



Waltham Forest College

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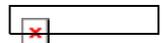
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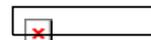
Basic information about the college



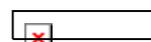
Name of college:	Waltham Forest College
Type of college:	College of Further Education
Principal:	Carol Gibson
Address of college:	Forest Road Walthamstow London E17 4JB
Telephone number:	020 8501 8000
Fax number:	020 8501 8001
Chair of governors:	David Pendle

Unique reference number: 130456
Name of reporting inspector: Vivien Bailey HMI
Dates of inspection: 11-15 February 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

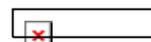


Waltham Forest College is located in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, in the area covered by the London North Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Within the borough, two sixth form colleges and three grant-maintained schools with sixth forms also offer post-16 provision. Most courses are offered at the college's main site and two subsidiary sites. The college also provides courses, in some instances through franchise arrangements, at venues in the local community and on employers' premises.

The borough is an impoverished area, with four wards which are amongst the ten most deprived in England. The LSC classifies the relative deprivation of students at the college as 'high'. About 60% of the college's students are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 36% of local residents. In 2001, the proportion of Year 11 pupils in the borough who achieved grade C or above in five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects was 42.8% compared with the national average of 50%.

The college provides courses from entry level to level 3 in all 14 areas of learning funded by the LSC. In 2000/01, the college enrolled 13,250 students, of whom 2,133 or 16%, were aged 16 to 18. Approximately 29% of the college's work is franchised provision. A new principal was appointed in February 2001. The college has been restructured. It has incurred a significant financial deficit and has launched a recovery plan. The college has four corporate goals: 'maximum achievement for all; innovation and adaptability; social inclusion; and financial health'.

How effective is the college?



The college meets the needs of its students effectively. Provision is good in two curriculum areas and satisfactory in the remainder. The majority of lessons are good or better and students value their good working relationships with staff. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- new and strong strategic direction for the college

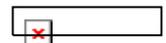
- broad curriculum with good progression routes for students at all levels
- success in widening participation within the community
- good guidance and support for students.

What should be improved

- some lessons and especially those for students aged 16 to 18
- retention and pass rates on many courses
- students' rate of progress towards achieving NVQ qualifications
- students' attendance and punctuality
- rigour of course reviews and the self-assessment process.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



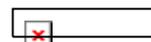
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. The pass rates on most courses are good, but retention

	rates for GCSE mathematics are low. Most teaching is satisfactory or good, although some science teaching is unstimulating. Mathematics and science areas are well resourced. The quality assurance of science courses is inadequate.
Engineering	Satisfactory. There are good pass rates on many courses, but declining retention and pass rates on level 1 mechanical and electronics courses. There is much good or very good teaching, especially of practical skills. There are not enough work experience placements for full-time students.
Business	Satisfactory. Teaching is good on management courses and students learn effectively. On business courses, however, some teaching is uninspiring. Pass rates are high on management courses but both pass rates and retention rates are declining on GNVQ courses. Many students progress to further courses and higher education (HE).
Business administration	Satisfactory. Teaching and assessment practices are good. Some pass rates are high but on some franchised courses, they are low. Many students progress to further study or employment. Some retention rates are low. Some aspects of quality assurance are unsatisfactory.
Information and communications technology (ICT)	Satisfactory. Most of the teaching is good. Retention and pass rates vary considerably and some are low. There are not enough resources to help students work on their own, and for practical demonstrations. There is a wide range of part-time courses to meet the needs of the community.
Leisure, travel and sports	Satisfactory. A broad range of courses is offered. Teaching on all courses is at least satisfactory, and some is very good. There are good links with industry. Good use is made of these in helping students to find work experience placements and develop their skills. There are low pass rates on GNVQ and football skills courses.
Hospitality	Good. There is much good teaching and students learn effectively. Retention and pass rates are high. Students are well supported by staff. They develop high level skills through the variety of their work, both within and outside college.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory or good. There are high pass rates on NVQ programmes, but some poor retention rates on hairdressing courses. There are good learning resources. There are not enough work experience placements for students or clients for them to work on in salons. Some students make slow progress.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. There is much good and very good teaching. Courses are planned carefully and taught in a supportive way. Retention rates are good, especially those for adult students. Pass rates are satisfactory on most courses, but those for students aged 16 to 18 give cause for concern.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Pass rates are high. Students receive good support from staff. Many students progress to further study. Accommodation and equipment need updating.
English, English as a foreign language (EFL) and modern foreign languages (MFL)	Satisfactory. There is much good teaching. Students are well motivated and industrious. Pass rates are high on EFL courses, but declining on MFL and English courses.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Teaching is good or very good, particularly on teacher education courses, where students demonstrate high levels of

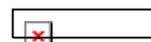
	attainment. Teaching on access courses is satisfactory, but retention and pass rates are low.
Foundation programmes	Satisfactory. All teaching is at least satisfactory and much is very good. Students are well supported by staff on a range of courses and enjoy their studies. Individual students are not set clear targets. Students on some courses do not attend regularly.
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	Satisfactory. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and some is very good. There are beneficial partnerships with community organisations. There were good pass rates on franchised provision in 2001. Students are well supported. There is, however, inadequate monitoring of the progress of individual students.
Basic skills	Satisfactory. The provision is well managed. It offers students clear routes to further study. Most teaching is good or very good and the national curriculum standards in basic skills are applied. Students' learning is accredited. Individual students are not set clear targets.

How well is the college led and managed?



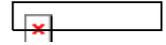
The leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. A new principal was appointed in February 2001. Managers and governors have given the college a new and strong sense of direction, to ensure that it meets the needs of the community more effectively. All staff support this aim. Good progress has been made in implementing a financial recovery plan which addresses the college's significant deficit. Actions taken have included a restructuring of the organisation and review of the curriculum. Change has been managed effectively. Quality assurance, however, has not led to discernible improvement in the overall quality of teaching. Some pass rates have increased but there has been little improvement in retention rates over the past three years.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



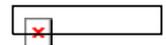
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college's strong commitment to social and educational inclusiveness is expressed through its corporate objectives and organisation structure. Good progress is being made in implementing the college's widening participation strategy. There has been an increase in the proportion of students living in areas of economic disadvantage in the last year. There is high representation of these students on courses at entry level and on franchise courses. Many of these students are aged 16 to 18. There is successful work with disaffected 14 to 16 year olds which encourages them to stay in education and progress to further study when they reach the age of 16. The college is developing partnership working with voluntary providers which is reaching into the neediest parts of the community. It also works with larger local partnerships to promote lifelong learning and social inclusion. There has been an increase in ESOL and basic skills provision. The college's curriculum is well designed. It provides students with progression routes from entry level to advanced level courses, and in some cases, HE. There is a good range of programmes for students who enter further education (FE) at the lowest levels, with opportunities to progress to vocational courses. There have also been a number of changes over the last year to make the college more welcoming and responsive to students and a more congenial place in which to work and study.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Through its good links with schools, the college provides pupils with clear information on its courses. Prospective students also receive help and guidance from the college's advice centre. There is an induction process which is well regarded by students. Staff give students an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills to identify those who need additional learning support. This support is provided on a one-to-one or small group basis, or through additional staffing in lessons. It is effective in improving retention and pass rates. Good support is provided for students with welfare and financial difficulties. Most students receive regular tutorials and these are mostly good. On many courses, students are not shown how to set themselves targets for improving their performance. Students' attendance and punctuality are monitored. A significant number of students do not attend regularly or are late for lessons.

Students' views of the college



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

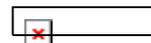
What students like about the college

- good support from staff
- good teaching
- good advice on careers and progression
- safe and friendly atmosphere
- wide range of courses and study patterns.

What they feel could be improved

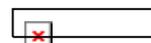
- sports and recreational facilities.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



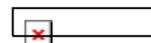
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	50	42	8
19+ and WBL*	69	26	5
Learning 16-18	43	45	12
19+ and WBL*	62	32	6

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. The overall retention rates on courses at levels 1 to 3 are broadly in line with the national average for FE colleges with a high proportion of disadvantaged students. They have remained mainly steady for the last three years. Pass rates have risen to be broadly in-line with the national average in 2001, although pass rates for adult students were above the national average for courses at level 2. Many students, particularly on NVQ courses, take longer than the planned time to achieve their qualifications. Overall attendance during the inspection was low at 70%. The highest attendance rates were on advanced and higher level courses, at 72% and 80% respectively, and the lowest rate was on level 1 courses, at 65%.

2. The curriculum is organised to help students progress from one level of study to the next, and many do so. Some students start at entry or foundation levels and progress to advanced level, and then on to HE, either in the college or elsewhere. The proportion of students who progress to HE is high, at 67% of those who apply.

16-18 year olds

3. Some 16% of students are aged 16 to 18. Many come to the college with modest levels of prior achievement. Most enrol on courses at levels 1 and 2. Retention rates on courses at levels 1 to 3 have remained broadly in line with the national average over the last three years. Pass rates have increased over this period. In 2001, the pass rate on level 1 courses was above the national average and on other courses, it was in line with it.

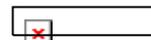
4. Most students are responsive in lessons. They enjoy opportunities to participate in discussions and group work. Many display good practical skills, for example, in science and engineering. However, students of this age group attained standards of work which were good or very good in only one-third of the lessons observed by inspectors. Some students on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses, and particularly those on GNVQ business courses, have poor skills of numeracy and literacy and they make slow progress. Many lessons were disrupted by the late arrival of students. Many students also fail to attend lessons regularly. On some courses, such as the GNVQ leisure and tourism, and football skills courses, students do not complete coursework by the end of the course and so fail to achieve their qualification within the planned timescale. In 2001, there were high pass rates on some courses. These included: GCSE science and mathematics courses, Edexcel national diploma courses in engineering, travel and tourism and design (fashion), courses leading to a NVQ at level 2 in catering and hospitality and hairdressing and beauty therapy; GNVQ in information technology (IT) at advanced level; the GCE A-level course in art and design and the art foundation programme. Pass rates are low or declining on a number of GNVQ courses. These include courses leading to a GNVQ in business at foundation and intermediate level, leisure and tourism at intermediate and advanced level, and health and social care at intermediate level. Pass rates are also low on Edexcel first and national diploma courses, and on foundation programmes. A high proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities gained a qualification.

Adult learners

5. Students aged 19 or over form the large majority of the college's intake. Most are returning to study after a break, with few or modest qualifications. However, they bring with them considerable experience of work or other valuable experience, such as raising a family. Most adult students are studying at entry level or levels 1 and 2. Many are taking courses in community venues or in the workplace. Retention rates on courses at levels 1 to 3 have remained broadly in line with the national average over the last three years. In 2001, the retention rate on courses at level 1 was slightly below the national average, and slightly above it on courses at level 3. Pass rates on level 2 courses have increased since 1999 and are now above the national average. Pass rates on level 1 and level 3 courses are broadly in line with the national average.

6. Older learners are well motivated and keen to make the most of their learning opportunities. They achieve higher standards of work in lessons than the younger students do. In more than half of the lessons observed by inspectors, older students attained standards which were good or very good. These students achieved particularly good standards of work on some advanced courses, such as those in management, teacher education and counselling. Many students on courses at lower levels achieved their qualification. Students on work-related programmes, such as those leading to the qualification of the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), were well motivated. In 2001, pass rates were high on AAT foundation and technician courses, counselling courses, the diploma in nursery nursing course and EFL courses. Pass rates on ESOL courses rose and were above average in 2001, as were those on basic skills courses. Pass rates were high on the access to science, IT and health studies courses, but low on the access to humanities and social science courses. Only a small proportion of students on the access to social work course progressed to HE. Over the past three years, pass rates have been low on franchised customer service and retail courses. Pass rates have declined on modern foreign language courses.

Quality of education and training



7. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 271 sessions. Approximately 60% of the teaching was judged to be good or better. Within this proportion, 19% of teaching was very good, and 3% was outstanding. About 7% of the teaching was less than satisfactory. This profile indicates that there has been little improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the last inspection. The highest proportions of good or better teaching were found on business administration, hospitality and catering, travel and tourism and visual and performing arts and media courses, whilst the lowest were on science and mathematics, hairdressing and beauty therapy and ESOL courses. Students taking advanced courses benefit from better teaching than those working at lower levels, particularly level 1.

8. Teaching in lessons which are predominantly for older students is significantly better than that for 16-18 year olds. The proportion of lessons for adults in which teaching was at least good was 69%, compared with 50% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18. In turn, the learning of adults was judged to be at least good in 62% of lessons, compared with only 43% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18. The attainment of adults was at least good in 56% of lessons, whereas that of students aged 16 to 18 was at least good in only 32% of lessons. Adult students' attainment was good or very good in 56% of lessons.

