001. Some particularly good learning materials have been developed and are used effectively in beauty therapy lessons. There is insufficient technical support for teachers when the commercial salon is busy. The hairdressing and beauty therapy salons are well equipped and maintained. There are sufficient work stations for the numbers of students and clients. Students use a well-resourced learning centre, although it is sometimes overcrowded. There is no provision of IT equipment in the classrooms.

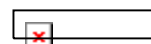
85. There is an excellent system used on all courses for recording and monitoring students' progress. Individual learning plans are effective. Since they were introduced, retention rates have improved. Assessment of prior learning has been developed for hairdressing and beauty therapy students, but it has not been implemented on all programmes. Students undergo a diagnostic assessment during induction which identifies their preferred learning styles as well as any additional learning support they may require. The results of these assessments do not sufficiently influence methods used in teaching them.

Leadership and management

86. There are curriculum co-ordinators for both hairdressing and beauty therapy. They manage the human and physical resources. They are well aware of the poor retention rates on some courses and have identified this area of weakness in their self-assessment reports. These reports give insufficient weight to the weaknesses identified during internal teaching observations.

87. The management of work-based training is good. College-based assessors regularly visit trainees on placements. Their progress is reviewed frequently and clearly recorded. Internal verification is effective, both in the college and at the work placements.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on full-time courses and those leading to NVQs
- effective target setting for full-time students
- effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on several courses
- failure of some teaching to provide for the full range of ability
- some poor assessment practices on courses leading to NVQs.

Scope of provision

88. Courses leading to GNVQ at foundation and intermediate level are offered. The GNVQ advanced course was replaced with a course leading to the AVCE single and double award in 2001. These courses are attended on a full-time basis only. Part-time provision includes a wide range of NVQ care programmes at levels 2, 3 and 4. Students study at college but the development of skills and assessment of their competences takes place at work. There is a two-year national certificate course in health studies, a course in deaf studies and a two-year course for communication support workers who sign to those with hearing impairment. In addition, there is a level 2 certificate course

in counselling skills. The college also runs a great deal of first aid training for small and medium-sized organisations in the local area.

89. Managers are developing the area's responsiveness to the needs of the community. There are increasing links with employers who provide effective work placements for students. At the time of the inspection, managers were reviewing the structure of the provision with the intention of improving attendance and retention rates. There are no links with any health or social care initiatives or projects. The range of courses meets the needs of most groups in the local community, but there is no appropriate short course available to allow progression to NVQ level 2. There is no level 1 counselling skills course to introduce people to this work and no level 3 course for those who would like to progress to practitioner training.

Achievement and standards

90. Pass rates on full-time courses are good. Those for foundation and advanced level courses have been consistently above the national averages since 1998. In 2001, the intermediate level courses rose to above the national average. Pass rates on the two-year NVQ level 2 and level 3 courses are well above the national averages. However, there have been no passes on the one-year level 2 course in the last three years from 1999. The new AVCE course had a pass rate of only 59% in its first year.

91. The retention rate is poor on several courses. The GNVQ intermediate course has been consistently below the national average. The retention rate on the GNVQ advanced course remains above the national average but fell 29 percentage points in 2001. The course for the national certificate in health studies retained less than half its students in 2001. The NVQ two-year level 2 and level 3 courses have retention rates that are consistently below national averages.

92. In many lessons, students barely attain the level required by the course. The written work of students on NVQ courses also reflects this modest level of attainment. However, students on GNVQ and national certificate courses produce some very good written work which indicates their ability to achieve at a level higher than occurs in most lessons. Attendance is well below the national average which is partly the result of NVQ students not attending workshops.

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	*	57	58
		% retention	*	62	83
		% pass rate	*	**	96
First aid at work	1	No. of starts	298	338	270
		% retention	97	100	100
		% pass rate	82	99	98
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	*	33	31
		% retention	*	64	70
		% pass rate	*	62	81
National certificate in health studies	3	No. of starts	*	*	65
		% retention	*	*	45
		% pass rate	*	*	62
GNVQ advanced	3	No. of starts	13	14	14
		% retention	82	100	71

		% pass rate	88	100	100
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Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

* course not running

** unreliable data

Quality of education and training

93. Most teaching is satisfactory. The more effective lesson plans provide clear objectives and identify a range of appropriate teaching methods and learning activities. However, on several plans the learning outcomes are vague and the teaching methods are either not included or unsatisfactory. In many lessons, students are mainly expected to listen and have insufficient opportunity to ask or answer questions, or take part in discussion. In a minority of lessons, the more able students are encouraged and helped to extend their thinking, whilst the less able are given different, but appropriate tasks. For example, in a biochemistry lesson, the teacher asked challenging questions that stimulated students and encouraged them to work on fundamental concepts. More complex questions were directed to the more able students whilst the less able were helped to develop their understanding using diagrams on the board. However, many lessons developed too slowly. For example, in a level 3 NVQ class, there were a number of controversial issues that were left unexplored and many students lost interest. Experience of work placements or students' own jobs make an important contribution to their learning. In the more effective lessons, such experience is examined and discussed in the context of the course.

