



Kingston College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Engineering and motor vehicle](#)

[Business](#)

[Information and communication technology](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health and social care and childcare](#)

[Visual arts and media](#)

[Performing arts](#)

[Humanities](#)

[English, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language](#)

[Basic skills](#)

[Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

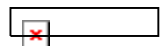
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

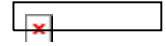
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

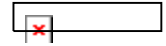


Name of college:	Kingston College
Type of college:	Further Education
Principal:	Arthur Cotterell
Address of college:	Kingston Hall Road Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT1 2AQ
Telephone number:	020 8546 2151
Fax number:	020 8546 2900
Chair of governors:	Lawrence Hardwicke
Unique reference number:	130448
Name of reporting inspector:	A Cross-Durrant HMI
Dates of inspection:	25 February-1 March 2002

Part A: Summary

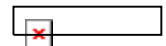


Information about the college



Kingston College, in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, is situated in the Kingston town centre. The town has a relatively low level of unemployment and deprivation compared with the Greater London area as a whole. School staying-on rates in Kingston are high, but the college maintains high enrolment figures, particularly of part-time students. In 2000/01, there were 2,587 full-time and 4,360 part-time students on further education (FE) courses, and 759 students on higher education (HE) courses. Some 73% of the college's students lived outside the borough. The college enjoys good relationships with employers, through which it develops both its main curriculum and provision to meet local employment needs. The college retains close working relationships with Kingston University, and the college and university run some joint HE courses. The mission of the college is 'to provide the best of further, higher and adult education and training across a broad range of ability', and 'to maintain an effective and efficient response to education and training needs identified locally, nationally and internationally'.

How effective is the college?



The college provides good education and training for students on mathematics, health and social care, English and modern foreign languages courses, and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Education and training were judged to be satisfactory in science, engineering, business, information and communication technology (ICT), visual arts and media, performing arts, humanities and basic skills. Provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy is unsatisfactory. The college's main strengths, and the areas that should be improved, are listed below.

Key strengths

- wide range of courses
- individual support for students
- good range of additional activities to enhance students' learning
- governors' strong support for the college

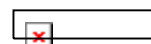
- productive links with business and external educational organisations.

What should be improved

- pass rates and retention rates in some subjects
- quality of some teaching
- data analysis as a basis for self-assessment
- quality assurance and its impact on raising standards
- students' attendance and lack of punctuality at lessons.

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



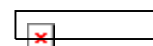
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) programmes, but low on General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced-level (GCE AS and A-level) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses. The teaching of practical science is good, but, in other aspects of work, teachers pay insufficient attention to students' individual learning needs. Many students lack punctuality and attendance at lessons is low.

Mathematics	Good. Retention and pass rates on level 2 courses are high. Retention rates on two-year GCE A-level courses are low. Mathematics teachers have been leaders in innovative curriculum development. Most teaching is satisfactory or good. Many students arrive late for lessons.
Engineering and motor vehicle	Satisfactory. The pass rate on the national certificate in engineering course is high, but there are low pass rates on some motor vehicle engineering courses. Retention rates are declining. The teaching in mechanical engineering workshops is highly effective. In many lessons observed, student attendance rates were low.
Business	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on some level 3 and management programmes, but low on level 2 courses. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers monitor students' progress well. On full-time courses, students' attendance at lessons was low, and students frequently arrived late for lessons.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Some pass rates on two-year courses for students aged 16 to 18 and on level 1 courses for adults are high, but they are low on level 1 full-time courses and some advanced level courses. Teaching is broadly satisfactory. Retention rates are low on two-year advanced level full-time courses. Teachers provide good individual support for students on foundation level courses. Students' attendance at lessons observed was often low.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Unsatisfactory. There are high retention and pass rates, and effective monitoring of students' progress on part-time beauty therapy courses. Pass rates on National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) level 2 courses, however, are low. There is a comprehensive range of additional complementary studies for students. A significant proportion of teaching is unsatisfactory. Students' attendance at NVQ lessons was low and many students lacked punctuality. Quality assurance is insufficiently thorough.
Health and social care and childcare	Good. Teaching is good and the quality of students' work is high. Pass rates are high on most childcare, counselling and advanced full-time courses, but they are low on some others. Student retention rates are low on NVQ level 3, advanced diploma in counselling and access to nursing courses. There are productive links with the local community.
Visual arts and media	Satisfactory. Teaching is good on most courses, but there is unsatisfactory teaching on some media courses. Retention and pass rates are high on vocational art and design courses. Pass rates are low on media courses and GCSE courses. Students' attendance at lessons observed was low.
Performing arts	Satisfactory. Teaching is good and teachers provide good individual support for students. Pass rates are low on some courses, particularly on the first diploma and General Certificate of Secondary Education courses. Retention rates are also low on a number of courses. Students' attendance at lessons observed was low and students are frequently not punctual. Self-assessment is insufficiently thorough.
Humanities	Satisfactory. There are high retention and pass rates on some courses, but the rates are low on some two-year GCE A-level courses. Some teaching is good and students value the pastoral support they receive. Attendance at lessons is low and students are frequently late for lessons.
English, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language	Good. Much of the teaching is very good. Pass rates are high on the majority of courses. There was a low pass rate in GCSE English in 2001. Students' written and oral skills are well developed. Students'

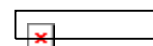
	attendance at lessons was low and there was some lack of punctuality for lessons.
Basic skills	Satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and teachers use good materials to develop students' employment and general life skills. The workshops are well managed. Pass rates on some courses are low and the level of students' attendance at lessons observed was low. Teachers do not consider sufficiently the individual learning needs of individual students and have not developed sufficiently learning plans for students.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. Teaching is good and support for students is effective. Pass rates are high and many students progress to higher levels of study. Learning resources, and the number of support staff available to assist students at the North Kingston Centre, are inadequate.

How well is the college led and managed?



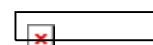
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors give good support to the college and are centrally involved in setting the strategic direction of the college. The financial management of the college is effective. The college has been successful in securing significant funding, including public/private partnership monies, to enable it to embark on a substantial building project. With a few exceptions, the management of curriculum areas is broadly satisfactory. Data on students' retention and pass rates prior to 2001 are unreliable. Since the last inspection, the college has not developed effective strategies, through its quality assurance system, to remedy low pass rates and some low retention rates, or to raise attendance rates. The college's self-assessment is not rigorous enough.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college strives successfully to be multicultural. Since the last inspection, the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups has risen from 22% to 29%. The overall proportion of female students has also increased from 45% to 54%. The college has increased the number of entry level courses it offers to encourage students with modest prior achievements to continue in education and training, and has developed courses for adults which run at times to suit their domestic and other commitments. It has also forged close links with some local schools through which effective courses for disaffected pupils have been introduced at the college.

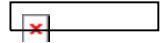
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Induction for new students is good overall. Individual meetings between students and their tutors to review their progress, or to discuss personal matters, are effective. Some group tutorials, however, are unsatisfactory. The college

needing help take advantage of the additional support which is offered. Students' attendance at lessons has been low since the last inspection. There is good counselling, welfare, finance and careers provision for students.

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

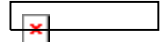
- its friendly atmosphere
- supportive teachers and tutors
- visits and activities that supplement their main programmes of study
- access they have to information technology (IT) facilities
- its reputation.

What they feel could be improved

- social and sports facilities for students
- methods to help develop their key skills
- some inadequate initial advice and guidance about courses
- waiting for slow lifts on the main site

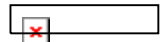
- some students' lack of punctuality.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

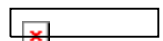


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	61	33	6
19+ and WBL*	55	35	10
Learning 16-18	49	43	8
19+ and WBL*	60	28	12

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 individual student record (ISR), which contains information on students' retention and pass rates for the three years 1998 to 2000, contains many instances of college courses on which at least 15% of the students who had completed their courses were shown either as continuing on the course after it ended, or showed that the examination results for at least 15% of the students on the course were unknown. In some cases, both incorrect students' retention rates and unknown outcomes were shown. In 2000, for example, the college does not know whether students entered

the three years 1998 to 2000, in many curriculum areas, the published college pass rates and some retention rates are inflated. Data for 2001 are significantly more accurate.

2. According to the published ISR data for 1999 and 2000, without taking account of unknown pass rates, overall pass rates on level 1, 2 and 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18 years, were around or just above the national average for colleges of a similar type. However, in 2001, they were all below the national average, and well below it on level 1 and level 2 courses. For students aged 19 or over, ISR data indicate that pass rates were also around or just above the national average for 1999 and 2000. In 2001, pass rates on level 1 and level 2 courses for adults were above the national average, but on level 3 and short courses they were well below it.

3. For the three years 1998 to 2000, the published ISR student retention rates have been generally at, or just above, national averages for all levels of course, before account is taken of the many students recorded as continuing on a course that they had already completed. College data for 2001 indicate that retention rates for students of all ages and on all levels of study are at the national average for colleges of a similar type. There is little difference in the retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 and adult students.

4. The college does not use students' GCSE points scores to predict systematically the GCE A-level grades that students ought to achieve. Some tutors agree target minimum grades for GCE A-level students to achieve and monitor students' progress to help them, but others do not. The college does not include this kind of performance measure when carrying out its self-assessment.

5. Some of the college's students have won national prizes and awards. For example, one mathematics student gained a gold award, and a second a silver award, in the senior United Kingdom 'mathematics challenge', and two secretarial students gained gold medals for high marks in the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry secretarial examinations.

16-18 year olds

6. In 2001, the average pass rate on long level 1 courses was low, at 53%, 13 percentage points below the national average. The pass rate on level 2 courses, having been around the national average in previous years, was only 50% in 2001. Level 3 courses, which the majority of students study, also had a low average pass rate of 65%.

7. In 2001, there were high pass rates on GNVQ advanced ICT, art and design, science, business, health and social care courses, GCE A-level English, and modern foreign languages courses. They were also high on some courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

8. In 2001, pass rates were very low, for example, on the national diploma in performing arts, NVQ level 2 in hairdressing, NVQ level 3 in health and care and childcare, GNVQ intermediate in health and social care, level 2 business, GCSE media, GCSE fine art, and several ICT courses. There was also some low pass rates on GCE A-level biology, physics and the two-year GCSE humanities courses. Other courses on which pass rates were low were motor vehicle engineering, GNVQ intermediate, and NVQ level 2 health and social care. Few students achieve key skills qualifications.

9. Over the three years 1998 to 2000, according to ISR data, retention rates appear to have remained at, or just, above national averages, before account is taken of the courses on which at least 15% of students are recorded as continuing courses they have completed. In 2001, the retention rate was low, for example, on many engineering courses, on the national diploma in performing arts, on level 1 and level 3 ICT courses for full-time students, and on two-year GCE A-level biology, chemistry, mathematics and psychology courses. There were also some low retention rates on level 3 courses in health and care, childcare and education, and counselling courses.

10. The college is funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the provision of advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in hairdressing and motor vehicle engineering. Since 1998, approximately 205 apprentices have begun apprenticeship programmes. Of these, 25 have successfully completed their programmes; 20 have completed but have failed to achieve the full

qualification, 75 have left the programme without completing and 85 are still following programmes. This represents a retention rate of only around 65%. Of those who started the course, only approximately 20%, excluding those who are still learning, have achieved the full qualification including its key skills elements.

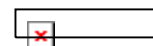
11. The college offers courses for students with moderate and severe learning difficulties and for those with behavioural problems. Retention and pass rates are high on many of these courses. For example, on the level 1 IT course, the retention rate was 93% and all the students who completed the course achieved their qualification. On the 'Pathfinder' course for young people, for whom school has been a negative experience, approximately 50% of the students who completed the course have progressed to other courses in the college, and most of the others went into employment.

Adult learners

12. Pass rates are higher on courses for adults than on courses for students aged 16 to 18. In 2001, most pass rates were at, or just above, the national average. There were some high pass rates, for example, on the ICT level 1 and part-time beauty courses, some childcare and education, and counselling courses, and on the access to HE programme. Pass rates are also high on some management programmes, particularly the certificate in personnel practice, and some modern foreign languages courses. Pass rates were low on the advanced diploma in counselling.