9. Most lessons are well planned. In the better lessons, teachers explain topics and concepts clearly and give good demonstrations. Many are also skilled in managing question and answer sessions and lively discussions. Staff often design and produce good quality handouts and learning materials to meet the needs of their students. Teachers draw effectively on both their own industrial and personal experience and that of their students, many of whom are already working or experienced in their chosen fields. There is usually a good rapport between staff and students, particularly on access, management, teacher education, health and social care, art and design and ESOL courses. Students appreciate the additional support teachers give them both in and outside lessons. In the best lessons, students are challenged to develop their knowledge and skills to the full. Teachers inspire them to achieve high standards in their work, rather than accepting mediocre responses. With 16 to 18 year old students, the best results are achieved with a well-judged blend of theory and practical activity. For example, the Young Enterprise programme has successfully motivated AVCE business students.

10. In weaker lessons, much teaching is dull and uninspiring. In these lessons, there was over-long and uninteresting exposition by teachers; a lack of variety in the activities; missed opportunities to show relevance by making connections with other aspects of the course, and insufficient use of information learning technology (ILT) to support learning. In these unsatisfactory lessons, teachers did not make learning exciting and stimulating for younger learners and failed to motivate them to work hard and succeed. Other weaknesses include a lack of clarity in the learning objectives to be achieved by the end of the lesson, and too few checks on students' understanding. In many instances, teachers failed to differentiate or adapt their methods to meet the diverse needs of students. This weakness was compounded by a lack of clarity about individual students' personal learning targets. In many instances, students disrupted lessons by arriving for them late. Teachers failed to reprimand latecomers or demand an explanation for their lack of punctuality. In a few lessons observed, teachers had difficulty managing the behaviour of groups of students aged 16 to 18.

11. Much of the practical teaching at the college is good. Most practical lessons are planned carefully and managed well. Students are encouraged to adopt professional working practices and usually pay proper attention to health and safety regulations. They develop their practical skills effectively and some achieve high standards. Students benefit from work experience placements. In some areas, however, such as engineering and hairdressing, it is difficult to find placements for all full-time students and some are not given the opportunity to relate theory to practice in the workplace. Two restaurants provide realistic working environments for students in catering and hospitality.

12. Procedures for the assessment of students' course work are generally good. On many courses the methods of assessment are appropriate and students are assessed against the standards

required by the awarding bodies. Assessment is fair and thorough and is mostly carried out on a regular basis. Most teachers provide good, constructive feedback to students on their performance and indicate ways in which it can be improved. On some programmes, however, there are deficiencies in assessment practices. For example, in hairdressing and beauty therapy there is weak assessment planning and students on the current courses have not yet received any formal assessment towards their NVQ. Little assessment has been carried out in science. There are deficiencies in arrangements for internal verification on some internally assessed courses. For example, there has been insufficient internal verification of assessment on retail courses.

13. In tutorials, students record and evaluate their own progress. The structure and frequency of tutorials varies across the college. All full-time and some part-time students have tutors. Most students receive individual tutorials regularly. Group tutorials, however, take place on a more occasional basis. The rationale for group tutorials has not been identified clearly. The majority of tutorials observed by inspectors were at least satisfactory. On many courses, students are not shown how to set targets for improving their learning, apart from targets for attendance and improvements in general attitude. In some tutorials, students are required to give explanations of why they have been absent from, or late for, lessons. This monitoring of students' attendance and punctuality, however, has not proved particularly effective.

14. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are kept well informed about the progress of their son or daughter, as are employers about the progress of students who are their employees. Parents speak very positively about the information and support they receive from the college, including regular written reports on their child's attendance and academic performance. Employers receive formal reports regularly on the progress of students they sponsor. Full-time students are taught, and assessed in, key skills. The level at which they study them is determined by the results of their initial assessment. Learning workshops are provided on communication, application of number and IT skills, which students attend in addition to undertaking work on aspects of key skills as part of their main course. On some courses, key skills are taught separately from the main course of study and some students do not see their relevance to the main programme of learning.

15. The college has effective links with employers and offers courses customised to meet the needs of companies and employees. The college is subcontracted by external managing agents to provide off-the-job training for a small number of modern apprentices. Although many students benefit from work experience, there is a significant minority of students who do not have work placements. In many curriculum areas, students are offered an extensive range of enrichment activities, for instance, residential trips and visits abroad. Students complained, however, that few enrichment activities were available to them on college premises.

16. The college provides good guidance and learning support for students. Staff provide good advice and guidance to prospective students and respond to their queries effectively. They also attend careers guidance sessions in local schools and organise visits to the college for school pupils, during which they are able to sample lessons. The student information, advice and guidance centre is open four evenings a week and is well used by full-time and part-time students. Induction for new students is well planned and students comment positively about this. Most full-time students undertake an initial assessment in literacy and numeracy, to identify their needs for additional learning support. Many students take up and benefit from additional learning support in numeracy or English, either in a workshop or on a one-to-one basis. In some cases, support teachers work in close partnership with subject teachers to plan and teach lessons jointly, although in some instances, this planning is not fully effective. The retention rates for students who receive additional learning support are high. Many of these students are enabled to progress to further courses.

17. Students have ready access to effective welfare support services in college, and speak positively about the support they have received. The college has worked hard to remove barriers to learning. For example, it provides financial support to many students to meet childcare, travel, living and course-related costs, as well as helping students with accommodation problems. Students with childcare needs have these met through the college nursery. The college provides effective specialist advice across a range of contexts. For example, advice is available for asylum seekers. Professional counsellors offer an effective service for students who require personal advice, guidance and support. Careers education and guidance are good. There are close links with

external agencies. The college makes effective use of these support agencies to augment its own range of support and guidance services.

18. The college provides a wide range of programmes at different levels to meet diverse local needs. These include pre-entry programmes, extensive foundation provision, and courses at intermediate and advanced levels. HE courses are also offered in some curriculum areas. There are clear progression routes to further courses and to HE courses both within and outside the college. About 75% of students on ESOL courses progress to other courses in the college. Progression to HE is good. The college works closely with a number of universities. In 2001, 360 students applied for HE and 67% were successful. Liaison between the college and local schools is well established and effective.

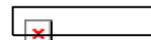
19. One of the college's strategic objectives is to widen participation amongst people who might not have considered entering FE. The college is making good progress in meeting this objective. There is a well-established programme for disaffected 14 to 16 year olds who undertake some study at the college in conjunction with their school studies. There was a successful 'summer university' at the college in August 2001, which familiarised young people with opportunities in post-16 education and training. Over the last year, there has been an increase in the proportion of students living in areas of economic disadvantage. Many of these students are on courses at entry level and on franchised courses in the community. The college is working in partnership with voluntary organisations which reach out to the neediest parts of the community. Many new programmes are being developed, following a thorough needs analysis with external organisations. There is insufficient promotion of mainstream provision based at the college to learners on franchised courses and at community venues.

20. There are good learning resources in many areas. For example, the college has developed modern facilities for automobile engineering at two centres away from the main site. There are good resources for language students and modern, well-equipped salons for hairdressing and beauty therapy. Some equipment needs to be replaced, for instance, in catering and hospitality. There is a good ratio of computers to students. Many of the machines are located in the college's nine learning resource centres. These provide students with access to e-mail, the Internet and the college's developing intranet. Students use the learning resource centres a great deal in the day and evening. There are extensive computing resources for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

21. Classrooms contain sufficient basic equipment, but many are drab and contain few displays of students' work or appropriate learning materials. Since the last inspection, the college has been made more accessible to students with restricted mobility. Currently, 97% of the college, including its satellite centres, is accessible to wheelchair users. The front of the main building is not accessible to wheelchair users, a weakness which the college intends to address when funds are available. There is no formally developed accommodation strategy. The college currently has no formal plan for refurbishment of its accommodation to make it suitable for new courses, such as some visual arts courses staff would like to run.

22. Many new staff have joined the college in the last year. In most areas, teaching staff are well qualified and deployed effectively. More than half the teachers of engineering do not currently possess a teaching qualification, and subject staff involved in basic skills provision do not have a specialist qualification in the teaching of basic skills. Many of these staff are currently working towards achieving one. Some teachers lack recent industrial experience. Technical and learning support staff provide good support for teachers. Staff are provided with clear guidelines on health and safety. In most practical areas, potential hazards have been correctly identified and appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that staff and students can work safely. Some staff, however, have not received the training in health and safety that they need.

Leadership and management



23. Overall, leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. There has been a significant improvement in both leadership and management since the last inspection. This was consolidated by the appointment of the new principal in February 2001. Before her appointment, the failure to achieve income targets and poor deployment of staff led to a significant accumulated financial deficit. In April 2001, senior managers developed a recovery plan to address these weaknesses. The corporation has made a significant contribution to the development of the college's revised mission and strategic plan for the period 2001 to 2003, which is closely linked to the recovery plan. The revised mission statement and strategic plan express the college's strong commitment to meeting the needs of the local community, and widening the participation of people from under-represented groups. High priority is given to raising standards. The new mission and strategic goals are well supported by managers and staff.

24. Senior managers provide strong leadership and are supportive of staff. The management of change has been effective, with much progress made over a short period of time towards the implementation of the recovery plan. Students appreciate the improvement made to some aspects of the learning and social environments. A carefully planned human resource strategy has been implemented. There is now a more effective management structure with fewer managers and better deployment of teachers. A model for costing courses at appropriate levels, based on national benchmarks for the sector, is now being used.

25. There has been a thorough review of the college's curriculum, with the aim of improving its relevance to the needs of the community. Full-time GCE AS and A-level and GCSE courses were discontinued, as they are offered by two nearby sixth form colleges, while provision in English for speakers of other languages was extended. A review of the college's franchised courses has led to provision of more courses at venues in the local community. Communication between staff and managers at all levels has improved considerably, and is good. The college is engaged in a considerable number of productive partnerships and collaborative activities with other learning providers, the local authority and organisations such as Connexions.

26. Governors meet regularly and review the progress made in implementing the strategic and recovery plans. There is effective monitoring of the management of change by governors. However, there are some deficiencies in reports made to governors. For example, some financial reports lack detailed forecasts. Reports received by governors on students' retention and pass rates do not indicate clearly to all governors those courses where students' performance is giving cause for concern.

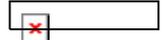
27. Overall, retention and pass rates are satisfactory. On some courses, pass rates are increasing. Most teaching is satisfactory or good. However, quality assurance systems have had little impact on improving the quality of teaching and the retention rates on many courses. Target setting has not been carried out effectively or with consistent thoroughness across all courses. Some course reviews lack rigour and there has been inadequate action planning. Some self-assessment reports do not cover teaching and learning, and retention and pass rates adequately. The college has recently improved its arrangements for quality assurance, including those for franchised courses.

28. Since the last inspection, there has been considerable improvement in the quality and availability of information available to managers. Some reports are too detailed and lack summary information showing the areas where efficiency targets are not being met. There is an established lesson observation plan. Overall, staff who observed lessons graded them more highly than the inspectors did. The findings from lesson observations have not been analysed sufficiently. A comprehensive internal inspection scheme focuses on selected curriculum areas annually. This moderates lesson observation grades and reviews progress in implementing action plans. The staff appraisal scheme was suspended during the restructuring period and is due to re-commence in April 2002. The views of students are sought systematically and are used to assist reviews of provision and planning.

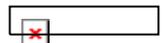
29. Commitment to equality of opportunity is reflected in the college's strategic plan. An annual

report on equal opportunities is prepared for the corporation. Detailed monitoring reports are produced which contain an analysis of enrolments, retention rates and students' pass rates in terms of students' ethnicity, gender and disabilities. Similar reports relate to aspects of staffing. In response to a recent report, managers have introduced changes to the engineering curriculum which are designed to help some students do better. The college has identified some weaknesses in the promotion of equal opportunities across the curriculum and managers are currently taking action to rectify these.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- good practical science skills of students
- well-resourced science and mathematics specialist areas
- progression of many science students to further study and HE.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on GCSE mathematics courses
- lack of stimulus in science teaching
- insufficient assessment and marking of work on many courses

- inadequate quality assurance of science courses.

Scope of provision

30. The college offers vocational science courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, which recruit almost a hundred students. A science certificate of achievement course is available for students whose first language is not English and wish to follow science studies. Similarly, a course leading to a qualification in numeracy prepares students for entry to the GCSE mathematics course. These mathematics courses are available in the day and evening, and about 100 students are enrolled on them. Currently, small numbers of continuing students are following GCE AS or A-level courses in biology, chemistry or mathematics. Full-time courses in these subjects are being discontinued following revision of the college's curriculum. Short courses are provided to meet local needs. For instance, there are courses in microbiology and for school technicians. Most science students are aged 16 to 18, but about half of the students enrolled on mathematics courses are over 19.