94. There are sufficient teachers and all are adequately qualified. However, only a minority of full-time staff have vocational qualifications and experience. Managers are addressing this shortcoming by ensuring that part-time and agency staff have vocational qualifications and relevant commercial experience. A few part-time staff are practitioners in the care sector. Although classrooms are large enough, the space is not always used effectively.

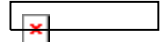
95. Progress reviews for full-time students are good. Students are fully aware of their progress in relation to their target grade and receive guidance on how to improve. They find the targets motivating. Review for part-time students' progress is less systematic. Target setting is not routinely implemented. There is some poor assessment practice on NVQs. The assessors do not always indicate whether or not evidence is acceptable and do not comment sufficiently thoroughly on the quality of this evidence. Sometimes there is no indication that the evidence has been assessed at all. Work from students on GNVQ and national certificate health studies courses is marked fairly and there is good feedback to students. Internal verification on full-time courses is systematic and provides brief but useful feedback to assessors. However, insufficient numbers of internal verifiers for NVQ courses delays the internal verification process.

Leadership and management

96. Managers are well organised. They work hard to bring about improvements which include strengthening assessment and internal verification practices on NVQs; restructuring the workshop framework for NVQs; and identifying data collection and communication problems. Good teaching is identified through internal classroom observations. Staff development is effective and all staff have attended a variety of activities since 1999. All permanent staff are scheduled for five days industrial up-dating in 2002.

97. Staff work well as a team to organise the courses. Timetables and rooming plans are reliable. There are regular, minuted course team meetings, but some are ineffective in monitoring the progress of planned actions. Managers and course leaders carry out thorough self-assessment activities which take account of college goals and the common inspection framework. Staff regularly review attendance and achievement data, but there is a number of discrepancies between the data from different sources, which makes effective planning difficult.

Childcare



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

Strengths

- good pass rates
- well-designed teaching materials
- good physical resources
- cohesive and supportive teams of staff.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on NVQ level 2 programmes
- inadequate supervision of work placements
- some unsatisfactory teaching on level 3 courses
- poor assessment of some work-based learning.

Scope of provision

98. The college offers a good range of childcare and education courses from foundation to higher national awards. The courses meet the needs of industry and provide good progression routes for students into employment and HE. Courses at foundation level for full-time and part-time students have been introduced. There are good progression routes within the college but NVQ level 4 programmes have not yet been established. Programmes are less successful in meeting the needs of mature or part-time students seeking formal childcare qualifications. The college works with other agencies to meet the needs of the community. For example, staff work in conjunction with the Early

Years Development and Childcare Partnership to provide programmes for child minders who are seeking registration.

Achievement and standards

99. Retention and pass rates on full-time, part-time and short college based courses are good. Many students on the BTEC national diploma and Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate in childcare and education courses have achieved high grades. There has been a good retention rate on the CACHE diploma in childcare practice course which was introduced in 2000. Up to 80% of students completing the BTEC national courses progress to HE. The pass rate on the CACHE diploma in nursery nursing course in 2000/01 was poor. Retention rates on NVQ level 2 programmes are poor but the overall pass rate on NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 compares favourably with national averages. The NVQ level 2 course for part-time students recruited well in 1999, but of the 58 students who started on the programme, only 58% remained at the end of the first year, and only 52% of those achieved the final qualification. Recruitment onto this course fell to 22 in 2000 and there was a very poor retention rate of 17%. Until 2000, enrolments have been low on NVQ level 3 courses, but both retention and pass rates have been good.

100. In lessons, students solve problems for themselves and take responsibility confidently. Many develop effective communication skills and share their good research skills with other students. Most students are enthusiastic and demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding. They show a high level of awareness and understanding of work-based routines and practices. Their files are well maintained and indicate that good progress is being made. Students frequently show maturity in their work and in their responses in lessons. Attendance generally exceeds college targets.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
CACHE diploma in childcare practice stage 1	2	No. of starts	**	12	18
		% retention	**	100	100
		% pass rate	**	92	100
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	30	40	29
		% retention	73	69	72
		% pass rate	100	78	100
CACHE diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	25	22	24
		% retention	80	82	83
		% pass rate	100	100	58
National diploma nursery nursing (part time)	3	No. of starts	13	44	40
		% retention	92	80	75
		% pass rate	100	*	100
National diploma nursery nursing (full time)	3	No. of starts	35	28	55
		% retention	97	71	69
		% pass rate	100	*	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001) *unreliable data ** course did not run

Quality of education and training

101. Much of the teaching is good or very good. In the most effective lessons, students develop independence and good research skills. They gain confidence in the use of IT. For example, first-year students are able to use PowerPoint in their presentations. The more skilful and imaginative staff design teaching materials that encourage independent learning and research that makes use of a wide range of resources. There are some instances of poor teaching of level 3 students which does not meet their needs. In these lessons, there is a lack of challenge for the more able students and some unrealistic expectations of students studying on the first year of the course. Teaching is generally effective in the community learning centres.