13. In 2001, retention rates were high on the NVQ level 2 health and social care, the advanced diploma in childcare and education, and the Institute of Legal Executives courses. Retention rates were low on NVQ courses in health and social care and on the advanced diploma in counselling. In 2001, 85% of the students who completed the access to HE course moved on to HE.

Quality of education and training



14. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 252 lessons. They judged that teaching was at least good in 59% of lessons, satisfactory in 34% and less than satisfactory in 7%. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in mathematics, humanities, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are significant variations in the quality of teaching and learning across different curriculum areas. The best teaching is in health and social care, humanities, English, modern foreign languages and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). However, in many of the curriculum areas, only a low proportion of teaching was judged to be very good and less than 2% of it was judged to be excellent. There is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in science, business, English, modern foreign languages and ESOL. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching in engineering, ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and basic skills.

15. Overall, teaching in lessons for students aged 16 to 18 is of better quality than in those for adults. Teaching on level 3 courses is better than on level 1 and level 2 courses. Teaching and learning are slightly better on GCE AS and A-level courses and GCSE courses than on some vocational courses at equivalent levels.

16. Too many students are late for lessons, they interrupt teaching when they arrive, and teachers lose valuable teaching time going over ground already covered for the benefit of the latecomers. Many lessons were disrupted, particularly in mathematics, engineering, ICT, visual arts, media, humanities, and basic skills. Students' attendance at lessons observed was low. In September 2001, the college introduced an 'absence hotline' for students in the general studies department to try to improve attendance. In other areas of the college, monitoring of students' attendance is unsystematic. In all but two of the curriculum areas inspected, the attendance rate in lessons for full-time students aged 16 to 18 was lower than in those for adults. Student attendance at lessons is low

across the college. The average attendance in the lessons observed was only 70%. And the lowest attendance rates were in engineering, ICT, performing arts, English, modern foreign languages, and basic skills.

17. In the better lessons, teachers help students to develop the skills that enable them to work on their own. They ensure students understand what is expected of them and enable them to work at their own pace. Teachers often draw effectively on what students have learned in earlier lessons. Many also provide relevant, topical learning materials for students to work with. Teachers in art and design and performing arts, for example, have good up-to-date commercial and professional experience, which they use effectively in their teaching to illustrate the practical relevance of points under discussion. Some teachers are adept at asking questions which help students to think for themselves. In some lessons, teachers manage students' discussions well and ensure everyone in the class is involved.

18. Students in engineering and science carry out good practical work. Visual arts and media students work well on individual tasks in workshops and studios. Basic skills teachers make effective use of materials which help students to develop general life skills and skills for work. Some teachers, for example in mathematics and humanities, use ICT successfully as a teaching aid in their lessons. There are some well-structured work placements for students in health and social care to enhance their learning. Students on, for example, visual arts and media courses benefit from visits to performances, conferences, museums and galleries.

19. Weaker aspects of teaching include poor lesson planning, the failure to check that students understand the topics and concepts being covered, and the time that some students are expected to spend copying notes from the board or the overhead transparencies. In some of the poorer lessons, teachers fail to provide aims and objectives for the lesson or have no clear expectation of what students should learn by the end of the lesson. Some teachers fail to pick out the students who are struggling to make progress. Teachers of classes containing students of mixed abilities sometimes fail to provide appropriate activities or materials to help each student learn effectively. In some lessons, teachers begin lessons too slowly and fail to engage students' interest from the outset. Instructions to students are not always clear and students become confused about what is expected of them. Some teachers' expectations of students are too low and there is not enough encouragement to students to develop their conceptual thinking. Some business students have had too many changes of teacher during their course and this has led to some aspects of their work being repeated, a lack of coherence in their learning overall, and the students have been unable to build a stable working relationship with the teachers.

20. In most lessons, learning is satisfactory and levels of attainment are appropriate. Many students are confident, well motivated, and work productively. Most of the foreign languages lessons were conducted entirely in the language being learnt. Students responded well to this, consolidating their knowledge of grammar and developing their vocabulary. There is too much unsatisfactory learning and low levels of attainment in ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual arts and media, performing arts, and basic skills. The levels of attainment of some humanities students are also below what is required, and their critical and analytical skills are insufficiently developed.

21. Most teachers are appropriately qualified. Some 70% of full-time and 46% of part-time teachers have a teaching qualification. Some learning support staff have appropriate qualifications and have received specialist training, for example, to help them to support students with dyslexia or behavioural problems.

22. The learning resources centre on the main site is well stocked with appropriate texts and computers and there are plenty of study spaces for students. It also includes the learning support centre. The quality of teaching accommodation varies. In mathematics and ICT it is good, and most students on business and ICT courses have access to industry standard hardware and software. However, some rooms are too small for the classes using them and, in some cases, the noise from outside has an adverse effect on lessons. The college has a planned maintenance programme, but many rooms remain in a shabby condition and do not offer a good environment for learning. The accommodation for hairdressing is poor. For example, the need to teach up to three groups in one large salon significantly restricts the space in which students, teachers and clients can circulate.

The accommodation fails to meet industry standards. A room at the north Kingston site, used for learning support, is reached only through a paint store in a temporary classroom. Some accommodation issues may be resolved by a building programme, which the college intends to complete by 2003. The new accommodation programme will provide major sports facilities, and adapt existing accommodation to create a theatre, hair and beauty salon, engineering workshop facilities and residential accommodation for students. A management training facility, suitable for holding conferences, is also planned.

23. Specialist facilities in art and design, humanities, languages, motor vehicle and multimedia are good. There is a satisfactory ratio of computers to students of just over 1:5. Most students have good access to IT, including the Internet. The site, which the college leases in north Kingston, has insufficient learning materials and access to IT for students with severe learning difficulties is poor. Students with restricted mobility are unable to use much of the accommodation because there are no lifts. Teachers' and students' use of the college's intranet varies in frequency and scope, across departments. There is no overall management of ICT resources across the college. Each department sets up and manages its own facilities. There are different user rights in different departments. Students in some departments find that when they are timetabled in rooms requiring different user rights, they have problems trying to complete the practical work that they started in a different room.

24. The college has clear policies and procedures for assessment and internal verification on GNVQ and NVQ courses, but not for other courses, such as GCE AS and A-level courses. Assignment and assessment briefs are clearly written, and are checked by teachers before being given to students. In general, assessment is carried out satisfactorily. Many students receive constructive feedback from teachers. However, on some ICT, science and mathematics courses, teachers' comments provide inadequate guidance for students to make progress. In mathematics, teachers record only a few marks for students' work. On health and social care, basic skills and science courses, teachers often take a long time to return marked work to students, and their marking is insufficiently thorough.

25. The college does not have a college-wide policy for the initial assessment of students to identify whether they need additional learning support. The majority of students take a test to determine their level of literacy and, on some courses, students are required to take additional tests. There is particularly good use of diagnostic tests for students on level 2 mathematics courses. However, some teachers are unclear about the process to be followed for students' initial assessment. Procedures and the tests used vary across departments and courses and there is no central analysis and comparison to gauge the effectiveness of the various methods used or to share any good practice. Little use is made of initial assessment findings in drawing up individual learning plans for students. Teachers on different courses devise different kinds of learning plans and go about setting objectives and targets for improvement in different ways. The college has no procedures for monitoring and analysing the effectiveness of individual learning plans.

26. Many teachers and tutors monitor students' progress regularly. In some subjects, for example English and modern foreign languages, teachers set minimum target grades for GCE A-level students based on their GCSE points scores. Some business students benefit from analysing their own progress, and assessing for themselves the effectiveness with which they manage their time. The college does not have a standard policy on the frequency of review meetings between students and their teachers or tutors. Some students meet with tutors to review progress each week; others each term. Parents and employers receive regular information on students' progress and attendance.

27. The college offers a wide range of courses for school-leavers and adults. It has increased provision at entry level and level 1, though there are no foundation programmes in business and performing arts. Most courses are offered from level 1 to level 3 and students often progress from one level of study to the next. There is a good range of courses for adults to return to learning, and special provision for students whose behaviour is challenging. The college is reorganising its provision of work-based training, which is diminishing. There are around only 80 work-based learners at the college. The college offers a wide range of tailored short or intensive courses for local business and industry, and has launched an e-learning training programme for a large multinational organisation.

28. The college encourages full-time students to pursue a broad range of courses as part of its Curriculum 2000 developments. Students embark on four GCE AS subjects. More than 60% of Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) students also follow a GCE AS subject in addition to their vocational studies. However, a substantial proportion of those students drops the additional GCE AS subject after the first few months. GCE AS subjects are also available for students on intermediate courses. Most students aged 16 to 18 are required to obtain key skills qualifications in application of number, communication and IT, but the number of students achieving the qualifications is low.

29. The college has good links with the local community. It participates in an increasing range of activities with local schools. Performing arts students put on performances for Year 10 and 11 pupils in six schools. There are very good departmental advisory committees, consisting of governors and up to 30 members from industry, commerce and HE, which are used effectively to keep departments up to date with commercial developments and to devise courses for employers. In addition, members of advisory committees and an extensive network of 'friends' of the college contribute to the college's wider life. For example, the engineering department calls on representatives of international companies, based locally, to present prizes for students, and students on the first year of the art and design diploma course participate in an annual drawing project, organised in collaboration with Kingston University.

30. The college provides a wide range of activities to enhance students' learning. Students across the college value highly the many opportunities they have to participate in visits and residential, activities organised as part of their courses.

31. Most students receive appropriate advice and guidance prior to enrolling at the college and most receive a satisfactory induction. Induction for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. However, in some areas, many students drop out of two-year courses during, or at the end of, the first year. This is particularly the case in mathematics where 25% of the students left the GCE A-level course early, and ICT where 35% left. Some of the students who drop out transfer to a one-year course.

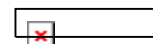
32. Learning support for students is organised and managed across the college by three different departments and teams of people. The college does not have a college-wide policy or system for ensuring that the college's performance in supporting students' learning is systematically monitored and assessed. There are no data giving reliable information about how many of the students who are referred by teachers and tutors for additional learning support actually take up the support they need. In some areas, for example science, there is a low take-up of support by students, while in others, such as business, there is good attendance in the learning support centre. Learning support tutors give good assistance for students during lessons in some areas, for example, in engineering, health and social care and modern foreign languages. At the north Kingston centre, the additional learning needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not always met because there are not enough learning support tutors at the centre. Some teachers are unclear about the role of learning support tutors and do not know what to expect of them. The college does not analyse the impact of learning support on improving retention or pass rates.

33. The college has devised quality standards for aspects of support and guidance for students, including induction and tutorials. There is a tutorial curriculum. A tutorial working party, comprising representatives from across the college, meet to identify relevant materials, agree tutorial standards and recommend methods for managing tutorials. Evaluation of tutorials forms part of an end-of-term questionnaire for students. The views of focus groups, and findings from the observation of tutorials also contribute to the evaluation. The individual meetings between students and their tutors are effective, but group tutorials are less effective, for example, ICT, humanities, engineering, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and basic skills.

34. An enthusiastic team of full-time and part-time staff provides good counselling, financial, disability and welfare support for staff and students. The services are publicised widely in the college. There are good links with external organisations to supplement the range of support services offered by the college. Students have ready access to careers guidance from college careers staff and the local Connexions service. The college has been accredited with the Investor in

Careers award and has met the national Information, Advice and Guidance standards.

Leadership and management



35. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college operates in a competitive environment. It attracts students from areas outside the borough, including inner London. Governors fully support the college's aim to widen participation and to respond to local community and business education and training needs. Governors and the college exhibit a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is increasing. The college's equal opportunity policy is implemented effectively.

36. Governors work well with senior managers. Attendance at board meetings is high. Governors are closely involved in the work of the five college departments and members chair the highly productive departmental advisory committees. The curriculum departments report to the committees on their provision in their subjects and courses. The committee meetings provide excellent opportunities for involving local employers in discussing the education and training needs of the business community. Governors are actively involved in producing the college's strategic plan. They attend residential workshops at which they develop strategic aims for the college. Strategic aims are established for each college department. The objectives for raising standards, however, are not sufficiently explicit.