Achievement and standards

31. Pass rates on most courses are high. For example, the pass rate on the intermediate GNVQ course in science is consistently high and improving. Both in GCSE science and in mathematics, pass rates are well above the national average. The retention rate on GCSE mathematics courses, however, is poor. Over the last two years, the pass rate on the GNVQ course at advanced level science has been in line with the national average, and the proportion of students who obtained higher grade passes has been well above the national average. Many students progress from GNVQ courses at intermediate level to advanced science courses. A high proportion of students go on to HE. The numbers of students on GCE A-level courses in mathematics and sciences have been very small. Pass rates on these courses have varied considerably and some have been low.

32. The standards students achieve in formal assessments are satisfactory. In some cases, for example on intermediate GNVQ science courses at intermediate level, they are high. Students carry out experimental science tasks with due attention to safety, and display good practical skills. In 2001, students of GCE A-level chemistry did very well in a national competition involving quantitative analysis, and the five female students entered were in the top 10% of all winners.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics (grades A*-C)	2	No. of starts	163	124	95
		% retention	77	48	55
		% pass rate	45	64	61
GCSE sciences (grades A*-C)	2	No. of starts	86	44	32
		% retention	92	61	81
		% pass rate	49	74	83
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	25	27	20
		% retention	88	89	80
		% pass rate	89	96	100
GNVQ advanced science	3	No. of starts	23	23	20
		% retention	78	96	76
		% pass rate	47	70	71

Access certificate in science	3	No. of starts	12	14	13
		% retention	50	71	77
		% pass rate	83	90	*

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

* awarding body data not available

Quality of education and training

33. All teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and most is good. Teachers plan lessons well. They provide students with a range of tasks and exercises to help them learn effectively. In the best lessons, students were given a variety of activities through which they extended their knowledge and developed important skills. For example, students of basic numeracy acquired understanding of measurement and became familiar with the variety of measuring units, by using scales, measuring jugs and a trundle wheel. In some lessons, teachers used additional exercises or tests available on a website and these were appropriate for the range of students' abilities. In less successful lessons, teachers failed to meet the needs of the more able students, did not check students' understanding regularly and did not summarise the learning objectives.

34. Science teaching is mainly satisfactory or good. In the best lessons, students carry out well-planned practical tasks, such as extraction of apple and pear juice using pectinase. They find such tasks interesting and enjoyable and these further their understanding of theory. Some teaching is dull and fails to stimulate the students. Some lesson objectives are unclear. Some teaching of vocational science is unsatisfactory. In science, schemes of work and lesson plans give subject content and specify practical work, but otherwise, many lack detail. They do not show how the teaching will meet the needs of students of all abilities. There is little use of ILT in teaching and practical work. The late arrival of some students disrupts some lessons. Some students fail to attend regularly and their absence has an adverse effect on the continuity of other students' learning on their courses.

35. In all curriculum areas, the key skill of application of number is taught at levels 1 to 3. All teachers of application of number follow the same schemes of work. Termly assignments and tests are well designed and carefully marked. In many cases, no other work is marked and students are given insufficient information about their progress in developing this key skill. When support assistants are present in lessons, there is inadequate planning of how their services will be used. Some application of number assignments, for example, at level 3 for science students, relate to the curriculum area well. In some instances, assignments in application of number are not relevant to the students' main course and this key skill is not taught as an integral part of it.

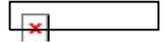
36. Assignments and tests cover the subject matter and competences which students need to obtain their qualifications. Marking is fair and accurate. On some mathematics and chemistry courses, marking is carried out regularly and recorded. In many other instances, however, students are not assessed regularly. Teachers do not give formal marks for homework and do not always ensure that classwork is correct. Students rarely receive detailed written comments which show them how they may improve their work. Mathematics students value the workshop support available to them.

37. Most teachers are well qualified in their subjects. They are well supported by a team of experienced technicians. Resources in laboratories and the mathematics specialist area are good, and include modern computers which give access to the Internet. Computers are not available, however, for the monitoring of practical work or the analysis of experimental data. Other than those on chemistry, there are few science CD-ROMs for use in teaching. Equipment for instrumental analysis in chemistry is very good, as is that for microbiology, but there are few simple models to illustrate large biological molecules.

Leadership and management

38. Curriculum teams hold meetings regularly and these have a clear agenda of items for discussion. Mathematics is well led and ably managed, but there is currently no curriculum manager for science. Quality assurance of science courses is inadequate. For example, there is no standardisation of tutorial practice and some tutorials are not carried out well. The monitoring of students' attendance is not always effective. Some schemes of work are poor. There is some inadequate monitoring of progress towards attainment of students' achievement targets.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses in 2001
- effective practical teaching
- very good learning resources for motor vehicle students
- broad range of engineering courses at all levels
- effective links with industry.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance
- low retention and pass rates on level 1 mechanical and electronic courses
- some ineffective teaching
- insufficient provision of work experience for full-time students

- inadequate quality assurance processes.

Scope of provision

39. The college offers a broad range of engineering courses including mechanical, electrical, electronic and motor vehicle engine and body studies. Mechanical and electrical/electronic courses are managed on the main Forest Road campus, and motor vehicle courses are run at the Lockwood Way and Priestley Way sites. There is well-planned provision which enables students to progress from entry level to higher levels, including a higher national diploma course, with different modes of attendance. There are about 630 enrolments, the majority of which are on level 1 and 2 courses. Approximately 50% of students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

40. There are high pass rates on Edexcel national diploma courses, and on electrical installation and motor vehicle level 1 courses. These have been rising over a three-year period and are now well above national averages. However, pass and retention rates on mechanical and electrical engineering level 1 courses have declined to below the national average. For example, on the City and Guilds basic engineering competences course, the retention rate declined from 92% to 62% over a two-year period. Retention rates on other courses are in line with the national average.

41. Students make good progress and develop a high level of practical skills. In a lesson on electronics on an Edexcel first diploma course, students were able to design and produce their own printed circuit boards, fit components and test the system. On most courses, many students are late for lessons or do not attend them regularly. The proportion of national diploma students who progress to HE is high at 65%. There are courses for disaffected students aged under 16 and a number of these students progress to higher level courses in the college.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 2010 basic engineering	1	No. of starts	24	24	13
		% retention	92	83	62
		% pass rate	76	83	63
City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle	1	No. of starts	11	38	38
		% retention	64	92	79
		% pass rate	57	66	87
City and Guilds 2240 electronics servicing	1	No. of starts	27	25	29
		% retention	70	76	69
		% pass rate	21	32	35
Edexcel first diploma engineering	2	No. of starts	29	25	29
		% retention	69	76	66
		% pass rate	75	63	68
City and Guilds 236 part 2 electrical installation	2	No. of starts	14	17	12
		% retention	93	82	92
		% pass rate	54	43	82

Edexcel national diploma engineering	3	No. of starts	35	33	38
		% retention	89	52	79
		% pass rate	27	59	89

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

Quality of education and training

42. Teaching is at least good in most lessons and it was very good or outstanding in about one-third of lessons observed. Teachers use a variety of appropriate styles for presenting topics and information. They supplement learning resources for the course with good learning materials they have developed themselves. In an effective motor vehicle lesson, the description of a complex operation was aided by the use of a video presentation. A well-designed task sheet was used to make sure the students understood what they had been taught. In a computer-aided design lesson, students made good progress in developing new skills which they applied in a series of well-planned exercises. These were staged to allow for students who were working at different speeds and levels. In a minority of lessons, teaching is unimaginative and students become inattentive. In theory lessons, teachers do not make enough use of visual aids and practical examples to aid students' understanding of concepts. There is insufficient use of assignments linking subject areas. Assignments are not scheduled systematically and sometimes students have to carry out too many at the same time. Students are well motivated and able to work successfully at their own pace. They make good use of the Internet during their assignment work. Motor vehicle students use computer-based learning materials and simulated systems effectively. Proper attention is paid to health and safety regulations in workshops and laboratories, but on occasions, some students in the electrical installation area were not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

43. Specialist accommodation and equipment are suitable for their purpose. Motor vehicle workshops are modern and well appointed. They lack storage space, however, and the equipment available to students is essential for their needs but not broad in range. Other engineering workshops contain older equipment, which is nevertheless functionally effective and adequate for the level of work. Students have open access to good resources, including a good, well-used stock of modern books and video materials within the curriculum areas. Students also have open access to computers, this includes powerful computers with engineering-specific software. Teachers are experienced and confident in their subjects, but many lack teaching qualifications. Although 71% of the college staff are trained teachers, only 42% of engineering teachers are currently trained. Many of these are working towards teaching qualifications.

44. Students are assessed regularly throughout their courses. Assignment briefs are clearly written and students are aware of deadlines for completion of work. The feedback teachers give students on their performance is often negative and seldom explains what is good about the students' work. Students on electronic and mechanical engineering courses have their progress reviewed formally by their tutor every six weeks. There is effective internal verification of students' assessed work in motor vehicle engineering courses, however, the processes for students' progress reviews and internal verification are not well managed.

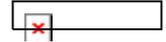
45. There are no formal industrial advisory committees, but staff in the curriculum area have strong links with individual employers and managing agents through personal contacts and their visits to carry out assessment in the workplace. There are effective links with industry. For example, a new motor vehicle has recently been donated by a company as a resource for students, and specialist courses have been run to meet the specific needs of employees.

46. There is little provision of work experience for full-time students, some of whom make slow progress in vocational subjects. There are few female students and managers are taking action to recruit more.

Leadership and management

47. There is a new management structure, which is well understood by all staff and is working satisfactorily. Good communication is maintained through regular team meetings. Realistic course targets are set for retention and pass rates. Where these are not met, the courses concerned are not monitored closely and there is little rigorous investigation into why some students are not performing well. The annual self-assessment report is comprehensive, but pays insufficient attention to the areas of teaching and learning and standards achieved. There is little sharing of good practice.

Business



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

Strengths

- success of many students in progressing to further courses and HE
- strong pastoral and additional support for students of diverse cultural backgrounds
- good teaching on courses for adult students
- high pass rates on management courses.

Weaknesses

- some unstimulating teaching on full-time courses
- very low pass rates on franchised courses
- little evaluation of teaching
- lack of recent business experience amongst teachers.

Scope of provision

48. The college provides foundation and intermediate GNVQ and AVCE courses in business, and currently there are 120 full-time students on these. Other programmes are provided on a part-time basis. There are 34 students on the access to business studies and law course. Courses leading to management qualifications are provided at levels 3, 4 and 5 and 80 students are on these. Some management courses are also provided on a commercial basis. For several years, the college has provided courses leading to a NVQ in owner management at level 3, and a NVQ in management at level 4, to two local providers on a franchised basis. There has been an average of 60 students on these courses each year.

Achievement and standards

49. Retention and pass rates on management courses at all levels have been very high for several years. The retention rate has averaged 90% on these courses, and in many instances, the pass rate has been 100%. The pass rate on the access courses has been variable, but was good in 2001. Retention and pass rates on full-time courses have fluctuated considerably and been low on courses at foundation and intermediate levels. Some students on GNVQ courses have weak skills in literacy and numeracy and make slow progress. On franchised courses, retention rates have been high, but pass rates have been low and have not exceeded 20% in the last three years. The majority of the students are keen to gain the skills they need but are not motivated to obtain the qualification.

50. Adult students show high levels of commitment to their work and their attainments are high. Students on management courses work hard to develop the knowledge and skills to perform their job role more effectively. Full-time students demonstrate good IT skills in their work. Many full-time students have little prior knowledge of the business world and their understanding of it builds slowly. Most are conscientious and keen to succeed, and eventually they produce work to the standards required. Attendance and punctuality are good on all courses.

51. Business courses provide good progression routes from foundation level to HE. In 2001, 94% of students who completed GNVQ courses at advanced level successfully, progressed to HE. The access courses provide a route to HE for adults with few qualifications. In 2001, 90% of access students who completed their course successfully went on to HE. All full-time students on the intermediate and AVCE courses spend two weeks on work experience.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	19	18	30
		% retention	61	81	68
		% pass rate	91	62	58
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	34	31	31
		% retention	81	77	60
		% pass rate	76	50	61
Access to business and law	3	No. of starts	33	27	18
		% retention	68	67	72
		% pass rate	76	44	85
NVQ owner management	3	No. of starts	16	84	58
		% retention	100	32	95
		% pass rate	0	20	16
Certificate in	4	No. of starts	27	13	22

management studies	% retention	85	100	86
	% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

52. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. There are clear schemes of work and lesson plans for all courses. Most contain appropriate detail and identify learning objectives. Teaching on courses for adults is good. Lessons are often lively and students participate in them with enthusiasm. Management lessons are planned carefully and taught well. In these lessons, students are given excellent handouts which have been developed by the teaching team. These contain essential knowledge about the topic being taught. They are written very clearly and specify activities which have been carefully designed to develop students' understanding and application skills. In one lesson on an access course, the teacher skilfully and energetically prompted the whole group to work collectively through examples of a complex numerical technique. The students' understanding was checked regularly, until students with little prior attainment had mastered the necessary skill. On full-time courses, some teaching lacks imagination, and fails to stimulate or engage students sufficiently. For example, in some lessons on GNVQ courses, the students lost interest in what they were doing. The Young Enterprise Scheme is successfully integrated with the AVCE business course. Students have enjoyed success in the competition locally. Their success has raised their aspirations and spurred them on to further achievements.