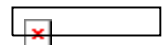
102. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Accommodation is good on each site and at most outreach centres. Students make good use of a wide range of relevant and specialist equipment. There are attractive resource centres that students use for their own research. There are multiple copies of key texts but some out-of-date publications remain on the shelves for too long. Encouraged by friendly staff, students make frequent use of information learning technology (ILT) equipment in the comfortable and well-equipped learning centres.

103. College-based assessment is good. Students are given a clear idea of the standards and expectations of the national awarding bodies. Assignment briefs are helpful and establish clear performance criteria. Assignments are timetabled to avoid an overload of assessments, but not all students are aware of these arrangements. Good additional support provides students with prompt verbal and written feedback. Work-based assessment has some inconsistencies but staff are developing systems and strategies to record, monitor and review students' achievements. Full-time students do not receive sufficient supervision in their work placements. College placement officers are not reaching the target of one placement visit for student each term. Tutorial support is effective. Students find tutors helpful and sensitive to their needs. Careers guidance is well organised through these tutorials.

Leadership and management

104. The management team is committed to continuous improvement and has implemented many changes. These have been clearly influenced by course reviews and self-assessment. However, the unreliability of data makes planning difficult. Staff work well together and have overcome many of the difficulties associated with the long-term sickness of colleagues. They support each other and are willing to share ideas and resources. All staff are valued. Part-time and agency staff make good use of staff development programmes.

Performing arts and music



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on full-time courses
- high retention rates on full-time courses in 2001
- good progression routes for full-time students

- effective arrangements for summative assessment

Weaknesses

- some low pass rates in 2001 on GCE A-level courses
- some teaching not meeting the needs of all students
- gaps in the monitoring of students' progress.

Scope of provision

105. There is a good range of provision and clearly defined progression routes. Full-time courses recruit well, although there are some small numbers on the GCE AS/A-level programmes. At the time of the inspection, students were studying on national diplomas and GCE AS/A levels in theatre, dance, music and music technology courses. The portfolio of courses is being rationalised and the college plans to cut nearly all of its GCE AS/A-level provision. Most performing arts and music students are aged 16 to 18. The school attracts small numbers of full-time adult students. Part-time courses for adults are run in partnership with other providers. There is only a small amount of evening provision. Sound recording, theory of music and electric guitar courses recruit well.

Achievement and standards

106. Most retention and pass rates are above the national averages for FE colleges. Full-time courses in 2001 had retention and pass rates that were above national averages. GCE AS/A levels, part-time programmes and courses leading to qualifications in addition to the students' main programme of study were less successful and had low pass rates in 2001. Students are punctual. Attendance during the inspection was lower than the college's average. Standards, both of achievement in lessons and of the work examined, varied considerably, but there were good levels of attainment in dance. Good standards are achieved in practical work. There are opportunities for students to give performances which they have devised. Students work collaboratively and often analyse the factors influencing successful group work. They participate effectively in actual or simulated work experience. Progression is monitored carefully and many students progress to related HE courses or employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Foundation programme in arts and leisure	1	No. of starts	19	22	17
		% retention	68	73	71
		% pass rate	92	69	83
Sound recording (part	1	No. of starts	30	26	21

time)		% retention	80	81	67
		% pass rate	75	71	71
National Open College Network (OCN) intermediate in popular music	2	No. of starts	29	17	23
		% retention	96	88	69
		% pass rate	37	70	81
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	**	19	23
		% retention	**	79	83
		% pass rate	**	93	95
National diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	48	47	41
		% retention	*	68	76
		% pass rate	100	90	94
National diploma popular music	3	No. of starts	24	30	17
		% retention	83	*	70
		% pass rate	65	88	83

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

* unreliable data

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

107. There is good course planning. Teaching is very good or outstanding in dance. Music students receive one-to-one tuition on their specific instrument each week. They have good working relationships with teachers and enjoy the opportunity provided to use their initiative during lessons. However, in music and theatre studies, lessons are not always thoroughly prepared or taught effectively. Some of this unsatisfactory teaching failed to meet the needs of students who, as a consequence, lost interest. Staff are experienced and well qualified in their specialism. However, some music teachers do not have teaching qualifications but they are on courses leading to them. Staff work well as a team and are supportive of each other. There is a curriculum co-ordinator who gives effective support to part-time music teachers. Performing arts and music students have access to a large theatre used by the community and professional groups. There are well-resourced teaching and rehearsal spaces. Students and staff benefit from good resources. However, students find it hard to gain access to computers in the resource centre. The performing arts area is unkempt and equipment is stored in classrooms. Music students use the corridors as social areas and their noise disturbs lessons.