37. There is insufficient co-ordination and cross-college development and cohesion of some key aspects of the college's work. For example, learning support for students, various strategies for improving attendance and punctuality, the development of 'value added' measures to gauge students' eventual GCE AS and A-level grades against their GCSE points scores, and improving pass rates are inadequately co-ordinated. This, together with some unreliable student performance data, hampers the governors' ability to monitor the progress being made towards meeting college-wide strategic aims. Governors receive information about different departments' retention and pass rates through the advisory committees, but their judgements about college performance are often based on unreliable data. The college does not collate and analyse information on performance across departments and divisions, and this restricts the extent to which good practice can be shared. The college fails to analyse the adequacy of objectives and targets that have been set or to identify the proportion of programmes that have met their improvement targets. In 2001, the college failed to achieve any of its pass rate targets on level 1, 2 and 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18, and the pass rates achieved were below the national average. Governors have not established formal procedures for appraising senior post holders, including arrangements for gauging the impact senior post holders are having on raising standards.

38. The management of curriculum areas is broadly satisfactory. It is good in English, modern foreign languages, and health and social care. Mathematics across the college is well managed, though quality assurance of GCE A-level mathematics is less than adequate. The management of GCE A-level science and hairdressing and beauty therapy is inadequate.

39. The college's centrally held data on retention and pass rates over the three years 1998 to 2000 are unreliable, and the record of the college's past performance is insufficiently accurate. However, the college was able to significantly improve the accuracy of data for 2001 in time for the inspection. Managers and teachers do not have ready access to the centrally held data and they often rely on their own information held in their curriculum areas. The college has recognised the need to rectify inaccuracies in data and to improve access to reliable data for those who need it.

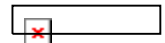
40. The college has developed systematic procedures for observing lessons, and observations are managed satisfactorily. Information gained from observing lessons, and from teachers' appraisal, is used in planning staff development. Lesson observation formed part of teachers' appraisal for the first time in 2001/02, but procedures to bring this into effect have not been fully implemented in all

curriculum areas. Grades for teaching awarded by the college were much the same as those awarded by inspectors. The college has long-established quality assurance procedures, which include self-assessment, observing lessons and seeking the views of staff and students. Management of the procedures is devolved to the five heads of department. Teachers in the various divisions and curriculum areas review their courses annually, as part of the college's self-assessment arrangements, and produce reports of their findings. The college's assessment of the quality of provision in many areas was higher than that determined by inspectors. The college's self-assessment is insufficiently evaluative and the self-assessment reports are not sufficiently critical of some poor student attendance, retention and pass rates. The principal and vice principal discuss the implementation of action plans with relevant staff, but actions designed to raise standards are not specific enough. The thoroughness with which strategies for improving retention and pass rates are identified and monitored varies significantly across the departments and within them, in the divisions.

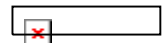
41. There has been insufficient improvement in quality assurance since the last inspection. The procedures are not having sufficient impact on raising standards across the college. Pass rates have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection and the college's performance overall is below average.

42. The financial management of the college is effective. Some budgets are delegated to heads of department, but full-time staffing is carefully controlled centrally. The college has met its student recruitment targets each year since 1999. Senior managers and governors have worked together effectively to secure significant sums of money for the college, including public/private partnership funds to implement the college's accommodation strategy.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on vocational science courses
- high proportion of students progressing to other science courses and HE
- effective teaching of practical science
- broad range of science courses.

Weaknesses

- poor student attendance and lack of punctuality on GCE AS and GCSE courses
- low retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses
- teachers' insufficient attention to individual students' learning needs
- unsatisfactory management of GCSE and GCE provision.

Scope of provision

43. The college offers a good range of GCE AS and A-level courses and vocational courses in science, including an NVQ course for laboratory technicians. The full-time students are almost all aged 16 to 18, but students on the substantial one-year intensive course are aged over 19. Just over 640 students are enrolled on science programmes. Servicing of science for other courses at the college was not within the scope of the inspection.

Achievement and standards

44. Student retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and advanced science are above the national average. Pass rates in GCE A-level science subjects have fallen over the three years 1999 to 2001 and were below the national average on two-year and one-year intensive courses in 2001. Pass rates on GCE AS biology and physics were also low. Retention rates on GCSE courses are high, but pass rates have fallen to below the national average in 2001. Retention rates on one-year courses are high. College data for two-year courses show that, on some programmes, many students left two-year programmes at the end of the first year and enrolled on one-year courses in a different science. For example, out of 46 students who started GCE A-level biology in 1999 only 37% stayed on the course on which they had enrolled; 12 transferred to other courses during their first year, and another 17 at the end of it.

45. Assessment of students' coursework and practical assignments is satisfactory. On vocational courses, students work well in laboratories and carry out appropriate risk assessments. They follow guidelines on safety carefully, although occasionally they bring drinks into laboratories, in contravention of the guidelines. The standard of students' work in general, is appropriate for the level at which they are studying. A high proportion of students who complete their courses progress from intermediate to advanced level programmes and on to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	63	41	38
		% retention	84	93	89

		% pass rate	36	44	25
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	13	10	10
		% retention	69	100	100
		% pass rate	78	70	90
GNVQ advanced science	3	No. of starts	17	10	16
		% retention	88	100	88
		% pass rate	67	90	83
GCE A-level biology (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	58	59	34
		% retention	*	*	*
		% pass rate	75	70	65
GCE A-level chemistry (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	51	36	34
		% retention	*	*	*
		% pass rate	78	75	64
GCE A-level physics (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	44	20	25
		% retention	*	*	*
		% pass rate	59	45	58

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

* college data shows at least 15% of the students recorded as continuing

Quality of education and training

46. Most teaching is satisfactory and often it is good. In the better lessons, teachers help students to learn effectively by using a wide range of resources and by guiding students through practical work or demonstrations. When posed probing questions to test students' learning, for example after watching a video, the students responded well. In an environmental science lesson, the teacher used a wide range of resources and involved students in working in pairs and in whole-class discussion. Students were well prepared for a timed essay they then had to undertake on the impact of agricultural production. Teachers recognise that classes now contain students of lower ability than has previously been the case, but they have not devised appropriate written material or teaching methods to meet the differing learning needs of students. Some teachers require students to do little other than listen to what is being said or to copy notes. Several teachers require students to use IT during practical work or theory lessons, but the use of IT for teaching is not widespread.

47. Teachers set tests and coursework assignments for students at an appropriate level for the courses they are on and they mark students' work fairly. However, there is no departmental policy on regular homework and written exercises and in some cases, very few marks for students are recorded. Students rarely receive detailed written comments on their work to help them improve their performance. Individual support for students in tutorial sessions is good. Students' attendance at GCE AS and GCSE lessons is poor and many students lack punctuality. In some lessons, half the students were absent, and sometimes students continued to arrive throughout the first hour of a two-hour session.

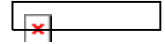
48. Most teachers are suitably qualified and experienced. Laboratories are old, but adequate, and some equipment is nearing the end of its useful life.

Leadership and management

49. Overall, the management of science provision is unsatisfactory. Managers and teachers fail to identify and act on shortcomings in teaching and learning and on students' poor performance on

GCSE and GCE A-level courses. Strategies for improving poor attendance and lack of punctuality have been ineffective. The action plan arising from the most recent self-assessment fails to address declining pass rates on GCE A-level courses, and the self-assessment report itself does not identify the high proportion of students who drop out of, or transfer from, two-year courses.

Mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on level 2 courses
- good support for students when working on their own
- innovative curriculum developments for full-time students
- effective management of college-wide mathematics provision
- effective use of ICT in mathematics teaching.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on the two-year GCE A-level course
- lack of punctuality by students in a significant number of lessons
- some inadequacies in quality assurance.

Scope of provision

50. There are 711 students studying mathematics and numeracy at various levels, on a broad range of courses. Of these, 46 are enrolled on level 3 courses and 340 on level 2 courses, including

GCSE and free-standing mathematics units. The major part of the provision is for full-time students aged 16 to 18. There is one evening class for GCE AS mathematics and one for GCSE mathematics.

Achievement and standards

51. There are high retention and pass rates on level 2 courses. Retention rates on two-year GCE A-level courses are low, however, which is a weakness not identified in the college's self-assessment report. Pass rates on the one-year GCE A-level course fell from 67% to 59% in 2001, but remain above the national average. Pass rates on GCE AS courses are low. Students who are re-taking GCSE mathematics are, on average, achieving almost a grade higher than they did at their first attempt. Teachers do not compare students' GCE A-level grades with their GCSE points scores to evaluate the impact of their teaching. Many students do not complete the two-year mathematics course. For example, of 88 students who began the course in 1999, only 36 completed it.

52. Students on all levels of mathematics courses carry out graphical work well and are able to make connections between different mathematical ideas. Students taking GCE AS and A-level mathematics use a wide range of algebraic techniques effectively and are able to discuss mathematics with confidence. Students on free-standing mathematics units, some of whom go on to study at GCSE level, are competent in using computer spreadsheets to solve statistical problems. Students may progress from the free-standing mathematics units to study at GCSE level. Two students won awards as part of the United Kingdom Mathematics Challenge in 2001.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics (one-year course)	2	No. of starts	161	106	152
		% retention	80	91	89
		% pass rate	31	46	49
Foundation free standing mathematics unit	2	No. of starts	42	115	117
		% retention	86	85	86
		% pass rate	80	65	86
GCE A-level mathematics (one-year course)	3	No. of starts	52	49	37
		% retention	88	90	86
		% pass rate	64	67	59
GCE A-level mathematics (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	127	63	62
		% retention	*	*	*
		% pass rate	69	71	72

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

* college data shows at least 15% of the students recorded as continuing

Quality of education and training

53. Teaching in lessons observed was at least satisfactory. Teachers encourage students to work independently and give them good individual support. Lessons are well planned and well structured. Students work well in small groups. Sometimes, they present each group's solutions to problems to the rest of the class. Students' graph work often indicates an understanding of different aspects of mathematics. Though much of the teaching is good, no teaching was judged to be outstanding and

in only one lesson was it judged very good. Most lessons are taught competently, but are uninspiring. Lessons frequently start too slowly to capture students' attention right from the start. Students' lack of punctuality disrupts learning in a significant number of lessons and teachers have to spend valuable lesson time repeating themselves for the benefit of the latecomers. Teachers sometimes do not fully explore with students the range of methods available for solving mathematical problems.

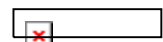
54. The mathematics workshop is well equipped with good ICT resources. Classrooms are of good quality and there are attractive wall displays containing information about general mathematical concepts. There are areas for students to work quietly on their own. Teachers are appropriately well qualified and knowledgeable. Learning materials are good. Some teachers are not up to date with a number of required skills; for example, the use of ICT and other methods of teaching.

55. Assessment criteria for marking students' work are clear and many teachers mark students' work carefully. While marks and grades awarded for students' work are checked carefully by various teachers, the comments made on GCSE students' coursework are inadequate and did not help them to do better in a subsequent piece of work. Teachers set regular tests to monitor students' progress. Good use is made of the results of initial diagnostic assessment of students' abilities and skills. Tutors hold regular and frequent progress review meetings with students, but the progress of students referred to the mathematics workshop are monitored inadequately.

Leadership and management

56. The mathematics department has been involved in innovative curriculum development. In 2001, the work undertaken to develop the free-standing mathematics units gained the Beacon Award for mathematics. The GCE AS 'use of mathematics' qualification has been piloted in the college and the findings shared with other colleges. There is effective leadership and management in mathematics. The co-ordination of mathematics provision across the college is good. However, quality assurance procedures are not fully effective. For example, comparison of students' GCE A-level grades with the grades achieved at GCSE is insufficiently thorough and the information is not used adequately in evaluating the division's performance. Teachers and managers do not analyse management information systems (MIS) data on retention and pass rates appropriately, and the self-assessment report failed to recognise the low rates of retention in some areas of work.

Engineering and motor vehicle



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on the national certificate in engineering course
- high standard of students' practical work
- highly effective teaching in mechanical engineering workshops

- good individual support for students in many lessons
- well-managed engineering workshops.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some motor vehicle engineering courses
- falling retention rates on many courses
- poor planning of some lessons
- low student attendance in many lessons.