53. In many lessons, however, teachers do not check students' understanding often enough. Some teachers do not ask the students sufficiently demanding questions. In several lessons, the same few individuals were allowed to dominate oral work and discussions. Classes include students from a wide ability range but teachers seldom allocate different tasks to different students according to their individual ability. At the end of lessons, some teachers summarise effectively what has been taught. Few teachers, however, ask the students whether they think the objectives of the lesson have been met.

54. Teachers are appropriately qualified for the work they undertake and most have teaching qualifications. Few have recent business experience. Classrooms have adequate resources for teaching but are dull and drab. They do not contain displays of students' work or materials related to courses. There are enough computers for students to use. There are adequate resources for management and related subjects, but there are insufficient resources in the learning centre for business studies.

55. There are good procedures for the identification of students' learning support needs on entry. Students do not have individual learning plans and they are not set specific learning targets. Forms of assessment used are appropriate and relevant to vocational programmes. Gradings are sound, but the quality of written feedback is variable. Some teachers provide comprehensive and constructive feedback giving clear guidance to students on ways of improving their performance. Other feedback is much more superficial. Spelling and punctuation are not always corrected.

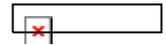
56. There is good tutorial provision for full-time and part-time students, which is effective in helping to build students' confidence. Support for students on part-time courses is provided where needed. Systematic reviews of students' progress are built into each course. On full-time courses, individual students receive progress reviews regularly. Students' attendance is monitored closely and attendance records are kept up to date. Business students make good use of the learning centre for extra help in English and numeracy. Students with learning disabilities are well supported. For example, learning materials on the management course are available in large font size and in Braille. Students very much value the guidance and support they receive from staff.

Leadership and management

57. The new management structure is well understood and responsibilities for management of

courses and the curriculum are defined clearly. Communication amongst staff is good and there are regular team meetings. Targets are set for retention and pass rates on each course. The process of self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous, particularly in relation to the evaluation of teaching and the effectiveness of learning. Action planning is not precise enough. The quality assurance of franchised provision has been inadequate, but more systematic and rigorous procedures are now being implemented. Students from minority groups expressed their appreciation of the way the college promotes equality of opportunity. Management courses are planned carefully and organised well. Members of the management teaching team share good practice. In other subject areas, teachers have not shared good practice but are beginning to do so now.

Business administration



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

Strengths

- effective teaching and assessment
- good pass rates on AAT courses in 2001
- success of students in progressing through AAT course levels.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on some programmes
- insufficient recording of initial assessment of students on NVQ courses
- lack of rigour in self-assessment process.

Scope of provision

58. Students in the curriculum area are mostly aged 19 and over, some of whom are on NVQ programmes provided for employers in the workplace. Of the total of 179 students, 61 are following NVQ programmes in the workplace in retail or customer service studies. The remainder are on AAT courses at foundation, intermediate or technician level, which are provided during the day and evening. There is also a full-time 'fast track' AAT course. There is a business administration NVQ level 3 programme, and a small number of bookkeeping courses. There are good links with

employers. Programmes meet the needs of employers and local employed people, such as young finance professionals.

Achievement and standards

59. Both retention and pass rates are highly variable across the range of courses. In 2001, pass rates on the AAT course at foundation and technician level were well above the national average. Pass rates were low on NVQ programmes which were franchised, or provided by the college in the workplace. There were low pass rates on the NVQ customer service course in 1998/99 and 1999/2000. The college consequently terminated a franchise arrangement for this course. The college now runs the course itself and in 2001, the pass rate was excellent, at 100%. In 1999 and 2000, pass rates were low for the small number of students on the one-year NVQ programme in retail. Of the students enrolled on this programme in 2000/01, the 20 students still on it did not achieve their qualification in the scheduled time but are continuing their studies. The AAT programme provides a route to further study at higher levels for young finance professionals. At the time of inspection, seven students out of the nine on the college's 'fast-track' programme in the current year, had completed the foundation level course successfully, and had progressed to the intermediate level. Retention rates have risen on the NVQ level 2 course in administration.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ customer service (one year)	2	No. of starts	49	130	25
		% retention	21	6	60
		% pass rate	0	0	100
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	26	30	22
		% retention	73	70	100
		% pass rate	74	50	59
NVQ retail (one year)	2	No. of starts	11	4	29
		% retention	55	100	62
		% pass rate	0	25	0**
AAT foundation	2	No. of starts	49	48	38
		% retention	93	67	74
		% pass rate	57	50	72
AAT intermediate	3	No. of starts	53	72	49
		% retention	90	87	86
		% pass rate	0	39	33
AAT technician	4	No. of starts	19	0	25
		% retention	100	*	58
		% pass rate	11	*	64

* not applicable

** students are continuing

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

Quality of education and training

60. Across the curriculum area, teaching and assessment are carried out well. In lessons, students on AAT programmes provided prompt, correct answers to teachers' questions, and demonstrated understanding of such topics as VAT and variance analysis. They showed themselves capable of following and calculating input figures as part of class exercises. Students on customer service NVQ programmes demonstrated high levels of knowledge and understanding in response to questioning by their assessor. Similarly, when being observed by their assessor, they demonstrated the competences they needed to possess in order to obtain their NVQ. Individual learning plans have been recently introduced for students on NVQ courses but these are not proving fully effective. In particular, students' results in initial assessment are not recorded on the plans. The feedback students receive on their performance in the initial assessments is not sufficiently detailed.

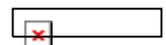
61. Teachers have appropriate professional and occupational experience. Some teachers keep their experience through activities outside college. There is, however, no systematic approach to helping staff update their professional knowledge and skills. Over the last year, there has been a lack of qualified staff on NVQ retail and customer service programmes but this shortfall has now been rectified. All members of the NVQ team are qualified assessors and some are qualified internal verifiers. There are adequate learning resources. Frequent use is made of previous test papers to prepare AAT students for assessments. In the learning centre, students have access to accounting texts, and computers with accounting and payroll software. Internal verification of assessments is not carried out thoroughly on the NVQ programme in retail. Internal verifiers do not sample enough assessments.

Leadership and management

62. Assessment is both effective and rigorous. Assessment of students' competence in NVQs occurs in the workplace, through direct observation, questioning and discussion. Students receive progress reviews during which they are set individual learning targets. AAT students are assessed by means of both college-devised and external tests. Progress is monitored in regular tutorial sessions where students receive one-to-one coaching and support. Relevant, work-based projects for technician level learners are managed by a personal project tutor. NVQ students in the workplace receive help from their assessors who visit them frequently. Initial identification of the learning needs of students, assessment planning and feedback to students on their work are not fully recorded.

63. Advice and support are available to all students. Internal verification is not implemented with consistent thoroughness throughout the curriculum area. For example, it is carried out well on AAT courses but lacks rigour on NVQ programmes in retail. Students' attendance and progress are discussed at programme team meetings. The self-assessment report did not identify strengths and weaknesses over the curriculum area with sufficient thoroughness.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on the advanced GNVQ IT course
- high pass rates on access to computing and City and Guilds 7261 programming courses

- effective provision to meet community needs
- good induction for part-time students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on several courses
- insufficient learning resources
- lack of rigour in quality assurance
- adverse effects of staff shortages.

Scope of provision

64. The college offers a wide range of provision for all students from level 1 to level 3, as well as a higher national certificate course. The City and Guilds level 1 modular provision has been arranged flexibly to meet the needs of both full-time and part-time students. The college plans to implement changes to its curriculum in September 2002. The GCSE IT and GCE A-level computing courses were not offered in 2001/02, but the college plans to introduce the GCE AS computing course in September 2002. Franchised provision is used effectively to widen participation and attract more students from the local community. Courses in ICT are currently franchised to seven local providers. The college also offers ICT provision at outreach sites. A range of Open College Network (OCN) units in ICT have been developed by the college to meet local needs. There are 'taster' sessions for employers in the college's 'Cyberskills' workshops, designed to encourage them to send staff for training.

Achievement and standards

65. Retention and pass rates on the advanced GNVQ IT or ICT course are above the national average, as are pass rates on the access to computing and the City and Guilds 7261 level 1 programming courses. Pass rates on the GCE A-level computing, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), Cambridge IT and key skills IT courses are low. Many students progress to further courses at the college and some progress to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion	1999	2000	2001
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		year:			
City and Guilds 7261 certificate in programming (one year)	1	No. of starts	118	19	26
		% retention	53	68	62
		% pass rate	79	77	100
CLAIT (all modes)	1	No. of starts	412	262	385
		% retention	94	83	85
		% pass rate	39	47	51
GCSE IT	2	No. of starts	47	25	29
		% retention	81	76	76
		% pass rate	34	11	45
Key skills IT	2	No. of starts	41	28	193
		% retention	88	82	74
		% pass rate	83	43	12
Cambridge IT	2	No. of starts	*	138	197
		% retention	*	79	90
		% pass rate	*	14	8
GNVQ advanced IT	3	No. of starts	28	35	34
		% retention	61	74	85
		% pass rate	88	64	86
Access certificate in computing	3	No. of starts	34	34	33
		% retention	62	79	79
		% pass rate	100	67	88
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	28	21	21
		% retention	61	52	91
		% pass rate	92	55	24

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

66. There is much good teaching. Most of the lessons are carefully planned and well prepared. In a good lesson, students aged 16 to 18 on a full-time City and Guilds course at level 1, were given a good introduction to the practical application of databases by creating one themselves, in order to monitor and record their own performance in course assignments. In another good lesson, students on a GNVQ course at intermediate level worked in groups to develop models for dealing with situations where some information was missing in an applications task, and they needed to make assumptions. This led to an effective discussion of modelling concepts and the students had to use mathematical skills which were more complex than those usually required at level 2.

67. Teachers lack the resources they need to demonstrate practical skills to groups. In the absence of such resources, they have tried alternative ways of teaching these skills, such as explaining them orally, but these have not proved effective. In one lesson, the students crowded round a demonstration where the prepared document did not transfer to the screen with the original font and formatting. As the demonstration continued, students became confused and uncertain how to

proceed. Across the college, students are not given learning materials about computer applications, which they can use on their own. All students have to work on the same materials but these are insufficiently demanding for some students and fail to develop their skills or extend their knowledge. The teaching of key skills is not an integral part of many programmes. Students do not attend lessons on key skills regularly. Few students gain certification in key skills.

68. Most assessment tasks are generally well designed and easy to follow. Assessment is fair and accurate and students receive adequate feedback on ways of improving their work. Students' progress is monitored carefully, with the aim of finding out whether students will meet deadlines for the completion of assessed work. Students' classwork and assessed work are of an appropriate standard. Some of the assessed work inspected was inadequately marked and mistakes in grammar or punctuation were not corrected. The monitoring and recording of individual students' progress at the outreach and franchised centres visited are very thorough.

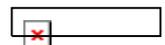
69. Recently there has been a high turnover of staff teaching ICT and there has been disruption to teaching schedules. Many of the staff with technical skills and knowledge have left. Some of the staff who have replaced them have business IT backgrounds and do not have computing qualifications or experience of teaching ICT. Managers in the area are seeking to recruit staff with technical backgrounds. This year, there has been a delay in finding work placements for students on the AVCE IT course and the GNVQ IT course at intermediate level. A work placement co-ordinator has been appointed recently.

70. The ratio of computers to students is good at 1:5:4. Students have good access to IT outside lessons through their personal network accounts in the learning centre.

Leadership and management

71. The restructuring of the college has brought about many changes of roles and responsibilities in the curriculum area. New procedures, including those for quality assurance, are not yet fully effective. Staff set performance targets for courses and use the college's management information system for monitoring progress towards reaching these. Staff do not, however, carry out rigorous monitoring of action to rectify weaknesses identified through the self-assessment process and course reviews.

Leisure, travel and sports



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on Edexcel travel and tourism course
- high pass rates on some short courses
- some very good teaching

- good support for students
- good ICT resources.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GNVQ and football skills programmes
- failure of students on football skills courses to complete coursework
- poor aspects of planning and management of courses.