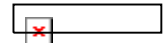
108. There is appropriately detailed assessment and feedback on a range of programmes. Students are given clear advice on how to improve. Marking is moderated effectively on all courses and there is an effective system to share information on students' achievement. Some poor standards of presentation, spelling and grammar go unchecked and most assignments lack sufficiently detailed evaluative commentaries. There is no formal method of monitoring students' performance nor of giving formative written feedback to students during practical lessons. Students are generally set appropriately demanding tasks and encouraged to succeed. They speak warmly of the support they receive. There are good links between the arts staff. Some performing arts students are not able to join enrichment activities because of timetabling constraints. Good pre-course guidance leaflets and course handbooks are available to supplement well-produced prospectuses. Students welcome the well-planned induction programme. There is effective target setting and action planning for students, although the use of minimum target grades to guide and motivate students is in an early stage of development. Although the additional support needs of students are assessed on entry, not all

students who need help take up the support offered.

Leadership and management

109. There is clear leadership which unites the programme area. There are effective arrangements for taking account of students' views. The self-assessment process is suitably detailed and self-critical. However, internal lesson observations have not been used sufficiently to identify weaknesses in teaching. Staff are aware of the importance of retention and pass rates and set appropriate targets.

Visual arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on level 3 art and design courses
- good standard of work on most courses
- good access to workshops
- effective arrangements for quality assurance
- good arrangements for monitoring students' progress.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate and GCE A-level media courses
- some teaching not meeting the needs of all students
- insufficient staff development

- some cramped and unkempt accommodation
- some restriction on opportunities for progression.

Scope of provision

110. There is a good range of full-time art, design and media courses at levels 2 and 3 for the 230 full-time students. Approximately 80% of the provision is in art and design and 20% in media. Full-time enrolments on GNVQ intermediate in art and design accounts for 13% of the full-time enrolments. The remainder are on BTEC national diploma, foundation diploma or AVCE courses. Full-time courses provide effective progression routes from level 2 courses for general art and design students. There are also specialist level 3 national diploma courses in graphic design and in media. On the general art and design courses, students begin to specialise in fine art, ceramics, textiles, fashion, three-dimensional design, or photography. There is only one full-time level 1 programme and no full-time level 2 provision in media. There are a small number of students on the higher national diploma in multimedia design. This qualification is being phased out in favour of a new foundation degree. In addition to the courses described, the college offers GCE AS and A-level subjects in fine art, photography, media, textiles, film, video production and ceramics; most enrolments are on art, design and media programmes.

111. Adult provision is limited to part-time classes in GCE AS photography, fine art and textiles. In addition, there is an evening programme in electronic media that includes website design and digital photography. This is marketed as WISH (West Yorkshire information highway).

Achievement and standards

112. Since 1999, there has been a significant decline in retention and pass rates for GCE A-level media. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate in media course is also poor. The course has been discontinued. In 2001, pass rates on GCE A-level art were outstanding; 85% of students achieved high grades. Pass rates on GCE AS photography, national diplomas, and on the GNVQ advanced course were also above national averages. Progression from national diploma media and foundation diploma is poor. Of the 19 leavers on the national diploma in media course in 2001, only 63% progressed to HE and none to vocationally related employment. Only 58% of foundation students progressed to HE. A significant number of students from the national diploma course proceeded to the diploma in foundation studies which is a course at a similar level and this does not represent good progression for students. However, 83% of students from the national diploma in graphic design course progressed to related HE courses.

113. The standard of work is good across most programmes. On art and design programmes, research is often thorough. Students use a range of primary and secondary sources. The emphasis placed on drawing and media experimentation contributes to lively and intelligent outcomes. Written work on media programmes is good and shows evidence of accurate spelling and syntax and a good grasp of subject matter. In a lesson in media, the room was too small for the size of the class and led to some inattention.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate art	2	No. of starts	23	23	24

and design		% retention	77	96	75
		% pass rate	88	91	76
GNVQ intermediate media, communication and production	2	No. of starts	17	11	16
		% retention	47	73	44
		% pass rate	62	12	71
National diploma graphic design	3	No. of starts	39	40	41
		% retention	76	82	69
		% pass rate	85	97	100
National diploma media	3	No. of starts	39	29	30
		% retention	61	62	69
		% pass rate	94	78	95
Diploma in foundation studies	3	No. of starts	37	39	43
		% retention	95	90	88
		% pass rate	68	94	97
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	19	20	22
		% retention	82	70	57
		% pass rate	100	71	58