Scope of provision

57. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time engineering courses. There are courses in mechanical engineering, electrical and electro-mechanical engineering, electronic engineering, electrical installation and motor vehicle engineering, extending from foundation level to level 4. Approximately 560 students are enrolled on engineering and motor vehicle courses. Students on the engineering national diploma course are able to study for a complementary practical engineering qualification alongside their main studies. While many full-time students are enrolled on level 3 courses, the engineering department has recently increased the range of foundation courses to meet the demand from school-leavers who do not possess the required qualifications for admission to level 2 courses. Many students attending part-time courses are on modern apprentice programmes which are managed by other organisations. The college is also directly responsible for the management of some 23 engineering modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

58. The pass rates on most mechanical and electrical engineering courses are satisfactory, and are high on the national certificate in engineering and the NVQ level 2 engineering courses. However, the pass rates on the national certificate in motor vehicle engineering, NVQ levels 2 and 3 in motor vehicle maintenance and the City and Guilds progression award in motor vehicle engineering are below national averages. Retention rates are falling on many courses, and are below average on the City and Guilds level 1 electrical installation course. Levels of attendance in many lessons are low. Students on the advanced modern apprenticeship course in motor vehicle engineering have made slow progress in completing the programme and it has had to be extended by a further year.

59. The standard of students' practical work in mechanical engineering is high. Engineering artefacts, such as hub extractors produced by students in the first few months of their courses, are manufactured to a high standard. Students on the national diploma course in engineering tackle

substantive and challenging projects well. However, in many theory lessons, attainment is rarely more than satisfactory and, in a few lessons, some students fail to achieve the standards expected of them. The work in many students' portfolios is of a high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 3830 repair and servicing of road vehicles	1	No. of starts	***	24	27
		% retention	***	83	67
		% pass rate	***	75	56
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installation competences (two-year course)	2	No. of starts	50	47	57
		% retention	*	*	*
		% pass rate	**	90	81
NVQ foundation in engineering	2	No. of starts	52	57	35
		% retention	*	*	89
		% pass rate	89	68	76
NVQ 2 in vehical mechanical and electronic systems unit replacement	2	No. of starts	***	32	61
		% retention	***	*	*
		% pass rate	***	17	47
National certificate in engineering (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	29	61	39
		% retention	*	*	69
		% pass rate	100	87	85
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	110	61	53
		% retention	*	*	74
		% pass rate	78	64	69

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

* college data shows at least 15% of the students recorded as continuing

** college data shows at least 15% of the students recorded as having no known outcome

*** course not running

Quality of education and training

60. Teaching in the mechanical engineering workshops is good. Teachers plan and manage most lessons well. Students understand what is expected of them, and undertake tasks enthusiastically. Lessons are organised to enable students to work at their own pace, and teachers provide effective support to help students make progress. Teachers monitor students' progress carefully. On the level 1 'skill builder' courses, lessons in communication and IT key skills are well organised, and students receive outstanding personal support whilst working on well-designed exercises to help them develop their skills. In a theory lesson in motor vehicle electronics, the use of a computer-aided learning system motivated students and helped them make progress. However, planning of many other lessons is unsatisfactory. Lesson objectives are sometimes unclear, and students become confused about what is expected of them. In an evening lesson for adults, the students wasted time waiting to gain access to the electronics laboratory because it was being used by other students. In some practical lessons, teachers fail to provide written instructions to help students complete practical exercises, and many students find themselves unable to make progress because the teacher is dealing with other individuals' queries. Teaching of engineering theory is often uninspiring, and some students become frustrated and inattentive. In a motor vehicle technology

lesson, inappropriate teaching and learning methods resulted in some students becoming disruptive. In a few lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to the wide range of students' abilities, and though teachers support students who work slowly, they often fail to take account of those who are more able, for example, by devising additional work for them.

61. Teachers are suitably qualified. Many of the full-time teachers have teaching qualifications and some have attended industrial updating courses. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to some of the accommodation and specialist equipment used by engineering and electrical installation students, and there are plans to improve the accommodation further. Students on motor vehicle courses benefit from a range of computer-aided learning equipment and the vehicle workshops are well equipped. The mechanical engineering workshops offer an adequate range of equipment and machine tools, and the college is planning to extend the range of specialist equipment available for students on mechanical and electrical maintenance courses. The layout of a few laboratories, however, is poor and this restricts the teaching and learning activities that can take place. The decoration and furnishing in some laboratories are shabby, and present a poor image of engineering.

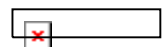
62. Schemes of work are good. Practical assignments, particularly in mechanical engineering, are well designed. Internal verification of marked students' work, however, is not always sufficiently thorough. Teachers monitor students' progress in the mechanical engineering workshops very well. Most teachers provide helpful comments on students' written work to help them make progress. Apprentices on the motor vehicle apprenticeship programme attend the college for one day a week. There is also an effective portfolio building 'surgery' every fortnight, during which apprentices review their work-based evidence for assessment with their tutors.

63. In some lessons, learning support tutors work well with subject teachers to provide additional support in literacy for those students who need it. Students' additional learning needs are identified during induction through diagnostic testing of abilities and skills. However, those identified as needing support do not always attend the learning support sessions. Full-time students benefit from regular meetings with their tutors to review progress. However, appropriate individual action planning for individual students has not been established.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management of engineering are satisfactory. The department has extensive and productive links with employers and there is an effective engineering advisory committee, which involves governors. The engineering department comprises four divisions; electrical, electrical installation, mechanical and motor vehicle engineering. Management of the mechanical engineering workshop provision is good, as is the management of the mechanical engineering apprenticeship programme. Management of motor vehicle engineering, however, is less effective. Arrangements for sharing good practice between divisions are insufficiently developed. There is considerable variation in teachers' awareness and understanding of procedures for setting targets to improve retention and pass rates. Course reviews and the self-assessment report are insufficiently critical about the quality of teaching and learning, and of some low retention and pass rates. Grades for teaching awarded by the college are higher than those awarded by inspectors. Teachers' data on student retention and pass rates are different from those on the college's MIS, and teachers mistrust the MIS data.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GNVQ advanced and some management programmes
- good monitoring of students' progress
- excellent computing resources for professional and management programmes
- wide range of provision from level 2 to level 5.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some programmes, particularly at level 2
- rapid staff turnover which adversely affects some students' progress
- low attendance and lack of punctuality on full-time business programmes
- lack of foundation provision.

Scope of provision

65. The college offers a broad range of courses for full-time students aged 16 to 18 and adult students. Full-time provision includes GCE AS/A-level, GCSE, AVCE, and GNVQ intermediate secretarial administration courses. Students on secretarial and administration courses can study full-time or part-time and are able to supplement their main programme by choosing from a wide range of single award subjects. Adult and professional provision includes courses in management, personnel, marketing, law, credit management and accountancy. The department also offers an intensive short course in office technology, 'computers made easy' programmes, and other specially designed short training courses. Productive working relationships have been established with a range of corporate clients. These include work for local authorities, social services, a multi-agency programme designed to develop management skills, and courses for a number of multinational companies. Some 723 students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on business programmes and some 653 adult students are enrolled on mainly short professional courses.

Achievement and standards

66. Pass rates on the GNVQ advanced business course for students aged 16 to 18 are consistently high, and the proportion of students achieving high grades is also high. In 2001, two secretarial students were awarded gold medals by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one for

the highest marks awarded internationally in text production and the other for the highest mark in the United Kingdom for the meetings paper on the level 4 course. Pass rates on the GCE A-level business studies course are consistently below the national average. In 2001, pass rates were below the national average on GCSE and GNVQ intermediate courses in business.

67. Pass rates on management programmes for students aged over 19 are generally high. In two of the three years 1999 to 2001, the pass rates on the certificate in personnel practice and the certificate in training practice courses were 100%. Pass rates are also high on the advanced certificate in marketing course. However, pass rates are low on professional accounting programmes and, in 2000, no one on the Association of Accounting Technician (AAT) foundation course achieved the qualification. Though pass rates are rising on the AAT foundation and intermediate courses, none of the students on the AAT technician course has passed since 1999. No one has achieved the full qualification on the Association of Chartered and Certified Accounts (ACCA) course each year since 1998 and, on the Chartered Institute of Management Accountancy (CIMA) course, since 2000.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate in business	2	No. of starts	45	45	36
		% retention	67	87	78
		% pass rate	50	74	39
Association of Accounting Technician foundation	2	No. of starts	32	24	25
		% retention	81	83	79
		% pass rate	54	0	68
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	116	86	86
		% retention	90	52	70
		% pass rate	60	67	71
GNVQ advanced in business	3	No. of starts	70	45	46
		% retention	84	76	55
		% pass rate	88	88	90
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	82	70	85
		% retention	91	90	86
		% pass rate	100	100	91
Institute of legal executives (ILEX) 9 part 2	4	No. of starts	41	50	47
		% retention	93	92	100
		% pass rate	23	48	51

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

Quality of education and training

68. The majority of lessons are well planned. Teachers devise appropriate learning activities, involving both theory and practical work, to help develop students' understanding of the subject. In full-time lessons, teachers often use well-chosen case study material to help students learn about current business issues. Teachers also give particular attention to building students' grasp of business and accountancy concepts. They draw effectively on students' earlier learning and guide them from one level of understanding to the next. However, some students struggle with aspects of

specialist terminology and need more support to enable them to understanding specialist terms. Teachers generally manage lessons productively and use appropriate activities to sustain students' interest. Some teaching in professional and management lessons is good. In the better lessons, teachers draw extensively on students' own experiences in the work place. In a marketing lesson, for example, the teacher analysed and compared various marketing styles, so that the students were then able to relate these to the policies of their own organisations. A lively debate on the advantages and disadvantages of various marketing styles followed. In other lessons, teachers draw effectively on their own business experience to provide examples of business and accountancy practice.

69. In the weaker lessons, for both the students aged 16 to 18 and those aged over 19, teachers fail to checks that students understand the topic. Some of the questions from teachers are insufficiently probing and some students remain passive. Teachers do not always require students to justify their answers to questions. Some do little to enable or expect students to demonstrate the depth of their understanding. Though students often work in small groups, insufficient briefing is given to students at the outset and some do not complete tasks thoroughly enough.

70. Full-time students' attendance is low and many students lack punctuality. The average attendance rate in lessons observed for full-time students was low at 65%. The student attendance rate for all lessons observed was only 70%. Low numbers and late arrival of students in lessons adversely affect the quality of some lessons. Teachers are sometimes unable to proceed with well-planned lessons because of having to repeat themselves for the benefit of latecomers, and often the momentum of learning is lost. Some teachers have devised additional 'catching-up' learning materials to help students who miss lessons. There has been frequent and rapid turnover of teachers on the GCE AS and the GNVQ intermediate courses, and students have suffered from loss of continuity in lessons, time wasted on some topics that are repeated, and the general lack of a stable learning relationship with teachers. The college acknowledges this issue in its self-assessment report and has taken steps to try to improve the situation. The college does not offer a foundation course in business and some students on the GNVQ intermediate course are struggling with their studies.

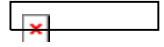
71. Resources for business, management and administration are good. Teachers are appropriately well qualified. The majority have a teaching qualification, and several are examiners for awarding bodies or members of relevant professional bodies. There is, however, no formal, systematic means by which teachers can update their business experience. Students have access to industry-standard computing facilities and modern software. The layout of furniture in most of the rooms used for business studies does not readily lend itself to group work. A few rooms are shabby and provide a poor environment for learning. The range and quality of learning resources and handout materials are generally good, but teachers do not always share them.

72. Teachers' marking of students' work is, in general, fair, and they make helpful comments for students when marking coursework to help students improve their performance. On management programmes, trainees' progress is recorded carefully. On other programmes, there is good self-evaluation by students and they devise agreed targets and action plans to help them improve their work. However, the arrangements for assessing and tracking individual students' progress with key skills on the GNVQ intermediate programme are inadequate. There is good additional learning support for students identified as needing it. Students with special learning needs are provided with laptops to use at home. Students on professional and management courses can receive information on the college's intranet system.