Scope of provision

72. There is a good range of vocational courses in sport and travel at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, and there are good links with the industries. Courses lead to OCN qualifications in football skills and travel, hotel and leisure at levels 1 and 2; GNVQ in leisure and tourism at intermediate level; the AVCE in travel and tourism; Edexcel national diplomas in travel and tourism, sport science, and leisure and sport. There are also many other courses relating to employment in travel and tourism. There are plans to offer several more Edexcel national diploma courses. There are enrichment courses for full-time students and trips and overseas visits are arranged. Courses allow progression from level 1 right through to level 4. In the leisure, travel and sport section, there are 158 students aged 16 to 18, mainly on full-time courses, and 120 adult students, mainly on part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

73. Pass rates have been above average on the Edexcel national diploma course in travel and tourism; air fares and ticketing courses at level 1 and 2; and on the Football Association junior team managers and community sports leaders courses. The pass rates on the Edexcel national sport and leisure course have risen over the past three years, but retention rates fell in 2001. Retention rates on football skills courses at levels 1 and 2 are very high. Many students on these courses fail to complete their coursework, and pass rates are low. GNVQ pass rates have been consistently low at intermediate and advanced level, with delays with students' completion of coursework.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	29	20	20
		% retention	86	90	85
		% pass rate	40	28	*

Community sports leadership award	2	No. of starts	12	12	21
		% retention	58	100	90
		% pass rate	71	100	71
Air fares and ticketing level 1	2	No. of starts	69	37	14
		% retention	81	84	71
		% pass rate	79	68	70
National pool lifeguard (short)	2	No. of starts	25	27	34
		% retention	88	100	85
		% pass rate	91	93	97
Edexcel national diploma in travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	19	29	27
		% retention	58	76	85
		% pass rate	50	76	94
Edexcel national leisure studies	3	No. of starts	22	17	11
		% retention	82	94	55
		% pass rate	36	64	100
Air fares and ticketing level 2	3	No. of starts	20	13	20
		% retention	85	100	95
		% pass rate	82	85	100
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	96	16	20
		% retention	99	69	65
		% pass rate	11	44	38

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

*data unreliable

Quality of education and training

74. There is much good and very good teaching in this curriculum area. In one lesson, an experienced teacher worked well with a new member of staff in sharing good practice. In another lesson, the teaching of numeracy to a group of students on football skills courses at levels 1 and 2 was energetic and highly effective. The students were clearly absorbed in their tasks and were working hard to improve their numerical skills. The teacher was skilled at managing a group of students who had been disaffected with education. The students on the level 1 and 2 travel, hotel and leisure course had diary sheets in their files, and the compiling of these served as a good way of monitoring their attendance and the amount of work they had completed. Many staff draw on their own industrial experience in lessons and relate theory work clearly to vocational practice. The quality of lesson plans was not consistent across the area. Some were usefully detailed, while others were too brief. Teachers did not always manage group work well. For instance, they did not organise activities effectively and ensure students had enough space in which to carry these out. Some groups were made up of students from as many as three different courses, and where this was the case, teachers sometimes had difficulty in dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour in class. Some lessons are not well attended but students' absenteeism is not always followed up rigorously. On the well-established Edexcel national diploma courses in sport and travel, however, procedures for dealing with poor attendance and other disciplinary matters are good.

75. Processes for the monitoring and recording of students' progress are not consistent. Assessments of students on two courses last year have still not been completed. The students are

well supported by the staff, who make time available for individuals when needed. On some courses, tutors give individual students help with personal and academic issues. They also set the students learning targets and monitor their progress towards reaching these. Additional learning support for students, for example with literacy and numeracy, is provided after an assessment at the start of the course. If a student is in need of support at a later stage, this can be arranged by the course tutor.

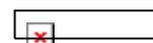
76. Staff are suitably qualified. Most have teaching qualifications and a wide range of expertise across the different vocational areas. ICT facilities are available and teachers make good use of them. Most classrooms are of an appropriate size for the groups using them and some have displays of students' work on the walls. Adequate book resources for travel courses are available. There is a staffed resource room for travel studies which has IT facilities and can be used by students who want to carry out private study and research. It is used as a 'travel desk' during two lunchtimes each week where customers can make travel enquiries. Students make good use of the college's learning centre. The college has no on-site indoor or outdoor sports facilities apart from a swimming pool, which is widely used by the community, and also by some students. The college makes use of the YMCA sports hall, which is very close, and some off-site playing fields may be reached by bus.

Leadership and management

77. Most courses are well managed, but some are not, and pass rates on these are low. Team meetings take place twice a term for each course and are minuted. There is no clear method for monitoring and recording the completion of coursework in some areas. Staff across areas do not share good practice. The self-assessment report for the area lacks depth and detail.

78. The rationale for having two advanced level courses in travel and tourism in different schools is not clear. Each course offers various options but the numbers following some of these are very low. Assessment and the monitoring of the students' learning are not carried out with the same degree of thoroughness on both courses.

Hospitality



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

Strengths

- good teaching
- high retention and pass rates on some programmes
- well-planned and thorough assessment
- particularly good courses for students in the meat industry

- good support for individual students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rate on NVQ level 2 food service course
- insufficient involvement of students in some lessons
- unsatisfactory equipment for food production.

Scope of provision

79. The college offers NVQ programmes in food preparation and food and beverage service from levels 1 to 3 for full-time and part-time students, and also level 2 and 3 programmes in meat processing. Students have good progression routes to further study, including a higher national diploma course. The needs of local industry are met with a variety of other programmes leading to wine and spirits, licensed trade and health and hygiene qualifications. Part-time students can join NVQ programmes at varying times throughout the year and courses leading to hygiene qualifications are also offered at weekends. A four-week introductory programme is provided for school-leavers prior to the start of the academic year. This allows them to 'shadow' a full-time student for two weeks and help produce meals for one of the restaurants, whilst working towards basic food hygiene qualifications.

Achievement and standards

80. There are high retention and pass rates on some programmes. Courses in professional cookery have consistently high retention rates, and pass rates on these have risen and are also high. The NVQ level 2 courses in food preparation and meat preparation have high retention rates and pass rates above the national average. There have been very high retention and pass rates on short courses in food hygiene and wines and spirits. Retention rates have improved on NVQ level 2 food and drink service courses, but pass rates have been low. Students achieve additional qualifications in food hygiene and additional NVQ units. All full-time students work towards key skills qualifications.

81. Students generally acquire good skills during their programmes. They are enthusiastic about the teaching and support they receive. They gain experience using a variety of different food preparation and service styles, and further their understanding of the industry. Students work well both as individuals and in groups. Teachers promote team working amongst students in practical activities to prepare them for industry. Their tutorial work in the college has good links with industry and students are able to participate in many commercial functions outside college. Students from the college have recently been invited to provide food service at a national catering exhibition.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion	1999	2000	2001
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		year:			
NVQ food preparation and cooking (one year)	1	No. of starts	32	23	21
		% retention	75	64	86
		% pass rate	93	71	72
NVQ food and drink service (one year)	1	No. of starts	25	21	19
		% retention	84	86	79
		% pass rate	100	71	*
NVQ food preparation and cooking (two year)	2	No. of starts	24	20	20
		% retention	79	75	95
		% pass rate	100	100	89
NVQ food and drink service (one year)	2	No. of starts	25	10	20
		% retention	84	70	95
		% pass rate	100	33	58
Diploma in professional cookery	3	No. of starts	22	13	12
		% retention	82	92	83
		% pass rate	78	91	100

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

*data unreliable

Quality of education and training

82. There is much good teaching in this area, and learning is well managed. Programmes are well planned and comprehensive. Groups of students rotate between several realistic work settings, thereby gaining valuable experience in food preparation, food service, larder and pastry work, and the three food service areas of lounge, restaurant and brasserie. Teachers have good knowledge and experience of the hospitality industry, which they draw upon effectively in their teaching. They are aware of individual students' abilities, learning styles and prior experience. Lessons are well planned and most have clearly identified objectives. In a minority of lessons, the students showed little interest in what was being taught, or in the learning activities. Teaching was insufficiently demanding for the students and teachers failed to check carefully that students understood the lesson.

83. Teachers plan assessments well. They carry out assessment thoroughly and make assessment an integral part of their teaching process. Individual students, however, have little say in deciding the times when they will be assessed. Students have a good understanding and knowledge of assessment and the standards required to achieve their qualification. Assessment is undertaken in realistic working environments. Teachers ensure students are well prepared for assessment. They are encouraged by teachers to evaluate their own performance and receive good oral and written feedback from teachers on their work. If students fail to demonstrate the requisite competence, good action planning is carried out of ways in which they can acquire the skills they need.

84. There are particularly good courses leading to NVQ qualifications for the meat industry. Resources for the teaching of skills on these courses are excellent. Students work in a realistic environment where they are able to develop a wider range of skills than they can in their own workplaces. Portfolios are of a high standard and contain good photographic records of students' work. Products made by students on this programme are either used by the college's catering facilities or sold through the college's retail outlet. Students acquire a thorough knowledge of meat preparation products. They gain useful experience not only in meat preparation, but also of the

financial management of the sale and retailing of meat products.

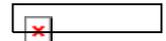
85. The department provides good support for individual students. Students with additional learning needs receive good support on mainstream programmes. Students' welfare and progress are monitored through a well-managed tutorial system. The area has a learning resources room, where students have access to learning materials and computers. There are good links with industry and good use is made of these to find students both full-time and part-time employment.

86. The area has a wide range of equipment which is well maintained, but there has been little investment in capital equipment within the area. Resources do not fully reflect the variety of equipment now used within industry. There is enough essential small equipment but some items are old and in need of replacing.

Leadership and management

87. The hospitality and catering team is well managed. Following recent changes in the way the area is managed, communications within the team, and between the members of the team and managers, have improved. Regular team meetings focus on the students' progress and achievements, and teaching and learning. Course targets for retention and pass rates are set and progress towards reaching these is closely monitored. The self-assessment report did not clearly identify the full range of strengths and weaknesses in this area.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- effective promotion of equality of opportunity
- effective support for students
- good hairdressing and beauty therapy resources
- high pass rates on NVQ programmes
- high retention rates on beauty therapy programmes.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on hairdressing NVQ level 2
- insufficient opportunities for students to develop commercial experience
- failure to carry out NVQ assessment from the outset of programmes
- insufficient action on some students' lack of punctuality
- failure to make key skills teaching an integral part of programmes.

Scope of provision

88. The college offers hairdressing courses leading to NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3. The level 2 course is provided on a full-time basis for 16-18 year olds, and as a substantial part-time course for older students. Owing to demand, older students can enrol at two other points in the year. The level 3 programme is offered on a part-time basis over two years. The college offers a level 1 course in hairdressing for young people aged under 16, as part of a local project to help disaffected learners. There is no work-based training available. Beauty therapy courses include the Edexcel national diploma course in applied science (beauty therapy) and, those leading to NVQs at levels 2 and 3, offered on a full or part-time basis. Short modular courses are offered as evening courses and also on Saturdays.

Achievement and standards

89. Pass rates on NVQ programmes are high, and the retention rate is good on beauty therapy courses. However, the retention rate on hairdressing courses has been consistently low. At times, there is a shortage of clients in the college's salons and students are not able to further their commercial skills of working with customers. Students who are working in industry and attending college part time are not encouraged to bring forward evidence of achievement from their workplace. Attendance on the NVQ level 3 beauty therapy programme has been poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	27	28	30
		% retention	70	64	53
		% pass rate	92	72	100
Salon hygiene certificate beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	20	19	20
		% retention	89	95	90
		% pass rate	41	56	47

NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	36	28	14
		% retention	92	100	79
		% pass rate	43	92	100
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	46	30	15
		% retention	93	71	80
		% pass rate	35	94	100

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

Quality of education and training

90. Courses are timetabled flexibly to make it easier for some students to attend college. Courses are offered on a 'roll on, roll off' modular basis. Students can work towards a full NVQ in beauty therapy in the evening over two years. This course is particularly popular for students with children or those who are working during the day.

91. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. Both theory and practical lessons are well planned. Aims and objectives are shared with the students at the beginning of lessons. Effective learning support is provided in some lessons when an additional teacher joins the group. The teaching rooms are equipped with a range of teaching aids which are used effectively. Schemes of work are detailed and clear and shared with the students, who refer to them and are well informed about the course. Many students are not punctual for lessons. The college has taken steps to address this, but to little effect, and most lessons are disrupted by some students arriving late.

92. Teachers set deadlines for written work which is marked promptly. Students receive comprehensive feedback on their written work and are shown how they can improve it. There are good systems for monitoring and recording students' progress. The assessment of students' competences does not begin early enough in courses. Regardless of their previous experience and ability, all students begin the assessment process at the same time. This makes heavy demands on the salons, particularly when there is sometimes a shortage of clients for students to work on during their assessments. When planning students' assessments, account is not taken of students' previous experience, even though some students have been in industry for some time prior to joining the courses.