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

Quality of education and training

114. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. For example, in a GNVQ lesson on the intermediate course in art and design, the teachers introduced a new project effectively. Good examples of previous students' work were shown and discussed and the lesson succeeded in motivating the students in the class. In one excellent AVCE art and design lesson, the teacher used teamwork enabling the weaker students to learn from the more able; the able students still found the work demanding. However, teaching methods frequently lacked appropriate variety. There was insufficient use of visual material to bring key concepts to life. Often teachers relied too much on students to find reference material without showing them exemplars. Teachers do not use enough examples from professional work, nor do they give sufficient time to demonstrating drawing techniques in the studio. Teachers' styles varied. For example, in the less effective lessons, oral delivery was monotonous and teachers lacked enthusiasm for the topic. In the more effective lessons, students were visibly motivated by the teacher's enthusiasm. Cramped studio conditions affect learning. For example, restricted sight lines prevented teachers from observing some students' activities.

115. Staff are well qualified. Corridors are decorated with stimulating examples of students' work. Workshops are adequate and accessible to students. IT resources to support programmes are very good. However, some studio and workshop areas are unkempt and many have poor wall displays.

116. Assignments and project briefs are well written and make clear to students the evidence and the quality of work that is required from them. Feedback from assessments is usually very constructive. Students found the written feedback helpful. Some students' written work in art and design was not corrected for errors in spelling and punctuation. Procedures for monitoring students' progress are good. After inductions, individual learning plans are developed well with students. The results of diagnostic tests assessing students' competence in key skills are also available. However, some staff do not use this information to guide their classroom practice. Tutorial support is good. Selection criteria are not applied consistently across all the courses. Some students' entry qualifications and work on level 2 art and design courses indicated the potential to succeed at level

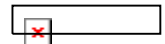
3. The attainment of a few students on level 3 courses was below the expected standard.

117. Opportunities for additional activities to support students' main programmes are good. Student trips, exhibition visits and advice on careers and progression all provide enrichment for students who are taking vocational courses. The range of activity adds value to their portfolio building. Timetable clashes prevent some students from making use of the cross-college enrichment programme.

Leadership and management

118. Leadership and management of the faculty are good. Links with schools are effective. Faculty staff make regular visits to feeder schools and a well-organised taster programme is used by school children within the curriculum area. There is a commitment to target setting and continuous improvement. New quality assurance and monitoring procedures have been introduced sensitively. Student disciplinary procedures are used effectively. Course review and self-assessment are thorough and carried out with integrity. Deployment of staff and allocation of other resources are well managed. Staff development, to keep abreast of developments in education, is good but opportunities for staff to develop their specialist practice professionally are unsatisfactory. Managers are aware of, and have reported on, gaps in curriculum provision. The faculty strategic plan addresses some of these deficiencies.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on GCE A-level and teacher education courses
- good achievement by most GCE A-level students
- much purposeful and effective teaching
- well-planned and helpful assessment of students' work
- effective course management.

Weaknesses

- declining and, in 2001, mostly low retention rates on most courses

- declining and low pass rates in GCE AS/A-level geography
- insufficient integration of IT and key skills.

Scope of provision

119. Provision in the social sciences is responsive to the needs of the local community. GCE AS/A-level courses are offered in six subjects, two of which were introduced in 2001. The inspection covered four of the subjects: psychology, sociology, history and geography. Most students are full time and aged 16 to 18, but a small provision exists at GCSE and GCE AS/A level for part-time adult students. An access to HE course offers a choice of social science subjects to full-time and part-time adult students. The college is preparing a new pre-access course to address weaknesses in the former, now withdrawn, course. Initial teacher education courses are available at different campuses and offer a variety of attendance patterns. They attract an increasing number of adult students.

Achievements and standards

120. High pass rates have been maintained for students on the further and adult education teacher's certificate courses and retention rates have improved to reach the national average. On the access to HE course, pass rates are good. In 2000, all students who obtained their qualification progressed to HE. However, retention rates on this course have declined and are low, particularly for part-time students. GCE A-level pass rates on most one and two-year social science courses have risen strongly over the three years from 1999 and are now high. Analysis shows that, since 1999, achievement of students aged 16 to 18 on GCE A-level courses in sociology, psychology and history have been better than expected, when compared with predictions based on their entry qualifications at GCSE. In contrast, there are low pass rates in GCE A-level geography where the students have not achieved what was expected of them on the basis of their entry qualifications. At GCE AS in 2001, pass rates were unsatisfactory in all subjects except history. Pass rates on GCSE courses remain above national averages despite a declining trend. Retention rates on most social science courses have declined. In 1999 they were generally comparable to national averages but fell sharply below this average in 2001.