Leadership and management

73. Day-to-day management of courses is satisfactory. Teachers meet regularly, and action plans arising from meetings are monitored regularly. Course reviews are effective and are used to inform curriculum planning. Targets for retention and pass rates are set at course level. However, teachers refer only to the department's most recent retention and pass rates rather than to national averages. They do not always check their figures with those provided by the college's central MIS and the business area has an inaccurate picture of its performance.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- wide range of full-time provision for students aged 16 to 18
- effective individual support for students on foundation courses
- high pass rates on level 1 courses for adults and two-year advanced level courses for students aged 16 to 18
- comprehensive planning of vocational ICT courses
- excellent library provision and class textbooks.

Weaknesses

- ineffective teaching methods
- low attendance at lessons
- narrow range of part-time courses
- incompatibility of computer systems
- low pass rates on level 1 and level 2 full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18

- low retention rates on full-time two-year advanced courses.

Scope of provision

74. The college offers a wide range of academic and vocational computing and ICT programmes for students aged 16 to 18, extending from foundation level to level 4. It includes GCE AS and A-level courses in computing and IT, GNVQ foundation, intermediate and AVCE courses. Approximately 300 students are enrolled on full-time ICT programmes. Full-time students may also take additional units of study to supplement their main course. Vocational programmes are offered in the department of business and computing, and GCE A-level programmes in the engineering and science department. As recognised in the ICT self-assessment report, the range of part-time provision is narrow. At the time of the inspection, 237 students were enrolled on part-time ICT courses.

Achievement and standards

75. Pass rates on the City and Guilds 7261 full-time course for adults are consistently above the national average and there are high pass rates on two-year advanced courses. Pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses and the GCSE IT courses, however, are below average, and retention rates on the two-year advanced level programmes are low. Some students' project work is good, particularly on GCE AS and A-level courses. However, many students have a casual attitude to their studies, arriving at lessons without their project work or failing to meet coursework deadlines. Attendance at classes during the inspection was very low, at 59.5%. Students on the GNVQ foundation and the AVCE ICT courses benefit from work experience. A high proportion of full-time students advance from one level of study to the next, including students who go on to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	38	38	25
		% retention	66	74	68
		% pass rate	75	21	53
City and Guilds 7261 (evening provision for adults)	1	No. of starts	87	21	118
		% retention	99	71	82
		% pass rate	100	100	82
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	38	28	41
		% retention	95	75	73
		% pass rate	40	62	53
GCSE IT	2	No. of starts	15	19	30
		% retention	80	79	73
		% pass rate	50	27	18
GCE A-level computing studies	3	No. of starts	83	**	**
		% retention	*	*	*
		% pass rate	62	40	73

GNVQ advanced IT	3	No. of starts	**	36	35
		% retention	*	*	*
		% pass rate	**	88	82

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

* retention figures calculated over one year rather than over two-year period - figures unreliable

** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

76. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory, but some is uninspiring. The best lessons are well planned. Teachers support individual students well and use a good range of learning materials and teaching methods and aids, including good use of projectors to demonstrate IT applications. In an AVCE IT lesson, students accessed materials and exercises on the shared network drive after the teacher demonstrated practical Delphi programming skills. In many lessons, the introduction and development of topics is slow and students are not kept busy enough. Teachers do not devise differentiated materials for students of different abilities to work at different paces, and students' needs are not met. The more able students, for example, do not have enough to do. In a GNVQ intermediate lesson, the teacher posed questions to the whole group and the more able students provided most of the answers while the remainder was silent. Students develop good practical skills, but some have difficulty with the theoretical aspects of their studies. Some students' English language and study skills are underdeveloped and they often do not receive the level of support they need, particularly if the number of students in the class is large and the teacher has difficulty finding time to give each of them attention.

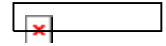
77. The stock of computing and ICT books in the learning resources centre is excellent. Many students make productive use of books they borrow from the centre. The college has recently invested in upgrading its ICT resources. As well as having access to resources in the learning centre, students can use IT resources in one of the classrooms before and after their timetabled lessons, and occasionally have access to other classrooms when teachers permit it. The level of support they receive from subject teachers when working on their own, however, is low. While students are broadly satisfied with IT resources, different software, lack of compatibility between systems, and user rights on different machines cause them many difficulties when they have to transfer work previously or partially completed on one system to continue on a different system. Teachers are suitably qualified. Most have a teaching qualification. The college's self-assessment report identified the need for teachers to update their experience of some modern software.

78. The department recognises that some GCE A-level students do not have the requisite level of IT skills before embarking on their courses. A substantial proportion of students leave GCE A-level and GCSE programmes early, and students' responses to questionnaires indicate that this is because students do not know enough about the content and requirements of programmes when they enrol. Tutors on vocational ICT courses meet students during weekly tutorial sessions, some of which are used for monitoring individual students' progress. Some GNVQ foundation and intermediate students play a part in drawing up their own individual learning plans and reviewing these on a regular basis. While most teachers provide thorough and constructive written feedback to students on their work, some do not provide enough comment to enable the students to improve.

Leadership and management

79. NVQ IT courses are well planned. There are comprehensive assessment records, as well as records of regular monitoring of students' progress. The course teams meet regularly, minutes are taken and circulated, and actions followed up. The quality of the contributing self-assessment reports from the various course teams, however, vary in thoroughness. The AVCE team's report is evaluative and includes an appropriate action plan. The action plans drawn up by other course teams are sometimes inadequate to address identified weaknesses.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on part-time beauty therapy courses
- good individual support for students
- effective monitoring of beauty therapy students' progress
- wide range of complementary studies for students.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching
- low pass rates on NVQ level 2 courses in hairdressing
- unsuitable specialist accommodation and resources
- poor management of hairdressing and beauty therapy courses
- insufficiently thorough quality assurance
- students' poor attendance and lack of punctuality on NVQ courses.

Scope of provision

80. The college offers NVQ courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 in hairdressing, in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3, the national diploma in beauty therapy course, an advanced modern apprenticeship and a work-based foundation programme. A wide range of complementary and related courses is also available, including studies in cosmetic make-up, manicure and pedicure. Several beauty therapy courses have not run because they did not attract enough students. The college runs two beauty therapy part-time courses at the weekend. Some beauty therapy and most hairdressing courses begin at various times during the academic year, to suit students' circumstances. Approximately 347 students are enrolled on the various programmes.

Achievement and standards

81. There are high retention and pass rates on part-time beauty therapy courses, except on the fashion and photographic make-up programme, where the student retention rate in 2001 was 16 percentage points below the national average and the pass rate 38 percentage points below average. Retention rates have declined on both the hairdressing and the beauty therapy courses at level 3, and in 2001 the retention rate on the NVQ level 3 beauty therapy course was 40 percentage points below the national average. Pass rates on most full-time courses are satisfactory. However, the pass rate on the NVQ level 2 course in hairdressing was 26 percentage points below the national average in 2001 and the rates have been consistently low over the three years since 1999. Students and trainees often take longer than the one or two years agreed for the course to achieve their qualifications.

82. Students' practical skills are satisfactory and in some cases they are good. Many students who complete their courses progress into employment. Students' written work and the standard of their portfolios are satisfactory. However, the college attracts insufficient numbers and variety of clients for students and the opportunities for students to be assessed in the same way as they should be in commercial practice are restricted. Teachers do not stress sufficiently commercial standards during lessons and students' awareness of good practice is insufficiently developed.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ level 2 in hairdressing (two-year course)	2	No. of starts	47	63	90
		% retention	*	*	68
		% pass rate	**	70	**
Foundation modern apprenticeship, NVQ level 2 in hairdressing	2	No. of starts	37	39	29
		% retention	27	54	****
		% pass rate	27	18	****
Manicure (one-year part-time course for adults)	2	No. of starts	10	11	19
		% retention	90	73	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Indian head massage (short, part-time course for adults)	2	No. of starts	***	***	10
		% retention	***	***	100
		% pass rate	***	***	70
Cosmetic make-up (one-year part-time course)	2	No. of starts	29	27	24
		% retention	93	70	88
		% pass rate	92	81	90
International therapy	3	No. of starts	15	18	24

anatomy, physiology and massage (one-year part-time course for adults)		% pass rate	*	*	67
--	--	-------------	---	---	----

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

* college data show at least 15% of the students recorded as continuing

** college data show at least 15% of the students recorded as having no known outcome

*** course did not run

Quality of education and training

83. The best lessons are well planned. Teachers identify methods of teaching and learning, prepare materials effectively and are clear about what students should have learned by the end of the lesson. They try to ensure that all students play a part in the lesson by directing questions at individuals and encouraging full and detailed discussion of topics. Teachers draw effectively on their knowledge of their subjects to bring topics to life, and help students to relate the theory they have covered to their practical work. Students' key skills are developed and assessed appropriately as an integral part of students' main programmes of study. In lessons in which the teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers do not do enough to ensure that some of the more reluctant students join in discussions. They fail to check whether students understand the topic or give them insufficient opportunity to share ideas. In some theory lessons, teachers talk too much, denying students the chance to exercise their initiative and draw conclusions for themselves. In other lessons, time is not always well managed and students do not complete their tasks by the end of the lesson. Teachers monitor and record beauty therapy students' progress effectively. Most full-time students undertake a period of work experience, which is also well monitored. Work-based learning is managed inadequately. There is very little assessment of students' work in commercial salons.

84. Students, particularly beauty therapy students, receive good support in individual tutorials. Group tutorials, however, are less effective. Additional learning support tutors are present in some lessons and these provide individual students with valuable help. The role of support tutors is unclear to some teachers, however, and sometimes the help was not as profitably directed as it might have been. The level of attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was low, at 69%, and students' lack of punctuality often disrupted lessons. Teachers had to go over ground already covered for the benefit of latecomers and valuable lesson time was lost.

85. Teachers are appropriately qualified. The college salons, however, are unsatisfactory in several respects. They do not adequately meet industry standards. As many as three groups at a time use the single hairdressing salon. Students cannot hear teachers adequately and in some cases cannot see their teacher. They are distracted by the levels of noise and students from one of the other groups passing through their work area. Students' bags and coats are left on floors, impeding movement, and there is insufficient space for teachers, students and clients. The beauty salons are very small, shabby and inadequately equipped. There are not enough key pieces of equipment to go round classes. For example, there is only one non-surgical face-lift machine, and this has to be shared by 42 students. One salon does not have cubicle curtains. Learning materials for students are often uninspiring and poorly produced.

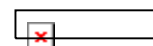
86. The college organises a wide range of activities for students, particularly those on hairdressing courses, to enhance learning. For example, there are visits to exhibitions, demonstrations given by external professionals, and hairdressing competitions organised by external agencies and the college. There are effective links with schools. School pupils attend the college one day a week to pursue an NVQ at level 1 in hairdressing. The college also works with disaffected school pupils, who attend the college to study on an NVQ level 1 hairdressing course.

87. Assessment procedures and assessment records are broadly satisfactory. There is little completed internal verification of grades awarded to students' work. Sometimes, however, assessors observe only a minimal amount of practical work when assessing students' efforts.

Leadership and management

88. Leadership and management of courses are unsatisfactory. Hairdressing students' progression from NVQ level 1 to level 2 is inadequately managed. Some students who have completed the level 1 course have not been moved to the level 2 course. Quality assurance, including course review, is insufficiently thorough. The proceedings of staff meetings are not always recorded and, where there are minutes, they indicate that meetings focus on administrative issues rather than teaching and learning. Timetabling of lessons and course planning are not centrally managed. Students on courses leading to the same qualification are dissatisfied that they are timetabled for differing numbers of hours for theory work, portfolio building, practical lessons and time with clients. Different teachers deal with the development of students' key skills differently. Some make key skills an integral part of lessons; others teach these skills separately. In 2001/02, only 16% of hairdressing teachers have been observed as part of the college's lesson observation system and none of the beauty therapy teachers. Performance monitoring, setting targets for improvement and devising appropriate action plans are insufficiently developed.

Health and social care and childcare



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most childcare, counselling and AVCE courses
- good teaching
- high standard of students' work on most courses
- well-structured work experience for students
- effective links with the local community
- well-managed early years and counselling courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GNVQ intermediate, NVQs in early years, and advanced diploma in counselling courses
- low retention rates on NVQ level 3, advanced diploma in counselling, and access to nursing courses
- lack of co-ordination of health and social care courses.