93. Full-time students learn key skills in application of number and IT. Hairdressing students also learn communication skills, and beauty therapy students are developing the key skill of working with others. Key skills are not an integral part of the content of mainstream programmes but are taught and assessed separately. Students find it difficult to see the relevance of these skills to their occupational area. Students' attendance at some of the key skills sessions has been poor.

94. Students are well supported. Tutorials for full-time students are held regularly and are effective. During their tutorials, students are able to discuss their progress and welfare with their tutors. The college is well resourced to offer additional learning support. Practical support, such as childcare provided by the college nursery, is particularly valuable in enabling some students to carry on with their studies.

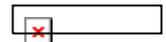
95. The hairdressing and beauty therapy salons have recently been refurbished and reflect a modern commercial environment. The reception, dispensary and laundry areas are exceptionally well equipped. There is a computerised client booking system in the reception area and students work on reception on a rota basis. Students adhere to a strict dress code and good hygiene, and health and safety practices are observed. The practical sessions are well organised, although there are not always sufficient couches for the clients. The average group size is 16 but there are only 11 couches, and client bookings have to be carefully organised. When students are not able to work on clients, they have to work on one another. Teachers keep their occupational skills current through a range of development activities, and share their considerable expertise with each other at training

sessions. Some of the part-time staff also work in industry. Some of the teaching staff have been appointed recently and have yet to gain teaching and assessor qualifications.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. The staff work together well as a team and there is effective communication. There is good technician support. Internal verification is satisfactory. It is not always clearly planned, however, and does not cover key issues, such as support for unqualified assessors. The self-assessment process lacks rigour and failed to identify some of the weaknesses.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- much good teaching
- eager and responsive students
- high retention and pass rates on childcare, counselling and access courses
- good practical resources for childcare.

Weaknesses

- some low pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and public services courses
- failure to meet the needs of all students in some lessons
- slow progress towards achievement of NVQs by many students
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

97. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time day and evening provision in health and social care and childcare. Adults and 16-18 year olds can choose courses which lead to employment, or to further learning. Most of the provision takes place at the college's main site, but a small amount of franchised provision also takes place in community venues. Full-time courses include GNVQ intermediate level, the AVCE in health and social care, those leading to the Edexcel national certificate and diploma in public services, and access to health studies. Counselling courses from levels 1 to 3 are offered to adult students in the day and evening. Courses leading to the qualifications of the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education from level 1 to level 3 are available on both a full-time and part-time basis. The college also offers courses leading to NVQs in care, early years and playwork, and qualifications in first aid, working with children and those for special needs assistants. There are 2,000 students enrolled in health and social care; some 1,600 of them are aged 19 and over.

Achievement and standards

98. There are high retention and pass rates for adults on both full-time and part-time courses. For example, on access to health studies, counselling and diploma in nursery nursing courses, retention and pass rates compare favourably with the national average. Pass rates are lower on courses on which younger students are mainly enrolled. On the intermediate GNVQ health and social care course, the retention rate has fallen, and pass rates have been below the national average for the past three years. Retention and pass rates are also below average on Edexcel first and national diploma courses in public services. Many students aged 16 to 18 do not attend regularly and action to improve their attendance is not proving effective. Many students working towards NVQs in early years childcare and education take longer than the planned time to complete their studies. However, most of these students achieve their qualifications after an additional period of study.

99. Students participate well in discussions. Those who are currently employed in care work bring much valuable experience to the classroom, which is effectively used by teachers to link theory to practice. Adult students manage their classroom activities very effectively. In a pre-school practice class, students were matching activities for early years children to appropriate learning goals for them. In a class for special needs assistants, students demonstrated techniques of stress management. Students' written work is of a satisfactory standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ health and social care	2	No. of starts	42	21	20
		% retention	78	86	55
		% pass rate	58	56	64
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	*	21	19
		% retention	*	81	74
		% pass rate	*	63	75
Certificate in counselling theory	2	No. of starts	20	34	55
		% retention	90	85	82
		% pass rate	81	96	84
Diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	41	44	33
		% retention	85	66	82

		% pass rate	91	100	82
Access certificate health studies	3	No. of starts	25	36	30
		% retention	84	85	90
		% pass rate	86	76	88
Edexcel national diploma public services	3	No. of starts	16	19	16
		% retention	100	84	56
		% pass rate	54	89	67

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

100. There is much good and very good teaching. The planning of courses and lessons is thorough. Most schemes of work are detailed and informative, and most teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods and learning materials. There are good working relationships between staff and students. Students become more self-confident in the classroom and participate in learning activities with enthusiasm. Teachers make good use of the wide variety of cultural backgrounds amongst students. For example, they draw on students' experiences of different approaches to child nutrition and by doing so, enable the students to broaden their understanding of cultural diversity. In a lesson on an advanced course, students carried out a role-play exercise in which they were required to present a point of view, not necessarily their own, in a debate on a topical issue. The exercise enabled students to develop a clearer understanding of group dynamics.

101. The learning needs of some students are not being fully addressed. Some students are not sufficiently challenged to develop their full potential. For example, in some lessons, students are not given enough help in developing personal and learning skills, such as making clear and interesting class presentations, or taking part in debate effectively. In some lessons, students do not demonstrate or use analytic skills. Learning methods used with some younger students are not always appropriate and fail to motivate them and excite their interest.

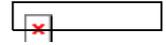
102. Students receive feedback on their work regularly and this helps them to identify how they can improve their performance further. Students value the personal support and subject guidance which staff provide for them.

103. Care students have access, on a drop-in basis, to a well-used resource centre where computers, books, journals and advice are available to them. Childcare classrooms have appropriate facilities where students can undertake a wide range of practical activities such as bathing and feeding babies, and using materials with young children which help them to be creative. A self-contained suite of small group rooms has recently been provided for counselling courses.

Leadership and management

104. Provision in health and social care is well managed. Managers are knowledgeable about the curriculum and the needs of the community. Course and management records are well maintained. The cohesion of the team is strong. The self-assessment report for the curriculum area was insufficiently comprehensive and rigorous. Staff have made insufficient use of findings from the college's lesson observation programme to identify and share good practice. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively within lessons and is the subject of a formally taught module on most courses.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates
- success of many students in progressing to further study
- stimulating theoretical and practical teaching
- effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- inadequate specialist accommodation and equipment
- lack of training for assessors.

Scope of provision

105. There is a broad range of full-time and part-time courses during the day and evening. These lead to various qualifications including GCE AS and A-level art, textiles and media studies, GNVQ in art and design at foundation and intermediate levels, AVCE in art and design, the diploma in foundation studies, Edexcel national diploma in fashion, Open College Network (OCN) certification in fashion, clothing and professional machining skills, computer-aided design and a higher national diploma in fashion. There are also introductory courses to subjects in this curriculum area. Courses in sound engineering are offered as franchised provision at venues in the community. There are currently 294 full-time and 364 part-time students on these courses.

Achievement and standards

106. There are high retention and pass rates across all the courses and particularly on some GCE A-level courses, and the Edexcel national diploma and diploma in foundation studies programmes. In 2000, only 20% of students on the GNVQ course at intermediate level achieved their qualification within the scheduled timescale. A number of students obtained their GNVQ at intermediate level later, after starting an AVCE course. The standard of students' work is appropriate to the level of course, students produce some very good work in fashion and textiles, and on the foundation

diploma programme. Many students progress from courses to HE. Some students begin at entry level, progress to higher level courses and go on to appropriate employment. Attendance is poor at lessons on some courses, especially those held in the evening. Some students on the GNVQ course at intermediate level are not punctual for lessons and their late arrival disrupts the learning of those students who have taken the trouble to arrive on time.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	17	16	15
		% retention	88	94	73
		% pass rate	60	20	80
GCE A-level art and design (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	15	8
		% retention	*	100	88
		% pass rate	*	75	100
GCE A-level fashion and textiles (one year)	3	No. of starts	10	11	10
		% retention	100	100	60
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level fine art (one year)	3	No. of starts	25	20	22
		% retention	72	95	91
		% pass rate	100	100	55
GNVQ/AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	16	23	14
		% retention	75	74	93
		% pass rate	50	54	92
Edexcel national diploma design (fashion)	3	No. of starts	15	20	15
		% retention	93	90	73
		% pass rate	92	100	100
Diploma in foundation studies	3	No. of starts	12	20	20
		% retention	100	100	95
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

107. There is much good teaching. There is a good rapport between staff and students. Students respond well to group teaching and also one-to-one guidance and direction. Students demonstrate knowledge of their subject. They have the skills to develop ideas and translate them into finished pieces, and the confidence to talk about their work and their aspirations. Many of the assignments set are challenging and the students respond well to the demands they make upon them. In one very effective lesson for foundation and pre-foundation students, a group made up of mature and young students worked on a range of techniques in print and drawing. The teacher had set the same task for all students, but each student adapted this to suit his or her own area of interest and expertise. Students interacted well and benefited from one another's diverse experiences. In a few lessons, particularly those on some evening courses, there were few students in the class. These lessons were insufficiently stimulating for the students who said little and did not ask many

questions. The teacher failed to adapt teaching and learning methods to suit the small size of the group.

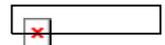
108. Assessments take place regularly. Students have one-to-one tutorials during which their results in assessment are reviewed and taken into account when planning their further learning. Students understand the assessment process. Tutors and students discuss progression routes. All students speak positively about their courses, which meet or exceed their expectations. Teachers are responsive to students' needs for individual support. For example, they assist students for whom English is not the first language, by modifying or explaining vocabulary.

109. Most accommodation for teaching is good, but some is in need of renovation, improved lighting and soundproofing. There are inadequate specialist resources in some areas of study. There are no industry-standard facilities for three-dimensional studies. The areas available for photography and printmaking are too small. IT facilities are currently inadequate, but are soon to be updated. All staff are appropriately qualified and suitably experienced, and many have benefited from staff development to bring their knowledge and skills up-to-date. However, too few staff have undertaken assessor training.

Leadership and management

110. Leadership and management in the curriculum area are effective. Good records are kept, for instance of team meetings, schemes of work and students' progress. Teachers feel that they are able to participate in decision making. They also appreciate being kept up to date on current developments in the college through the bulletin and e-mails from senior managers. There are inadequate arrangements for the verification of assessed work.

English, English as a foreign language (EFL) and modern foreign languages (MFL)



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

Strengths

- wide range of EFL provision
- high pass rates on EFL preliminary test
- much good teaching
- well-motivated and industrious students
- accurate and careful assessment of students' work.

Weaknesses

- low and declining pass rates on MFL and English courses
- insufficient detail in some planning
- over-reliance on text books in the teaching of EFL
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

111. Most students in this area are aged 19 and over. There is a good range of courses in EFL, which effectively meets the needs of individual students. The majority of students are enrolled on the general English course, which can be studied on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time students undertake specialist options, such as English for business. Options are changed termly to provide students with opportunities to study a range of skills and subjects. Students have the opportunity to take examinations at five levels. Students wishing to continue to HE may take an international English language test at level 3 or above. There are courses which combine English with vocational studies, for example in travel and tourism, hotel management, office skills and hairdressing. There are 300 students currently enrolled on EFL courses, including over 120 full-time students and about 180 part-time day and evening students. The demand for MFL courses has declined significantly over the last three years. Evening classes are offered in French, German, Italian and Spanish. There is little provision of MFL courses in the daytime. Students aged 16 to 18 have few opportunities to learn a language as part of their enrichment programme. A GCSE English course is available for students wishing to re-sit this subject. GCE A-level English is available as an evening course.

Achievement and standards

112. Retention rates have remained steady on most courses. In 2001, however, the retention rate on the GCSE English course was low. There have been high pass rates for the EFL preliminary English test, and these were well above the national average in 2001. Pass rates on MFL courses and GCSE English are low and declining. The pass rate on OCN accredited courses in French, German, Italian and Spanish have dropped by more than 20% over the last three years. The proportion of students who achieve grade C or above in GCSE English has varied considerably and in some years, it has been low. For example, this proportion increased in 2000, but was significantly lower in 2001.