121. Standards of attainment in lessons are good. Students show their responsiveness by applying themselves to tasks and engaging in lively discussion. Students on access and teacher education courses make effective use of group work, demonstrating good communication skills. Some sociology students make perceptive comments and ask good questions as they explore issues. By contrast, a significant minority of students aged 16 to 18 display poor communication skills. This weakness restricts their ability to talk appropriately about their subjects. Students' writing displays the ability to communicate in a variety of appropriate formats and styles. Many history and geography students have good analytical and interpretative skills. Psychology and sociology students show a growing confidence in their use of the language and methods of psychologists and sociologists. Attendance during the inspection was high at 89%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE subjects	2	No. of starts	39	77	71

(psychology, and sociology)		% retention	79	65	49
		% pass rate	68	66	54
GCE A-level psychology (2 years)	3	No. of starts	114	75	73
		% retention	62	67	53
		% pass rate	70	90	95
GCE A-level sociology (2 years)	3	No. of starts	20	40	19
		% retention	60	65	53
		% pass rate	58	65	90
GCE A-level sociology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	*	80	83
		% retention	*	65	58
		% pass rate	*	92	95
Access to HE humanities (1 and 2 years)	3	No. of starts	40	38	92
		% retention	83	63	50
		% pass rate	79	88	84
Further and adult education teacher's certificate (stage 2)	3	No. of starts	26	28	50
		% retention	69	82	90
		% pass rate	94	100	100

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

* unreliable data

Quality of education and training

122. Teaching is good or better, and consistently well planned and purposeful. Students make effective progress. A wide and appropriate range of teaching methods maintains the interest of students and takes account of their preferred ways of learning. In the most effective teaching, higher attaining students tackled the work in greater depth. Students develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers use their own expert subject knowledge to hold students' attention and stimulate debate. They are skilful at drawing on students' experience to illustrate new concepts and ideas. Many very good handouts are produced. Students are taught study skills, such as essay planning or ways of note making, to increase their capacity for independent study. Teachers do not make sufficient use of computers in their classroom teaching. Key skills are taught separately and not integrated into the teaching of social science subjects. Students find this approach unhelpful.

123. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced, and nearly all are employed full time. They take advantage of the frequent opportunities for staff development. A recent high turnover of staff disrupted learning for some students. Most teaching takes place in classrooms that have an adequate supply of specialist resources and equipment, with the exception of suitable screens for use with overhead projectors. In a few lessons, accommodation is unsuitable because it restricts the effectiveness of the methods that the teacher is using. The specialist book stock in the resource centre is well used and sufficient except for a shortage of up-to-date textbooks in sociology. There is an inadequate range of computer software and little provision on the college's intranet to support students' learning in the social sciences.

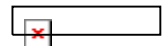
124. The assessment of students' work is well managed. Students receive a plan of the year's work which includes regular and suitable assessments. Teachers set assignments that encourage students to develop relevant skills. Students understand the standards that they are expected to reach. Teachers provide detailed criteria for awarding marks. Constructive written feedback on students' work is often supplemented by the teacher's discussions with individual students or the

whole class. In psychology, the combination of methods used, including the use of model answers is particularly effective. Teachers keep thorough records of students' assessed work to enable them to monitor progress. Students are kept aware of the progress they are making and how it compares with their target grades. Students' action plans which include long term and short term learning goals are, in many cases, completed superficially. Attendance is closely monitored. Teachers make extensive use of time outside lessons to provide informal help for those who request it. Students speak highly of this help. There are no formal arrangements for providing extra subject support.

Leadership and management

125. Management of the curriculum area is good. Strategic direction is clear. Individual courses are effectively managed. For example, on teacher education courses good team work has resulted in joint production of course materials, regular liaison with local universities' education departments and well co-ordinated provision across three sites. Teachers and managers are committed to improving students' achievements. Social science teachers undertake thoughtful reviews of their courses. Action plans are well considered and have resulted in a more thorough approach to the initial guidance, support and monitoring of students. These and other measures have been taken in response to poor retention rates, which earlier action plans had failed to remedy.

Foundation studies - basic skills



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

Strengths

- effective teaching and learning for students over 19 years of age
- high retention and pass rates on adult community programmes
- effective and responsive basic skills support for students aged 16 to 18
- good curriculum management
- effective liaison with schools and other partners.

Weaknesses

- poor quality feedback on students' written work

- some unsatisfactory accommodation for teaching
- some poor continuous review of students' progress.