Scope of provision

89. The college offers a wide range of provision in child, health, social care and counselling. The provision is managed in two curriculum sections, which are in different divisions. Childcare and education provision includes the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate and diploma in childcare and education courses and 80 students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on these, in addition to a wide range of part-time courses for adults, including NVQ courses at level 3. The college also offers a specific diploma in childcare course for 20 adults and there are certificate and diploma in counselling courses. Health and social care provision includes GNVQ intermediate and AVCE for students aged 16 to 18 and 16 students are enrolled, an access to nursing and NVQ in care courses on which approximately 40 adults are enrolled. The college introduced an access to social work course in 2001. The college has established effective links with employers and the local early years care development partnership, as a result of which many new courses are being introduced to satisfy the needs of local people. Many of the courses for adults are arranged at times to suit students' domestic and other commitments.

Achievement and standards

90. Pass rates on most courses are high. They have been consistently above the national average on certificate and diploma in childcare courses for the three years 1999 to 2001. The pass rate on the GNVQ advanced course has risen significantly to above the national average. Pass rates have been consistently at 100% on most part-time childcare courses. Pass rates on NVQ level 3 childcare courses, however, were well below national averages in 2001. Since 1999, all the students completing the certificate in counselling course and the counselling theory course achieved the award, but pass rates on the advanced diploma in counselling are below the national average. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course are particularly low; only 23% of students achieved the qualification in 2001. Retention rates on most courses are at, or above, the national average. On NVQ level 3 courses, however, they are below the national average and on the advanced diploma in counselling course they are 22% below. Retention rates on access to nursing courses have oscillated from well below the average to well above it.

91. The standard of students' work is high on most courses. Students on childcare and education courses are able to relate the theoretical aspects of their course to practical situations. Students on the diploma in childcare and education apply the work of theorists, such as Piaget and Bruner, to their experiences of working with children. Students on the AVCE course gave confident presentations on equal opportunities legislation and demonstrated good research skills. Students on access courses have good analytical and evaluative skills and make well-considered contributions to debates on a range of relevant issues. Overall, students' attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was 77%. On health and social care courses it was only 59%. A high proportion of students advance to higher-level courses and go on to HE and employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	23	18	14
		% retention	70	83	79
		% pass rate	100	87	100
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	12	10	14
		% retention	67	80	93
		% pass rate	38	38	23
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	50	53	42
		% retention	72	77	74
		% pass rate	94	94	94
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	12	10	16
		% retention	75	60	88
		% pass rate	44	83	86
Open college network access to nursing	3	No. of starts	42	42	44
		% retention	50	93	60
		% pass rate	80	90	81
CACHE advanced diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	14	6	7
		% retention	71	100	86
		% pass rate	90	100	100
Advanced diploma in counselling	3	No. of starts	10	12	12
		% retention	100	83	67
		% pass rate	80	57	60
Certificate counselling theory	3	No. of starts	**	10	19
		% retention	**	90	67
		% pass rate	**	100	100

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

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

92. Teaching is good. Teachers identify students' preferred ways of learning at the beginning of their courses and modify their teaching methods to meet students' specific learning needs. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects and make good use of examples from their professional experience to help students learn effectively. In a lively access to nursing lesson, the teacher presented students with well-structured case studies, highlighting a range of factors which influence the spread of disease. Students were clearly knowledgeable about health issues and able to analyse the case studies successfully and provide suggestions about how individuals could improve their lifestyle. In less successful lessons, students spent too much time copying notes from overhead projectors, or teachers failed to check students' understanding of the topic thoroughly enough. Teachers help students to understand how the theoretical aspects of the courses are applicable to their work experience. Work experience placements for students are well structured

and the work associated with them is used effectively in subsequent lessons and assignments for students.

93. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. The base rooms used for childcare and education courses contain good resources. Some teaching rooms are too small for the groups who are taught in them and are poorly decorated. Resources in the learning resources centre are extensive. Students have good access to IT facilities outside their timetabled lessons.

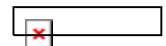
94. The quality of assessment of students' work is mixed. Assessment of students' work on NVQ childcare courses has improved significantly. Assessment of work NVQ on health and social care in the work place is carried out too slowly and internal verification has not been established for 2002. On the access to nursing course, there is no coherent assessment plan and each unit of the course is assessed differently.

95. The quality of tutorials varies. Tutorials are effective on childcare courses and students' progress is monitored carefully. On access and AVCE courses, students' progress is monitored less thoroughly and students are dissatisfied with tutorials. All students are tested at interview to identify whether they might need additional learning support with literacy skills. Students who receive additional support speak highly of the support they received.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management of early years and counselling courses are good. Teachers work well together as a team and there is much sharing of good practice. Levels of attendance at lessons and the student retention rates have risen. There has been a vacancy for a manager of health and social care courses since September 2001. As a result, there has been no co-ordination of health and social care courses, and the quality of the courses has been adversely affected. While a self-assessment report was produced for childcare courses, no report was produced for health and social care provision.

Visual arts and media



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on vocational art and design courses
- good teaching and effective learning on most art and design courses
- creative use of materials in three-dimensional work
- good use of the Penny School Gallery to enrich students' learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some media courses
- some unsatisfactory teaching in media lessons
- low pass rates on GCSE courses
- low attendance at most lessons.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time provision in visual arts and media, including: GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses; the AVCE in art and design and the GNVQ intermediate course in media. There are national diploma courses in three-dimensional design, graphic design, fashion and clothing, photography, media and multimedia, and fine art. Art, media studies and photography are offered at GCSE. GCE A-level subjects include art, history of art, and media studies. The college also offers a full-time and part-time diploma in foundation studies in art and design courses. There are Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses in fine art and graphic design. Most students are aged 16 to 18. At the time of the inspection, there were 424 students on art and design courses and 334 on media courses. The inspection covered all level 1, 2 and 3 provision in the area.

Achievement and standards

98. The pass rates on vocational art and design courses are high. For example, in 2001 the pass rate was 100% in foundation studies, product design, photography and fashion and clothing. However, on the GNVQ intermediate media course, pass rates have been below the national average. In 2001, the pass rates in GCSE photography and media at grades A* to C were 0%, and in art it was 33%. Pass rates for GCE AS subjects, including media, were generally high. Student retention rates were below the national average on the national diploma in fashion course and in GCE A-level photography.

99. Students' work in lessons is good. In foundation studies, students following different specialist aspects of the course were able to interpret a common brief in a manner that extended their understanding of their specialism. Students are able to work well on their own in the workshops and studios, where there is an industrious and productive atmosphere. Many students go on to further specialist study, and to HE. In media studies, students tend to move successfully to employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	51	50	32
		% retention	75	78	88

		% pass rate	66	82	82
GCSE media studies	2	No. of starts	13	12	25
		% retention	77	75	75
		% pass rate	80	11	0
GCSE photography	2	No. of starts	14	54	10
		% retention	82	96	75
		% pass rate	33	47	0
GCSE art	2	No. of starts	25	33	22
		% retention	83	78	55
		% pass rate	30	25	33
GNVQ intermediate in media studies	2	No. of starts	20	16	15
		% retention	75	75	79
		% pass rate	53	17	55
National diploma in product design (three-dimensional design)	3	No. of starts	26	28	11
		% retention	62	79	90
		% pass rate	93	86	100
GCE A-level art	3	No. of starts	57	34	26
		% retention	75	77	75
		% pass rate	89	90	94
National diploma in media studies	3	No. of starts	39	39	40
		% retention	82	82	63
		% pass rate	91	75	96
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	40	59	46
		% retention	89	67	73
		% pass rate	91	57	80

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

Quality of education and training

100. The quality of teaching is generally good. In the better lessons, good planning and well-devised assignments encourage students to think for themselves. In art and design lessons, teachers explained complex ideas carefully to students and they, in turn, demonstrated how well they have learned by asking detailed and relevant questions. Teachers keep students busy throughout lessons. For example, graphic design students had undertaken a design brief for the Royal Society of Arts Bursary competition, and were producing examples of well-engineered packaging for goods. In multimedia lessons, some teachers encourage students' enquiry about the expressive use of colour. In some lessons, the teachers move from one topic to the next briskly and keep students focused. In some media lessons, however, teachers do not help students enough to identify new ideas or develop their conceptual thinking. In many lessons, teachers' expectations of students are insufficiently high. Students benefit from a good programme of visits to performances, conferences, museums and galleries.

101. Students on GCE AS and A-level media studies courses are taught at the main site in spacious rooms that are well lit. Accommodation for film studies is too small and rooms are sometimes overheated. In one lesson, there were insufficient seats for the whole class. There is good

accommodation for art history lessons and good learning resources. Most art, design and vocational media courses are taught at the Richmond Road site. Accommodation there is generally good, but some rooms are too small for the large classes using them. There are good new technology facilities. However, these are heavily used for timetabled lessons and students often find they cannot get sufficient access to them outside lessons to complete their work. The Penny School Gallery on the Richmond Road site is used for regional and some national exhibitions of artwork and students view and discuss the work to good effect. Some students on the national diploma courses have joined an intensive drawing scheme, in collaboration with the Drawing Research Unit at Kingston University, and their understanding of scale and space in drawing has been strengthened significantly by this. The book stock is adequate for visual arts students, but less than adequate for media students. Students have good access to the Internet and use this facility well to conduct research.

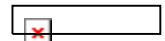
102. Teachers mark students' work carefully. They provide helpful feedback to students to help them improve their work. However, in media, some assignment briefs made no reference to the criteria to be used for assessing the assignment. Procedures for setting improvement targets for media students are not sufficiently developed.

103. Teachers are suitably qualified and most are also working practitioners in their professional fields. There are good links with universities and art colleges through which staff who teach on HE courses visit and offer specialist guidance to students seeking to progress to further study. Students receive mainly good support from teachers and tutors.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff work well as a team across some courses and there are examples of some good team teaching. Teachers collaborate over methods of teaching and the development of provision across the divisions. The area has undertaken a major review of its provision. The teaching of vocational media courses has recently been moved to more suitable accommodation at the Richmond Road site. Self-assessment procedures are clear, but teachers have relied on some inaccurate retention and pass rate data in drawing up action plans. The action plan for media is unrealistic in respect of higher-level provision. The observation of lessons is insufficiently thorough. Some of the actions for addressing poor performance and low pass rates are inadequate.

Performing arts



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

Strengths

- many well-planned lessons
- strong support for students
- teachers' careful marking of students' assignments

- good use of commercial venues to enhance students' learning.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some courses
- some low pass rates, particularly on first diploma and GCSE courses
- low attendance and lack of punctuality
- insufficiently rigorous self-assessment.

Scope of provision

105. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in music, music technology and drama, a GCSE course in dance, first diploma courses in rock and popular music and in performing arts, and national diploma courses in popular music, music technology and performing arts. There is also a part-time open college network (OCN) drama course which is run at The Questors Theatre. Many courses recruited their first students in 1999 or 2000. The college plans to introduce level 1 courses. Approximately 200 full-time students are enrolled on performing arts courses.

Achievement and standards

106. Pass rates in performing arts are often below national averages. In 2001, pass rates on only the most longstanding course, the national diploma in popular music, reached the national average, having improved steadily since 1999. In 2001, pass rates on the first diploma in performing arts dropped by 44 percentage points from the 100% pass rate in 2000. No student achieved grades A* to C on the first year of the GCSE dance course in 2001. Other pass rates were, at best, satisfactory. Student retention rates on the first diploma in performing arts are well above the national average, although the rate fell significantly in 2001. On all other programmes, the retention rate is often below 80%. In 2001, on the national diploma in popular music, it fell to 70%.