113. Most students' work is of an appropriate standard. The majority of students are well motivated and industrious, and work well in pairs and in groups. They respond well to questions. In lessons, students' oral contributions are generally uninhibited and confident. The students who do well are able to express their ideas and opinions clearly and cogently. A large number of students take advantage of the effective drop-in workshops to extend their learning.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, English as a foreign language and modern

foreign languages, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English (grades A*-C)	2	No. of starts	122	118	67
		% retention	75	71	64
		% pass rate	39	55	42
Preliminary English test	2/3	No. of starts	559	367	468
		% retention	97	78	85
		% pass rate	36	67	85
OCN French	Entry to level 3	No. of starts	*	*	8
		% retention	*	*	88
		% pass rate	*	*	57
OCN German	Entry to level 3	No. of starts	*	*	10
		% retention	*	*	80
		% pass rate	*	*	63
OCN Italian	Entry to level 3	No. of starts	*	*	19
		% retention	*	*	84
		% pass rate	*	*	63
OCN Spanish	Entry to level 3	No. of starts	*	*	77
		% retention	*	*	87
		% pass rate	*	*	63

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

* subjects not shown separately on ISR

Quality of education and training

114. Much of the teaching is good. In the best lessons, teachers provide students with a variety of activities which motivates them to extend the range of their knowledge and skills. Challenging tasks are set using authentic materials. Students work well in groups or in pairs to explore their ideas, formulate arguments to present in class discussion, and identify how they will tackle the tasks set. They learn how to work together effectively. There is a good relationship between students and teachers, and students feel comfortable and confident in asking questions and offering their views in class. In MFL lessons, extensive use is made of the language being learnt. All MFL teachers are native speakers of the languages the students are learning. They serve as good role models for the students and inspire them to become proficient in the language they teach. In all subject areas, students benefit from receiving effective individual support from teachers during lessons. The different abilities of the students within the groups are usually well catered for, although sometimes the most able are given work which is not demanding enough for them.

115. In EFL and MFL lessons, good use is made of audio-visual aids to help explain the meaning of words, aid pronunciation and develop oral language skills. Some teachers rely heavily on course books when planning lessons, rather than devising learning materials themselves to meet the particular needs of students in their group. A minority of teachers make effective use of college-devised worksheets and visual aids, tailored to the cultural backgrounds of the students. Overall, there is little inspiring teaching. MFL teachers have no standardised approach to providing students with reference sheets on vocabulary and grammar. Some teachers issue these, and they are

particularly helpful to students who are less confident, but other teachers do not.

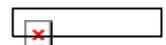
116. The assessment of students' work is accurate and careful. Grammatical and mechanical errors are identified. In their marking of students' work most teachers indicate what has been done well and what needs improving. Some teachers, however, do not provide students with enough guidance about how they could improve their work.

117. All students are given initial guidance and a skills assessment on entry with the aim of ensuring that they are placed on the right level of course. Students appreciate the good personal and academic support they receive from staff. Students on both full-time and part-time EFL courses participate in a very effective 'buddy' scheme. New students are put in touch with two students who have been on the same course for some time, from whom they receive help and support. Workshops provide students studying EFL and modern foreign languages with good and additional subject-specific learning support. Students following EFL courses also benefit from access to the language laboratory on a drop-in basis. The laboratory is open to students for an hour at lunchtime and again in the early evening. There are resources available which students can use on their own, such as tapes of books. A teacher is present to provide guidance and support, listen to oral exercises and give feedback to students on their work. The laboratory is well used and is valued by students. However, there are no worksheets for students to use in order to follow up textbook exercises or practise specific skills which they are finding difficult to master. Students studying MFL also have access to a modern language laboratory and well-stocked resource room.

Leadership and management

118. Overall, too little priority is given to the management of teaching and learning. Quality assurance procedures and self-assessment are not rigorous enough in evaluating teaching and the effectiveness of learning. The lesson observation programme has not yet proved effective as a means of identifying good practice and ways in which the overall quality of teaching can be improved. There is some good practice in teaching, but this is not shared effectively between teachers. There is insufficient monitoring of the quality of schemes of work and lesson plans. These follow a common format, but some lack detail about teaching methods, the intended learning outcomes for students and how students' differing learning needs are to be addressed. Some schemes of work are merely a list of topics. Teachers of EFL and MFL, respectively, have not shared teaching and learning materials they have found to be effective, and they have not created resource banks from them.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- much very good teaching on teacher education courses
- high retention and pass rate on English language teaching courses for adults
- thorough assessment procedures

- strong pastoral and study skills support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on access courses in 2001
- poor attendance on access to social work course
- inadequate use of personal learning targets for access students
- lack of base room for access students.

Scope of provision

119. The provision includes teacher education, access to HE and social work and GCE A-level psychology courses. The qualifications students work towards include the City and Guilds 7307 further and adult education certificate, certificate and diploma in English language teaching for adults (CELTA and DELTA) and several Edexcel professional development qualifications. A classroom assistants' programme is offered at levels 2 and 3. These courses provide good opportunities for students on teacher education courses to progress to further study. All the teacher education programmes are offered on a part-time basis. The access to HE course is full time, and the access to social work course is part time.

Achievement and standards

120. There are high retention and pass rates on the certificate in teaching English to adults courses, the level 2 course for classroom assistants, the professional development programme and in GCE A-level psychology. On access to HE courses, retention and pass rates have been low. In 2001, the retention rate on the access to social science course was 64% and the pass rate was 43%. Retention and pass rates on access programmes have been low. The new access to HE course replaces previous programmes in access to humanities and social sciences. It offers greater breadth of study as preparation for university. The retention rate for the access to social work course was low in 2001, at 31%. Only a small percentage of access to social work students progressed to university in 2000/01. Attendance on this course was low during the inspection.

121. Students on teacher education courses achieve high standards. Their knowledge and their understanding of issues related to teaching and education are good. They are able to apply their knowledge effectively in practical tasks. They are able to work on their own effectively and in course work and assignments, they display good skills of critical evaluation, research and analysis.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Award for teaching assistants	2	No. of starts	*	11	15
		% retention	*	91	93
		% pass rate	*	100	85
City and Guilds 7307	3	No. of starts	60	19	*
		% retention	78	95	*
		% pass rate	82	78	*
Access to social science	3	No. of starts	26	28	22
		% retention	88	86	64
		% pass rate	86	83	43
Access to social work	3	No. of starts	49	39	35
		% retention	69	64	31
		% pass rate	70	54	100
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	12	16	12
		% retention	33	81	83
		% pass rate	100	86	86
Certificate in English language teaching for adults	4	No. of starts	25	25	25
		% retention	96	96	100
		% pass rate	79	92	92

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

Quality of education and training

122. Teaching was good or very good in the majority of lessons. In teacher education, teaching was particularly good. Lessons are well planned. Teachers give clear explanations and use examples well to illustrate points. They question students skilfully to aid their understanding of what is being taught. In many lessons, students are given demanding exercises which require them to use skills of analysis and evaluation. Students work well in lessons. They are attentive, responsive and enthusiastic, and make excellent progress. In the best lessons, teaching strategies are adapted to meet the needs of students with differing abilities. Students work well in groups and engage in lively discussions to explore issues in depth. For example, on a CELTA course, students analysed criteria relating to the National Qualifications Framework in order to identify the level of the students they teach. Another successful exercise involved the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of learning resources. In less effective lessons, the teacher did not check students' understanding sufficiently. In some cases, the pace was inappropriate and there was a failure to include all students in discussions.

123. Staff are well qualified and enthusiastic. Facilities in the learning centre for teacher education are good, with a wide range of relevant texts and resources. Learning resources for access courses are satisfactory. All students have access to computers and the use of ICT is integral to courses. For example, the Internet is used for research projects. Some classrooms are poorly decorated. There is no base room for the access courses where students can meet and give each other help and support.

124. Assessment of students' work is thorough. Assignment briefs are well written, and the criteria against which assignments will be marked are shared with students. Feedback to students is constructive, and teachers give students clear explanations of ways in which they can improve their

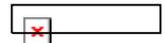
work. Errors in spelling and punctuation are corrected. Students on teacher education courses have their needs for individual learning support identified. They are set clear targets and their progress towards reaching these is monitored carefully. In contrast, however, students on access courses are not set targets which are specific and clearly defined.

125. There is strong pastoral support for students. On access courses, students develop study skills through both the tutorial programme and a study skills course unit. Students speak highly about the amount of support they receive both on a formal and informal basis and express their appreciation of the willingness of staff to give up their free time to help them. Careers guidance is an integral part of the study skills unit on the access courses. For example, in one lesson on study skills, the students underwent a mock university entrance interview conducted by one of the college's careers advisors. The students found this a very effective lesson.

Leadership and management

126. Teacher education and access courses are well structured and carefully organised. Members of each team work together closely and they frequently exchange information informally as well as through formal course team meetings. Course teams are responsive to course evaluations completed by students. Effective action has not yet been taken to address low retention rates and students' lack of punctuality on access courses.

Foundation programmes



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

Strengths

- wide range of appropriate courses
- success of many students in progressing to further study
- effective personal support for students
- high pass rates on courses for students with learning difficulties.

Weaknesses

- failure of students on some courses to be punctual or attend regularly
- inadequate resources

- inadequate individual learning plans
- no recent training for staff on the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

Scope of provision

127. There are courses for adults and young people with learning difficulties and vocational and non-vocational courses for students who have not done well at school. Students with severe learning difficulties follow a programme to help them to develop independent living skills. The work preparation certificate course prepares students with learning difficulties for employment. The vocational access certificate course prepares students for level 1 vocational courses or work. The part-time team enterprise course is usually taken by students with learning difficulties who are on other full-time courses within the curriculum area.

128. The new directions and foundation studies courses for young people are designed to cover the skills students need to progress to foundation or intermediate level courses across the college. These courses focus on mathematics, English, IT, study skills and personal development and receive OCN accreditation. There are also NVQ level 1 courses in retail and painting, and decorating and horse care. There are 59 adults on part-time and full-time courses, 77 full-time 16-18 year-olds and 14 full-time 14-16 year olds who use the provision as a stepping stone to post-16 courses. All classes take place during the day.

Achievement and standards

129. Overall, retention and pass rates are satisfactory. In 2000/01, retention and pass rates on the new directions and foundation studies courses fell, following the recruitment of students aged 14 to 16 and young people with a history of poor attendance at school to these courses. More care is now taken in placing students on new directions and foundation studies courses, improvements have been made to the tutorial system and students' absenteeism is followed up more systematically. This year, the retention rate on these courses has risen.

130. Retention and pass rates on courses for students with learning difficulties are high. In 2001, all of the 19 students on the vocational access certificate programme completed their studies and achieved the qualification in 2000/01. In most lessons, students applied themselves well to their learning tasks and made good progress.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Vocational access certificate (two year)	E	No. of starts	9	6	19
		% retention	67	100	68
		% pass rate	75	100	100
OCN (new directions)	E	No. of starts	33	33	40
		% retention	78	76	68
		% pass rate	64	67	48
OCN (new directions)	1	No. of starts	50	19	30

		% retention	80	100	73
		% pass rate	66	89	32

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

Quality of education and training

131. Teaching is at least satisfactory or better, and much is very good. In a practical painting and decorating lesson, students working from entry level to level 3 were all concentrating on the tasks set. One student, who had been a poor attender at school, had a near-perfect attendance record and had completed most of the NVQ level 1 units in the first term. Lesson content and assignments for OCN accreditation and for the vocational access course meet assessment requirements. When planning lessons, teachers do not systematically take into account students' individual learning plans. Some teachers do not know what their students' individual learning goals are. Support assistants and teachers work well together.

132. Initial assessment is effective in identifying students' abilities and support needs. The recording of students' progress towards achieving qualifications is more thorough on some courses than others, but is mostly satisfactory or good. Moderation and internal verification arrangements for courses with external assessments are effective. Individual learning plans are in the early stages of development. There is some good tutorial practice. For example, in one tutorial, the tutor expertly encouraged students to identify the learning targets they should set themselves for their work experience. The targets were then recorded and a date for reviewing progress towards the achievement of these targets was then set. Most individual learning plans for students do not specify short-term targets for measurable achievements, which students have agreed with their tutors.

133. None of the subject staff teaching literacy and numeracy on these programmes has a specialist qualification in the teaching of basic skills. Training for staff on the teaching of literacy and numeracy has been arranged to take place later in the year. Teachers of other subjects often fail to help students improve their literacy or numeracy, or fail to record their achievements in basic skills. Students are not set specific, short-term targets for improving their literacy and numeracy skills.

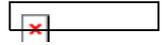
134. Some accommodation is inadequate and poorly equipped. Classrooms are not stimulating places in which to study and they contain few displays of students' work. Resources are not always available to enable students to work towards their achievement of learning targets. For example, no member of staff was available to teach the skills of independent travel to a student whose learning plan stated he wished to acquire them. Good use is made of off-site accommodation for students with learning difficulties in the Horizon Café, and a flat provided by social services for practising independent living skills.

135. Students are very positive about the support and guidance they receive at college. They feel independent but know they can get help if they need it. The tutorial programme provides good personal support for students. Many students on foundation studies, new directions and NVQ level 1 courses do not attend regularly or are late for lessons. Absences, however, are now followed up with consistent thoroughness.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are insufficient course team meetings to identify and record actions to rectify weaknesses in provision. Clear action has been taken this year to reverse the decline in retention and pass rates on the new directions and foundation studies programme. Weaknesses relating to literacy and numeracy are identified in the basic skills strategy, with actions planned for later in the year.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on franchised programmes in 2001
- effective systems for initial assessment of students
- effective partnerships with local providers to meet community needs
- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring of the progress of individual students
- failure to make language development an integral part of vocational programmes
- ineffective use of ICT
- overuse of inappropriate handouts.