Scope of provision

126. The college offers basic skills courses in English and mathematics for full-time and part-time students. These courses include discrete basic skills provision and basic skills as additional learning support. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,206 enrolments on a wide range of programmes offered on all the main sites and in a large number of well-resourced community locations.

Achievements and standards

127. Retention and pass rates are above national averages for most courses. This profile is particularly evident on short courses for adults in the community. Data on these courses for 2000/01, show pass rates in literacy of 95% and in numeracy of 100% and high retention rates. Approximately 80% of students progress to other courses or relevant work in the community. A few courses have retention and pass rates below the national average. Learning support is very effective and retention rates on courses, where this support has been operating, are showing an improving trend. For example, the retention rate on the GNVQ in health and social care has increased from 88% in 2001 to 93% in 2002. Similarly, on a foundation arts and leisure course, the retention rate has increased from 71% to 94% over the same period. On these courses, pass rates over the same period show an average improvement of 15 percentage points. Students frequently acquire skills in addition to those that form part of their main programme of study. This feature is most evident with adults. For example, in an excellent lesson at a centre in the community, students made confident and effective use of the Internet to support their mathematics course. Students' achievement is not celebrated sufficiently in this whole area of work on basic skills.

Quality of teaching and learning

128. Overall, teaching is effective and programmes are well constructed. Tutors on vocational courses and basic skills learning mentors provide comprehensive curriculum support. The needs of students are identified early and addressed on an individual basis. However, teachers do not always check with sufficient frequency or rigour that students are understanding their work. Teaching methods address the individual needs of most students well. In the most effective lessons, a range of appropriate teaching methods was used that covered the wide span of students' ability and interests. Teachers encourage students and help them to acquire independent learning skills. In the less effective weaker lessons, teachers did not create enough interest among students and gave them poor feedback. Written work was poorly marked. There was insufficient correction and annotation of scripts.

129. Staff work well together. They are well qualified and make effective use of staff development opportunities. For example, at the time of the inspection, they were undergoing training to help them deliver the new basic skills curriculum effectively. Resources and general accommodation are very good in the basic skills workshops and out in the community centres. Inappropriate accommodation sometimes restricts the range of teaching styles for full-time students on basic English and mathematics courses. Desks arranged in rows make it difficult for tutors to work with individuals within the group. The lack of computing equipment also hindered students' learning.

130. Initial assessment of students is effective. Students are matched to courses at an appropriate level. An individual learning plan is being used successfully. Formal reviews of progress take place three times a year. Teaching methods have been changed as a consequence of the findings from

these reviews. The less formal system of continuous assessment and review is less effective. Tutors fail to record, in writing, the main issues that were discussed. The lack of a written record makes it difficult for students to recall all the action points and restricts their capacity to improve.

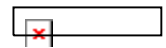
131. The programme generally meets the needs of the community. There is some effective and innovative work, which sets the learning in the heart of the local community. For example, there is a 'Learning Bus', a 'Family Learning' project and an 'Into the Future' project that uses It to widen participation and address basic skill issues.

Leadership and management

132. There is effective leadership and good curriculum co-ordination and management. Quality assurance measures are generally effective. The self-assessment report is useful to staff. Course teams set targets and work towards them effectively. To address declining retention rates new targets have been set and an action plan drawn up. There is also a more highly organised team approach. Learning support mentors have been appointed. They work with vocational and academic staff to help students in their main programmes of study. They are effective members of the team. Most students are working towards appropriate qualifications. The range of courses has been extended to give more choice to students and reflect the new basic skills curriculum. This development has led to a decline in numbers on some courses including City and Guilds Wordpower and Numberpower stage 1

133. Liaison with partners such as schools, the Local Education Authority and WEA is both strong and effective. These partnerships have resulted in some excellent project work that is widening participation on courses and is helping to address the high level of basic skill needs in the area.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates
- very good, often outstanding teaching
- good progression to higher level courses
- highly effective learning support in lessons
- excellent resources to support teaching and learning

- high standards of students' work
- effective leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

134. The college offers a broad range of discrete provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are five full-time programmes which are provided for those with severe, moderate and mild learning difficulties. A number of school link programmes are offered. There is also a programme for disaffected young people which is run in partnership with the careers and youth services. Students on these programmes take appropriate qualifications that include; MENCAP essential skills; Associated Examining Board (AEB) literacy and numeracy tests; OCN communication skills; Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) workright; and City and Guilds skillpower. The ESOL provision is part time, covers all levels from beginner to advanced, and includes ESOL through the use of computers. ESOL students can take a range of qualifications at a several levels. At the time of the inspection, there were 80 full-time students and 83 part-time students on the programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 74 students on the schools link programmes, and 262 students on ESOL programmes. Most of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

135. Students achieve well on all programmes. Pass rates in most of the externally accredited qualifications have improved over the three years from 1999, and in all cases were better than the national averages in 2001. Students make very good progress on all courses, and most are able to move on to a higher level course or to employment. Most retention rates are generally very good and were high on all programmes in 2001. Students on both programmes are motivated to learn and do well. Their course work is invariably of a good standard in relation to their learning goals. Punctuality and attendance are good. During the inspection attendance averaged 81%.