107. Students' levels of attainment in the lessons observed were mainly average and sometimes high. Students often work confidently and with imagination. A group of first-year drama students learned to run up a wall safely as part of a physical theatre production. Students on first and national diploma in music courses worked on voice production for a forthcoming performance at a commercial venue, 'The Riot Club'. Students' practical achievements are often reflected in well-presented assignments and play scripts. Most drama students progress to a degree or a Higher National Diploma (HND) course.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion	1999	2000	2001
---------------	-------	------------	------	------	------

		year:			
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	*	11	18
		% retention	*	100	89
		% pass rate	*	100	56
GCSE dance	2	No. of starts	*	*	12
		% retention	*	*	80
		% pass rate	*	*	0
Questors foundation	2	No. of starts	*	*	19
		% retention	*	*	74
		% pass rate	*	*	100
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	*	*	17
		% retention	*	*	76
		% pass rate	*	*	75
National diploma in popular music	3	No. of starts	20	25	33
		% retention	80	88	70
		% pass rate	73	76	85

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

108. Much teaching is at least good. There are good schemes of work and many lessons are well planned. Many teachers draw effectively on their professional expertise to help students learn effectively. Teaching methods are appropriate and varied. Theory is derived from analysing good practice. Students are encouraged to work on their own initiative. Second-year national diploma students were entirely responsible for the directing, acting and designing of the play, 'Find Me', in preparation for a public performance. However, not all students are able to respond effectively to such opportunities. Students' attendance is low in some lessons, and lessons are often interrupted by students arriving late. The average attendance rate in lessons observed during the inspection was only 66%. Teachers are working hard to tackle poor attendance and lateness, including contacting absentees promptly.

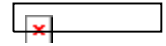
109. Teachers mark students' work, including their assignments, particularly thoroughly. They make constructive comments, which help students to improve their performance. Students are well supported in their studies. They speak positively about their tutors and the support they receive from them. There are regular group tutorials and students meet individually with their tutors once a term. Some tutorial files are inadequately completed. Teachers integrate the development of students' key skills effectively into their teaching.

Leadership and management

110. The college is adapting an old sports hall to create a new space for performances. The project is on target for completion in 2003/04. In the meantime, students are taught in buildings hired for the purpose. Most teachers are suitably well qualified and have interesting and relevant experience in professional performance. All either have or are working towards a teaching qualification. A few inexperienced teachers sometimes find it difficult to motivate or control students. Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety issues when dealing with specialist electrical and stage equipment, and students are given careful instructions about working safely when they are involved in dance and drama performances.

111. Teachers work appropriately towards raising standards and improving students' learning. Communication is good and some teachers work collaboratively. There are team meetings, but the intended outcomes of actions, which are listed, are not made clear. Students' pass and retention rates are not always recorded accurately and course data are not analysed sufficiently thoroughly to identify weaknesses and plan for improvement.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- some good teaching
- high retention and pass rates on some courses
- attentive pastoral and learning support for students
- modern and varied resources to support learning.

Weaknesses

- some low retention rates on two-year GCE A-level courses
- low pass rates on GCSE and two-year GCE A-level courses
- low attendance rates and lack of punctuality for lessons
- low levels of attainment of some students.

Scope of provision

112. The college provides a good range of humanities and social science subjects, mostly at GCE

AS and A level. Government and politics, history, sociology, psychology and the access to HE course for adults were inspected. In 2001, a new interdisciplinary GCSE course in humanities replaced single subject GCSE courses. Although most students are aged 16 to 18, there are a significant number of older students on part-time courses, especially in the evenings. At the time of the inspection, there were over 3,000 students enrolled on humanities subjects.

Achievement and standards

113. Pass rates are high on the intensive one-year GCE AS and A-level courses in history, on the GCE AS sociology course and the access to HE course. However, in virtually all two-year GCE A-level subjects, pass rates are below the national average. Pass rates on GCSE courses are particularly low. A significant minority of GCE A-level students fail to achieve the grades predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. Student retention rates are often above the national average. It is particularly good on the access to HE course, but low on some of the two-year GCE A-level courses, particularly psychology.

114. Some students, particularly access to HE students and well-motivated GCE A-level students, are developing effective analytical skills. Their work is good or very good, indicating that they plan their assignments well and think carefully about what is required. The completed work is well organised and there is evidence of wide reading and good use of other resources, including the Internet. The more able students are handling complex ideas and theories with skill. However, the levels of attainment of many GCE A-level students are below average. Much written work contains poor grammar and spelling and folders of work are disorganised and sometimes incomplete.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	13	13	27
		% retention	69	69	81
		% pass rate	33	0	5
GCSE history	2	No. of starts	13	10	8
		% retention	62	70	75
		% pass rate	13	17	17
GCE A-level politics (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	16	15	17
		% retention	69	73	88
		% pass rate	67	73	62
GCE A-level sociology (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	57	59	49
		% retention	68	*	71
		% pass rate	65	73	63
GCE A-level history (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	31	37	30
		% retention	63	*	79
		% pass rate	50	60	61
GCE A-level psychology (two-year course)	3	No. of starts	82	99	62
		% retention	*	*	60
		% pass rate	66	70	79
GCE A-level history (one-year course)	3	No. of starts	28	25	30
		% retention	57	83	86

		% pass rate	56	82	76
GCE A-level psychology (one-year course)	3	No. of starts	56	48	50
		% retention	82	81	80
		% pass rate	70	74	55
Access to HE	3	No of starts	85	107	86
		% retention	70	80	74
		% pass rate	94	87	93

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

* college data show at least 15% of the students recorded as continuing

Quality of education and training

115. Most teaching is good. Overall lessons are well planned. Schemes of work focus on the requirements of the examination syllabuses, and there is information on the development of students' key skills. Teachers normally set clear objectives at the start of lessons and explain tasks carefully to students. However, in some lessons, students are uncertain about what is required of them, for example, they do not always know whether to make notes. Teachers employ varied and appropriate methods of working to capture and maintain students' interest and help them learn effectively. However, students are not always fully occupied in the activities which are introduced. Some teachers do not do enough to persuade more reticent students to join in class discussion. Sometimes, too much of the work is conducted in small groups. Students are often confident about expressing their ideas in a small group, but less so in front of the whole class. Students' attendance at lessons was low, at just over 70%, in the lessons observed during the inspection, and many students were late for their lessons.

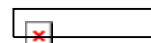
116. Learning materials are good. Psychology and sociology teachers in particular make good use of the college's intranet facilities to help students extend their knowledge, develop research skills and improve their IT key skills. Students' learning is enriched through visits abroad, field trips and attending conferences related to their subjects. Teachers mark students' work fairly. They provide students with clear assessment criteria and present helpful insights into the requirements of examination boards.

117. Learning resources for students are good. Teachers are appropriately qualified. There is an extensive range of humanities books and relevant journals for students to use. IT resources have recently been improved substantially, and there is a new and attractive general studies resource base, and a psychology and sociology laboratory, in both of which students can access modern computers. Classrooms are generally well equipped. They provide attractive and stimulating environments for learning. Students receive good support and guidance. Students' progress and achievements are monitored and recorded thoroughly.

Leadership and management

118. The management of humanities subjects has recently been re-organised and is generally effective. Raising pass rates is now recognised by course managers as an urgent priority. Quality assurance issues are now being appropriately identified and the subject and area self-assessment reports are fair and comprehensive.

English, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on the majority of courses
- high proportion of very good teaching
- effective leadership and course management
- students' confident oral skills and good written work
- successful promotion of modern languages across the college.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates in GCSE modern foreign languages courses
- poor results in GCSE English in 2001
- low attendance at, and some lack of punctuality for, lessons.

Scope of provision

119. Provision in English includes GCE A-level English language and literature, GCE AS and A-level literature and GCE AS English language. A total of 85 students are enrolled on GCE AS courses and 70 on GCE A-level courses. There are 27 students taking an intensive one-year course which covers both the GCE AS and A level. A total of 88 students are enrolled on GCSE English courses and 35 students aged 16 to 18 are taking a newly developed pre-GCSE course.

120. The college offers GCSEs and GCE AS and A levels in French, German, Italian and Spanish and, in response to local demand, GCE A-level Arabic, Mandarin Chinese and Urdu. There is also a course for beginners in Spanish and French. There are good opportunities for students aged 16 to 18 to study languages as a supplement to their main studies. The college also offers English as a foreign language (EFL) courses extending from elementary to advanced and proficiency levels, and an access to HE programme for international students. Approximately 250 students are enrolled on

foreign languages courses and around 230 on EFL courses.

Achievement and standards

121. Pass rates on GCE A-level courses are broadly good. In English, they are well above the national average and in foreign languages they are at, or above, the average. In the new GCE AS subjects, most pass rates are high. Pass rates on GCSE languages courses are also high, though retention rates are low. In 2001, pass rates on the GCSE English courses were particularly low. Retention rates on all English and EFL courses are high and pass rates on the more advanced EFL courses are particularly high.

122. In all but one of the lessons observed, the standard of students' work was at least satisfactory. In GCE A-level lessons, students respond well to the tasks which are set for them and express themselves with confidence in English or the foreign language being studied. English and upper level EFL students enjoy discussion and debate. In the better lessons, they volunteer answers to questions confidently, intervene in discussions and express their own ideas coherently. English students' written work indicates an ability to undertake research, express literary ideas clearly and criticise texts maturely. GCSE languages students demonstrate good speaking skills when practising for oral examinations. In English GCSE lessons, students work well on poetry and literary texts, often displaying a lively interest and growing understanding of the works. Languages students have taken part in several award-winning collaborative projects with students in other countries. For example, they were involved in a geography fieldwork project in Germany with German geography students, and gave presentations in German, a project for which the college achieved a Beacon award in 2001.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	203	138	131
		% retention	55	65	79
		% pass rate	35	51	26
GCSE foreign languages (French, German, Italian and Spanish)	2	No. of starts	80	73	70
		% retention	56	57	60
		% pass rate	73	85	78
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	78	91	61
		% retention	67	66	82
		% pass rate	80	82	88
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	103	67	61
		% retention	69	81	79
		% pass rate	93	98	99
GCE one-year A-level foreign languages (French, Italian and Spanish)	3	No. of starts	58	56	47
		% retention	76	78	81
		% pass rate	90	100	86
GCE two-year A-level foreign languages (French, German and Spanish)	3	No. of starts	31	42	36
		% retention	77	69	69
		% pass rate	64	91	81

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

Quality of education and training

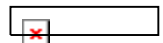
123. Most teaching is good or very good. Teachers prepare their lessons well and exhibit lively enthusiasm for their subjects. Several modern foreign languages teachers are native speakers. Teaching materials are carefully considered and succeed in stimulating students' interest. In a series of lessons on Chaucer's 'Merchant's Tale', English teachers succeeded in bringing alive the characters and the theme of marriage by enabling students to closely analyse Chaucer's language and ideas. In good lessons, teachers guided their students' learning by posing careful questions to them. Students learn effectively that close reading of a text can lead to a clear understanding of what the author intended. GCSE English students dealt successfully with the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy, enjoying her poems' ironies and ideas. However, in some lessons, teachers failed to involve all the students in the discussion, some students said very little, and some students languished on the fringes of otherwise lively activities. Students' lack of punctuality resulted in lessons being interrupted while the first part of the lesson had to be covered again for the benefit of latecomers. In some lessons, teachers often had to repeat topics for those who had missed earlier lessons. In modern languages, lessons are conducted entirely in the language being learned. Teachers devise appropriately demanding tasks for students, using a range of video, audio and written materials. There are also effective materials designed specifically to help students develop their vocabulary in the foreign language, and to consolidate their mastery of grammar. Teachers ensure that students use dictionaries skilfully. Students are well supported, formally and informally, by teachers who are always ready to give freely of their time.

124. Teachers are appropriately qualified. They use agreed policies to ensure that marking is of a consistent standard, and they monitor students' progress effectively. Learning resources for students on foreign languages courses are particularly good. They include a suite of four fully equipped audio-active comparative language laboratories. Students have access to good ICT facilities in the learning resource centre. They are using the pilot version of the college's 'Blackboard' intranet project effectively to prepare for a field trip. In a session in the resource centre devoted to using the pilot facility, students were producing excellent notes in English and German.

Leadership and management

125. English literature and language, and foreign languages, are based in the general studies department. EFL provision is managed in the adult education department. At course level, management is good and communication effective. Section heads provide strong leadership and subject teachers work well in teams. There are effective schemes of work, good practice is shared, and every effort is made to involve the substantial number of part-time teachers in course developments and meetings. Teaching observations are undertaken thoroughly. Quality assurance is effective. Teachers discuss teaching methodology and take students' views into account when planning improvements. A cross-college committee promotes the study of languages and English in other curriculum areas.