Scope of provision

137. The college offers ESOL programmes on the main site and in the community, where provision is franchised to five providers. At the time of the inspection, there were a total of 845 students on ESOL programmes of whom 205 were enrolled on franchised courses. The college provides daytime classes for students aged 16 to 18 and adults, and there is no evening provision. Students who want part-time evening classes are referred to the local Adult Education Service. Saturday classes have been started recently.

138. Courses are available at levels 1, 2 and 3, and at levels 1 and 2, and are validated through the

OCN. They involve attendance of between 12 and 17 hours a week. Students aged 16 to 18 can also choose options which include football, drama, numeracy and computing.

139. A pilot series of programmes which combine ESOL with vocational studies at level 1 have been launched for students aged 16 to 18. At the beginning of the year, students are taught English for 12 hours a week and they also have 4 hours of vocational training. Over the year, the number of hours spent on English is reduced and the amount of time for vocational training is correspondingly increased. Students can choose to undergo vocational training in one of the following areas: childcare, fashion, engineering, motor vehicle studies and science studies. This vocational training is offered in response to demand from students.

Achievement and standards

140. Pass rates for the franchised provision show a marked improvement in 2001 compared with those for the two previous years. The pass rates on Pitmans courses are both well above the national average. There has been some decrease in retention rates. In 1998/99 and 2000/01, the college offered a course leading to the university entrance test in ESOL and the retention and pass rates on this were high. About 95% of students on ESOL courses are asylum seekers and refugees, and retention rates on some of these courses are low. Some students have had to leave the area because of the government's policy on the dispersal of asylum seekers.

141. Students progress to higher levels of study throughout the year and most reach the required levels of attainment. Data on students' destinations show that up to 75% of students progress internally. Students make good progress in their written work, as well as becoming more proficient in reading and listening. Arrangements for monitoring learners' progress are not yet effective.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English for speakers of other languages, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
ESOL Pitmans basic	E	No. of starts	60	641	719
		% retention	100	100	80
		% pass rate	5	20	99
Spoken ESOL basic	E	No. of starts	35	270	458
		% retention	97	100	89
		% pass rate	0	35	80
ESOL OCN (part time)	E	No. of starts	221	563	254
		% retention	74	76	86
		% pass rate	99	73	81
Trinity ESOL basic	E	No. of starts	*	182	243
		% retention	*	100	67
		% pass rate	*	28	100
ESOL OCN (full time)	E	No. of starts	221	105	494
		% retention	74	94	69
		% pass rate	99	88	88
University entrance test in ESOL	3	No. of starts	17	24	32
		% retention	59	75	78
		% pass rate	40	67	48

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

142. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and about one-third of lessons were very good. The most successful lessons had been prepared well and teachers set the students clear objectives for language learning. They assessed students' progress by asking questions and using well-planned handouts and other resources, such as recorded conversations. Teachers maintained students' interest and motivation by using a variety of appropriate learning methods. One teacher encouraged students to play a game which involved students asking ten questions to guess one another's occupations. Students had the opportunity to practise new words and to carry out role plays. Another tutor set her students a demanding exercise on vocabulary. She gave them a text containing colloquial words, and working in pairs, the students had to decide what these meant. The best lessons were well attended.

143. Weaker lessons had not been planned thoroughly. In these, students were given confusing instructions. Some handouts had too much text, and did not take account of students' cultural diversity. In some lessons, teachers did not check students' learning effectively or allow enough time for language practice. In such lessons, students had files that were poorly organised.

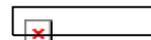
144. Links between ESOL teachers and those who teach vocational subjects are weak. ESOL students are not always taught the language and terms they need to understand and use, in order to make progress in their vocational subjects. In turn, teachers of vocational subjects are not always aware of the language demands their lessons make on ESOL students. In one lesson, students were unable to make progress because they did not understand the difference between 'more' and 'less'. ICT is used little in lessons and there is a lack of stand-alone computers in some of the centres. Where computer-assisted language learning takes place, its effectiveness is not always monitored. For example, some students merely guess the answers to language questions. Work the students carry out with the computer is not printed and no record of it is kept by the teacher.

145. There is a well-developed procedure for admissions and initial diagnostic testing. All new entrants are tested before being placed on a course of a level appropriate to their aptitude and ability. A standardised assessment procedure has been introduced and this is shared with the students. Feedback from staff on assessed work is clear and detailed and helps students to improve their performance. Students on ESOL programmes are well supported by teachers. All students have an induction to their programme. Resources within the curriculum area are adequate, although some rooms used are too small for the classes using them. There is a lack of dictionaries in the learning centre for non-European languages, and only Turkish and Arabic dictionaries are available. All ESOL staff hold appropriate specialist qualifications.

Leadership and management

146. Management of the provision is satisfactory. A new curriculum for ESOL, based on national standards, has been successfully introduced. Observations of lessons, both in the college and in venues for franchised provision, have been carried out and have involved all staff. Staff meetings take place regularly and communication within the school is good. Reviews of provision by the curriculum managers form part of the self-assessment process and operational plans. Priority has been given to introducing the new curriculum, modifying schemes of work and improving students' individual learning plans.

Basic skills



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

Strengths

- good teaching on part-time basic skills courses
- high retention and pass rates on basic skills courses
- effective literacy and numeracy support.

Weaknesses

- low attendance rate on part-time courses for adults
- ineffective monitoring and evaluation of students' progress
- insufficient co-ordination of partnership teaching of basic skills across the college.

Scope of provision

147. There are part-time basic skills courses in the college and in the community, and a full-time basic skills course for adults. Students who need help with literacy and numeracy are given this in the college's learning centre, where they are taught individually or in small groups. Basic skills teachers also provide support for students by working jointly with teachers on courses across the college. All part-time courses are planned to allow for progression to a communications and numeracy course at level 1. This in turn prepares students for a choice of several further courses. Students work towards OCN accreditation. Some 540 students were enrolled on part-time basic skills programmes, and 17 students were taking the full-time course. A number of adults receive individual support for basic skills at the learning centre. The college offers some basic skills provision in schools, at a high street learning centre and in community venues.

Achievement and standards

148. Retention and pass rates are high on courses leading to external examinations. The retention rate on short literacy courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 is in line with the national average, and the pass rate is 85%, compared with the national average of 78%. On long literacy courses, the retention and pass rates are 90% and 100% respectively, both well above the national average. Retention and pass rates for short and long numeracy courses are also significantly above the national average.

149. The majority of students receiving help with literacy and numeracy support are on mainstream

courses and receive support to help them achieve their primary learning goal. In 2000/01, the retention rate for those receiving support was 80%. Students who receive literacy and numeracy support often improve their personal skills, confidence and ability to work on their own, although this is not always recorded. Students' portfolios are well maintained and contain evidence of improvement in their basic skills. Students' attainment is satisfactory. When marking students' written work, however, some tutors fail to make helpful suggestions on how the students can improve their performance and do not encourage them to check their work thoroughly.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Achievement tests literacy (short course)	E	No. of starts	49	119	156
		% retention	100	94	89
		% pass rate	100	100	85
Achievement tests literacy	E	No. of starts	10	53	42
		% retention	100	89	90
		% pass rate	100	96	100
Achievement tests numeracy (short course)	E	No. of starts	52	122	78
		% retention	100	98	97
		% pass rate	67	94	88
Achievement tests numeracy	E	No. of starts	*	11	30
		% retention	*	55	93
		% pass rate	*	100	100
City and Guilds Wordpower foundation	1	No. of starts	*	81	149
		% retention	*	100	96
		% pass rate	*	100	100
City and Guilds Numberpower foundation	1	No. of starts	*	55	133
		% retention	*	100	98
		% pass rate	*	0**	**

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

Quality of education and training

150. Most teaching is good or very good. Schemes of work are well structured and relate to externally accredited awards. Lesson plans have clear aims and objectives linked to the national standards for basic skills. ICT is integral to the curriculum. Individual students receive good support. In the best lessons, teachers adapted their materials to meet the range of needs in a class. In less successful lessons, some teachers failed to use effective questioning techniques to enable students to arrive at the answers themselves. There is sometimes inadequate differentiation of materials and methods of working to meet the needs of all students. There is little use of pair or group work. The overall attendance rate was low and group sizes were small.

151. There are effective methods for identifying full-time students on foundation and intermediate level courses who need additional support to improve their key skills and basic skills. During the last year, more of these students have been identified. Students who need help are referred to the learning centre. Attendance at support sessions is not compulsory, but take-up of the support offered has increased. The basic skills support team provide course tutors with termly reviews of the progress of students receiving additional support. There is, however, no reciprocal review by course tutors and students of the impact of support on the learners' progress on their main programme.

152. Students on full-time courses and those needing help with literacy and numeracy have learning plans, but these are not detailed enough. They do not provide enough information to enable realistic targets to be set for students' progress and achievements. The students' termly progress reviews do not focus on students' specific achievements and learning plans are not updated to take account of these. Instead, there is a very general discussion as to how students are progressing. The individual learning plans for students receiving learning support are not shared with all the teachers and support workers who work with the students concerned.

153. The college has developed joint teaching of groups, known as partnership teaching, for students who need help with their basic skills. The support teacher joins lessons and helps students in the classroom. Students value the support they receive and its positive impact on their self-confidence and performance. Teachers involved in partnership work well together in writing schemes of work and planning lessons to meet students' needs. The support teacher produces a separate lesson plan for some lessons involving partnership teaching. In the absence of individual learning targets for students requiring help with basic skills, this plan does not reflect the learning needs of individual learners. In some learning support sessions there is an over-reliance on worksheets as a teaching aid. Many of the worksheets used to teach basic skills do not set the tasks in an appropriate vocational context

154. Approximately 50% of teachers have undertaken specialist training in the teaching of basic skills. Few teachers have advanced basic skills qualifications. Most basic skills and learning support tutors have undertaken training in the new national curriculum in literacy and numeracy. Others are due to be trained later this year.

155. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. There is, however, not enough space in the learning centre for some of the activities planned to take place there. Students make regular use of the learning centre. There is an extensive bank of well-produced materials which students can use on their own, as well as a good stock of specialist teaching resources and software to help students improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Leadership and management

156. In September 2001, a new school was created which has responsibility across the college for basic skills courses and additional support for students who need help with basic skills. Managers and staff meet regularly and communication between them is good. However, there is insufficient dissemination of good practice from one curriculum area to another.

157. The development of basic skills courses is part of the college's strategic plan. There is, however, poor co-ordination of basic skills provision across the college. The college has recently developed a basic skills strategy, which has identified many of the weaknesses found by inspectors and has actions to address them. Progress on implementing the strategy is being monitored.

Part D: College data

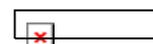
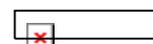


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2000/01

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	25	39



2	34	26
3	24	14
4/5	0	1
Other	17	20
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	1,565	2,387	16
Agriculture	1	18	0
Construction	52	187	1
Engineering	366	722	5
Business	759	3,080	16
Hotel and catering	438	1,660	9
Health and community care	248	2,373	11
Art and design	209	166	2
Humanities	2,524	2,313	20
Basic education	990	4,094	21
Total	7,152	17,000	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
		1	Starters excluding transfers	900	831	762	1,109
	Retention rate (%)	84	85	80	84	84	67
	National average (%)	77	75	76	76	73	76
	Pass rate (%)	51	67	79	61	62	47

	National average (%)	48	59	64	55	58	66
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,779	1,399	1,389	4,404	1,232	2,158
	Retention rate (%)	84	82	74	80	83	83
	National average (%)	75	72	73	76	74	74
	Pass rate (%)	40	65	67	56	55	68
	National average (%)	57	65	69	57	63	66
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,204	938	932	1,698	1,282	1,390
	Retention rate (%)	81	80	75	84	79	74
	National average (%)	77	73	75	76	75	76
	Pass rate (%)	53	54	64	58	65	75
	National average (%)	59	65	66	59	63	67
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	14	10	3	323	240	315
	Retention rate (%)	64	100	*	85	92	85
	National average (%)	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Pass rate (%)	100	57	*	68	52	47
	National average (%)	*	*	*	50	56	55

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

Sources of information:

1.) National averages: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/00): Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

2.) College rates for 1997/8 - 1998/9: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/00): 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

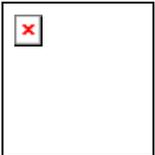
Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	63	33	4	98
Level 2 (intermediate)	53	38	9	69

Level 1* (foundation)	56	35	9	89
Other sessions	87	13	0	15
Totals	60	33	7	271

** includes entry level*

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