Quality of education and training

136. Most teaching is very good or outstanding and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Courses and lessons are well planned. Teachers make use of appropriate methods to ensure that their students learn effectively. They ask good questions which interest the students and show, from the answers, whether they understood the work. Lessons are carefully structured to ensure that learning is developed and consolidated in manageable steps. Many of the classroom-based lessons consist of a series of appropriate activities, such as whole class teacher-led question and answer sessions, small group or paired work, and individual work. Teachers have high expectations of their students and provide them with appropriately demanding tasks in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Teachers on all the programmes know their students well. Lesson plans generally include notes on individual students and on how particular tasks and activities will be organised to enable them to participate successfully. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and feelings of their different students, and judiciously give praise and encouragement.

137. The college provides high levels of additional support to ensure that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and students on ESOL programmes can succeed. In most of the lessons, there is at least one basic skills mentor or learning support worker providing additional support to individuals, groups or the whole class. Some of the courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have two teachers taking the lesson. Effective use is made of the additional staff who support the various activities. Work experience is an integral part of many of the courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and is being extended in 2001/02 so that more students can benefit. New procedures have recently been introduced to ensure that detailed feedback on students' performance during placements is received from those providing the work experience.

138. All the teachers are graduates with relevant teaching qualifications and experience. Classroom accommodation is good. Furniture can be easily moved to suit different activities. Equipment and materials to support teaching and learning are excellent. All the full-time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have timetabled lessons in IT rooms. Students attend ESOL through computer workshops where they can work individually through an extensive series of exercises produced by staff in the college. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to all the specialist college workshops.

139. Initial assessment is thorough. The full-time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities start their programme with a two-week period of assessment and induction after which they are placed on the appropriate course. All students have an individual learning plan which is used effectively throughout their programme. Students' progress is carefully monitored, and assessment data are recorded continuously. Reviews of progress take place regularly, and target setting and monitoring are thorough and effective. Parents and carers are well informed on the progress of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through regular evening events, and through annual reports.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to all the specialist workshops of the college as required for their practical courses.

Leadership and management

140. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are highly effective. Staff work exceptionally well together as a team, and course team meetings take place regularly and are well attended by both teachers and support workers. Staff feel well supported by managers. Both managers and staff are strongly committed to continuing professional development. College policies and procedures have been fully implemented. Targets are set and monitored at course level. Course reviews are thorough and all staff are involved in the self-assessment process. Accurate self-assessment and realistic action planning have led to many improvements.

Part D: College data

Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 1999/2000

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	33	67

2	42	58
3	38	62
4/5	4	96
Other	31	69
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	1,424	4,742	25.7
Agriculture	26	73	0.4
Construction	225	379	2.5
Engineering	484	704	5.0
Business	878	2,088	12.4
Hotel and catering	513	361	3.7
Health and community care	976	2,638	15.1
Art and design	583	635	5.1
Humanities	2,517	2,672	21.7
Basic education	792	1,229	8.4
Total	8,418	15,521	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long courses)	Retention & pass rate	16-18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/ 2000	1997/98	1998/99	1999/ 2000
		1	Starters excluding transfers	1,154	1,567	1,429	1,330
	Retention rate (%)	74	83	77	79	79	73
	National average (%)	81	80	80	80	78	79

	Pass rate (%)	45	57	74	61	59	74
	National average (%)	59	62	66	62	63	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,841	1,635	2,064	1,257	1,733	1,977
	Retention rate (%)	74	77	72	77	82	75
	National average (%)	76	76	77	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	57	71	78	61	72	76
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,331	1,705	1,565	975	1,354	1,655
	Retention rate (%)	83	81	77	80	81	73
	National average (%)	77	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	73	76	80	72	73	84
	National average (%)	71	72	73	64	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	12	21	5	452	338	231
	Retention rate (%)	100	95	80	91	88	79
	National average (%)	83	84	80	84	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	73	73	100	57	73	88
	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 and Tertiary colleges with a high number of students disadvantaged areas and 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 1998/99 - 1999/2000: *Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.*

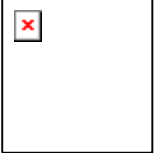
3. College rates for 1999/00: *provided by the college in spring 2001.*

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	63	29	8	86

Level 2 (intermediate)	65	29	6	69
Level 1 (foundation)	74	18	8	38
Other sessions	78	19	3	36
Totals	68	26	6	229

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