Basic skills



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

Strengths

- well-planned lessons

- good learning materials relating to vocational and life skills
- well-managed open-access workshops
- well-qualified ESOL staff.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some wordpower courses
- failure of teachers to meet some students' learning needs
- inadequate use of learning plans
- low attendance for lessons.

Scope of provision

126. The college provides basic skills programmes for some 117 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a further 128 students on wordpower and numberpower courses. Additionally, there are 178 students enrolled on key skills programmes in communication and use of number. Of the 384 students identified as needing additional learning support, around 230 are offered individual support in the learning resources centre. Over 150 students receive additional learning support during lessons. The college provides basic skills workshops, which are run three times a week, and students can attend them as they choose.

127. The college offers extensive provision in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), including 'summer schools' and open-access workshops. A total of 93 students are enrolled on programmes leading to qualifications and IT tuition is an integral part of these programmes. The college also offers short, part-time access to FE courses for a small number of students. Some 29 students have taken part in the college's 'fresh start' and 'step into study' courses since September 2001. Some short IT courses are offered at other venues, such as Chessington Community College. The college also runs a course, in partnership with a charity, to help young mothers return to part-time study.

Achievement and standards

128. Data on students' performance in 1999 and 2000 are unreliable. In 2001, with the exception of

short intensive courses, pass rates on level 1 wordpower courses were low. None of the hairdressing students on the one-year wordpower course achieved the qualification. ESOL courses were re-structured in 1999 in an attempt to improve the low retention and pass rates on courses for adults. Data supplied by the college suggest that student retention rates on ESOL courses have risen.

129. Students sit a test at the outset of their courses to find out whether they need additional learning support and, if so, at what level. Analysis of the results enables learning support staff to offer specific learning support, during lessons, to the nine classes with the highest number of students assessed as requiring support. Teachers on the skill-builder course in engineering, for example, speak highly of the additional learning support provided for students in the classroom. Some students make good progress relative to their prior achievements. One student, for example, who entered the college on an access to FE programme has now been accepted by Kingston University to train as a primary school teacher. In general, those students who stay the course progress successfully either to further study or to employment. For example, in 2001, 32% of the students on ESOL courses progressed to higher-level ESOL courses or to other college courses, including GCSE and HNC studies.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Wordpower (short course)	entry	No. of starts	*	45	23
		% retention	*	100	91
		% pass rate	*	100	100
Wordpower (one-year course)	entry	No. of starts	*	8	42
		% retention	*	50	90
		% pass rate	*	13	39
Numberpower (for hairdressers)	entry	No. of starts	*	18	88
		% retention	*	53	85
		% pass rate	*	88	51
Wordpower (one-year course for hairdressers)	1	No. of starts	*	28	30
		% retention	*	54	97
		% pass rate	*	54	0

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

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

130. Lessons are generally well planned and, in ESOL lessons, teachers provide activities that develop students' reading, writing and listening skills. Most teachers have high expectations of students and have established good working relationships with them. Students who attend lessons are well motivated, work productively and concentrate well throughout lessons and, broadly, teachers are effective at maintaining students' interest. However, students' attendance in lessons is low across the provision; the average attendance rate in lessons observed was only 67%. Teachers have devised some good materials relating to vocational areas of study and to general life skills. In work packs provided for hairdressing students, for example, exercises are related to hairdressing salon management. In some lessons, teachers made little use of visual aids to enhance students' learning. There were few opportunities for students to work in groups to help develop their team-working skills. Some teachers do not demonstrate skills or topics adequately, and students become

confused and unable to grasp and apply new concepts. In other lessons, teachers rely on whole group responses to questions and fail to check whether all students have understood the topic. Most students' portfolios are poorly presented. They contain little marked work or comments from teachers. Some portfolios are not assessed regularly and students are unclear about the work they need to complete for assessment, and about when they would receive certification for the qualification if they successfully completed the work and had it assessed.

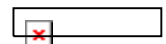
131. Staff in the basic skills workshop circulate among students and provide them with valuable individual tuition in study skills, basic IT, and additional help with mathematics and literacy. The use of individual learning plans for students is insufficiently developed. Some plans contain no dates for review and many of the improvement targets set for students are too vague to be of value to them. In some cases, the targets are not shared with students.

132. ESOL teachers are well qualified. Many have specialist qualifications for teaching English as a foreign or second language. Though 24 staff from across the college have attended courses in basic skills support since 1998, most failed to complete their portfolios and did not achieve the qualification. The stock of texts in the learning resources centre is good and it is well used by students. Students receiving additional learning support have access to six computers, set aside specifically for their use. There are sufficient computers in the basic skills workshop, and good work packs for individuals to use when studying on their own. However, the workshop is too small. It leaves no space for individual tutorial support to be conducted in private. Many students speak well of the pastoral and careers support they receive.

Leadership and management

133. A steering group has been established recently to co-ordinate the introduction of basic skills support into each department in the college. An external specialist offers awareness-raising activities for teachers to help them identify students' preferred methods of learning. The specialist also visits departments to help teachers identify students' learning needs and to consider curriculum changes, different teaching methods and new materials which would help students develop their basic skills. Good practice is disseminated through the college's intranet. The mechanisms for referring students to the learning support service are effective. The college does not, however, analyse performance data to identify the impact of learning support or basic skills provision on retention and pass rates. ESOL tutors meet regularly and are kept up to date on national initiatives. However, there is high dependency on part-time learning support teachers. Staff meetings are rarely held because part-time teachers often cannot attend them.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- good teaching
- high pass rates
- high proportion of students progressing to higher level of study

- effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- insufficient resources at the north Kingston centre
- inadequate number of support staff at the North Kingston Centre.

Scope of provision

134. The college offers a wide range of provision for students with moderate and severe learning difficulties. The provision includes: an entry-level, three-year, full-time 'Stairway' programme, which has no entry requirements; one-year full-time Pathfinder programmes at levels 1 and 2; 'Independent Living Skills' courses for older students; 'Skill Builder' courses in electronics, mechanical engineering and motor vehicle engineering.

135. The Stairway course is designed for students with learning difficulties seeking to progress to training, FE or employment and it contains vocational options, which include hairdressing, retail, horticulture, care, motor vehicle engineering and administration. Pathfinder programmes are offered for young people for whom school has been a negative experience. These begin in September and January. Students are helped to develop learning and personal skills whilst pursuing a small number of GCSE qualifications. Students on the Independent Living course study part-time for up to three years in diet, hair care, make-up and manicure.

Achievement and standards

136. Pass rates are high on many courses, and in 2001 the pass rate on the Pathfinder course was 80%. The pass rates on the vocational access certificate core subjects were high until 2001 when there was an unusually low pass rate. Student retention rates on most courses exceed 70% and are particularly high on the Stairway course. Retention rates on the IT course have been 100% each year since 1999. Many of the students on Pathfinder and Stairway courses return to the college for up to three years. Approximately 50% of the Pathfinder and Stairway students progress from their final year to GCSE courses or other forms of education or training; for example, hairdressing or engineering courses. Many of the remainder find employment. Students develop good interpersonal skills and are well motivated to study. They use computers confidently. Students are supported well by their teachers and learning support staff. They evaluate their own work and set themselves demanding learning targets. Punctuality is high and most students attend lessons regularly.

137. Students on the Stairway programme spend much of their time at the college's North Kingston Centre, and this significantly restricts their opportunity to play a full part in the life of the college. Students on the Pathfinder programme are based at the college's main campus in the town centre.

1.

A sample of retention and pass rates for provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
IT foundation	1	No. of starts	17	16	31
		% retention	88	93	93
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Vocational access certificate (core studies)	1	No. of starts	18	31	21
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	89	100	**
ASET effective learning skills certificate	2	No. of starts	*	16	58
		% retention	*	88	70
		% pass rate	*	93	85

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

* course did not run

** course not finished; students are continuing in 2001/02

Quality of education and training

138. Teaching was at least satisfactory, and in 60% of the lessons observed it was judged to be good. Teachers introduce an appropriate range of learning activities to engage students' interest and develop their research skills. These include watching videotapes, taking part in short quizzes and discussions and preparing wall displays. At the North Kingston Centre, students make good use of a well-stocked local history library, shared with the local adult education centre. Teachers set high standards for their students and mark students' work carefully.

139. In one lesson, students were preparing a wall display of historical events in Kingston over the last 100 years, drawing on contents of local newspapers from the past. They were developing their research skills by searching through newspaper articles for suitable material, then writing short, well thought-out summaries for their display. A group of science students were developing their communication skills effectively by discussing the uses and harmful effects of electromagnetic radiation, and by making links between their own experiences and the knowledge gained from watching a video. The students were able to make effective notes whilst watching the video. In a mathematics lesson, teachers helped students develop their reasoning skills by setting them a project to determine the maximum volume of a box that could be made from flat card. Students who choose the retail option on their vocational access certificate course run a small canteen for other students and adults in the North Kingston Centre, developing effectively their number and customer service skills.

140. There are insufficient computer facilities, no library and a shortage of specialist rooms at the north Kingston centre. There are only two classroom assistants at the centre, one of whom is part time. When they are available to support the teachers during lessons, the support staff enable the teacher to make best use of time and they give valuable help to individuals. However, this very small number of support staff restricts the opportunities to take students away from the centre on visits to gain relevant experience and knowledge for their studies on vocational options of the course.

141. Tutors monitor students' progress carefully and frequently, and give regular feedback to students on their progress. Staff hold regular case conferences to review individuals' progress and to decide where extra support is needed. Teachers also help students choose appropriate options. Each student has an individualised programme of learning. There is good support for students at a pastoral and academic level.

142. Teachers are appropriately qualified in vocational subjects. All have a teaching qualification, but few have specific training in the teaching of students with learning difficulties. They have, however, benefited from recent staff development in the management of poor student behaviour.

Leadership and management

143. Teachers, support staff and curriculum managers work well together, and managers set clear objectives and targets for improvement. The department reviews its provision regularly and seeks the views of local schools, local authority departments and social services departments. All staff participate in annual self-critical course reviews and contribute to realistic action plans. One of the managers has worked with the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) to develop cross-college understanding of issues relating to inclusive learning, as a result of which procedures for individual action planning for students with learning difficulties have been improved. The Pathfinder and Stairway programmes are in different departments and on different sites, and there are few opportunities for teachers to share good practice.

Part D: College data

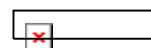
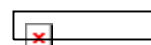


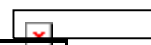
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	18	17
2	22	21
3	39	37
4/5	1	9
Other	20	16
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	1,124	821	15
Agriculture	27	13	0
Construction	18	169	1
Engineering	442	548	7

Business	807	988	13
Hotel and catering	291	68	3
Health and community care	420	314	6
Art and design	831	207	8
Humanities	2,878	1,966	37
Basic education	901	383	10
Total	7,739	5,477	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	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
		/98	/99	/2000	/98	/99	/2000
1	Starters excluding transfers	441	1,100	935	135	356	353
	Retention rate (%)	77	75	81	78	87	80
	National average (%)	81	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	74	71	81	66	85	87
	National average (%)	59	62	66	62	63	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,741	1,703	1,544	676	565	547
	Retention rate (%)	75	77	80	75	77	80
	National average (%)	76	76	77	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	52	53	67	75	59	79
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	3,273	3,079	2,418	1,035	915	1,050
	Retention rate (%)	80	81	80	82	79	82
	National average (%)	77	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	75	68	74	70	77	81
	National average (%)	71	72	73	64	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	28	24	7	417	354	386
	Retention rate (%)	79	88	86	85	82	80
	National average (%)	83	84	80	84	84	81

	Pass rate (%)	79	47	100	63	61	72
	National average (%)	64	65	70	58	61	60

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

Sources of information:

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

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

3. College rates for (1999/2000): *provided by the college in autumn 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)	64	31	5	134
Level 2 (intermediate)	57	31	12	67
Level 1 (foundation)	54	43	3	28
Other sessions	43	48	9	23
Totals	59	34	7	252

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2002. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

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