



Leeds College of Building

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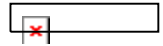
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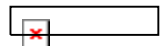
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Basic information about the college

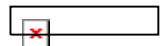


Name of college:	Leeds College of Building
Type of college:	Further Education College
Principal:	David Roberts
Address of college:	North Street Leeds LS2 7QT
Telephone number:	0113 222 6000
Fax number:	0113 222 6001
Chair of governors:	Geoff Lister
Unique reference number:	130542
Name of reporting inspector:	Ian McMillan (ALI)
Dates of inspection:	25 February -1 March 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Leeds College of Building is a general further education (FE) college that specialises in construction education and training. The college has approximately 800 full-time and 4,000 part-time students and a budget of £6.2million for the academic year 2001/02. The college is the only specialist construction college in England. There are seven other FE colleges in the Leeds area but only one offers courses in construction; its provision is in electrical installation, an area of construction training not provided at Leeds College of Building. Colleges in Wakefield, Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield are within 20 miles of Leeds and also provide courses in construction. Most students come from the Leeds area, then West Yorkshire, and some travel from across the country for specialist courses and training.

Leeds College of Building provides programmes in 8 of the 14 areas of learning. Construction programmes account for over 90% of the full-time equivalent students. The other programmes have only small student numbers and many operate on a distance learning and short-course basis. The college holds a work-based training contract for modern apprenticeships with West Yorkshire local

Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It also provides subcontracted education and training for the Employment Service for the New Deals, and higher education (HE), through its links with Leeds Metropolitan University. The college states that it 'is committed to providing a comprehensive range of high quality learning opportunities relevant to construction and the built environment'.

The college was last inspected in 1997 under the first cycle of Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspections. It was not inspected in the second quadrennial cycle. The college has been reorganised since its first inspection. It is now organised into six main areas of work, including five teaching divisions; timber studies, fabric studies, service crafts, management, technician studies and learning support. The college also has a business and development unit that manages short course income and the work-based learning contracts with the local LSC. At the time of the first inspection, fabric and timber studies were awarded a grade 2 and service craft studies received a grade 1. Technician studies was a separate division to management studies; they were awarded grades 3 and 2 respectively. Cross-college areas were graded 2 with the exception of quality assurance, which was awarded a grade 3. Leeds College of Building has a current LSC financial classification of A (where A is best, C is worst).

Leeds has a population of approximately 726,000. Around 6% of the population are from minority ethnic groups. The city, in February 2002, had an unemployment rate of around 3%, compared to the regional rate of 4.5% and a national average of 3.5%. Seven of the twelve Leeds inner-city electoral wards are included in the top 10% of deprived wards in England. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers gaining five or more General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSE) at grade C or above was 39.4%, compared with the national average of 47.9%. In 2000, the proportions were 40.4% in Leeds and 49.2% nationally.

The college's senior management team comprises the principal, a deputy principal who is also a director of operations, and two further directors responsible for finance and support services. Curriculum divisions are represented by divisional heads for fabric studies, management and technician studies, service crafts, timber studies and learning support.

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be good. Education and training in fabric studies and service craft studies are satisfactory. In management and technician studies the provision is good. Education and training in timber studies are outstanding. Leadership and management are good. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- good retention and pass rates
- effective monitoring of the college's performance by governors
- good financial management and strategic planning
- mostly good teaching
- high standards of students' work

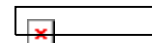
- improvements to staff development since the last inspection
- good attendance
- good learning support
- wide range of specialist resources and equipment
- very good learning and social accommodation.

What should be improved

- some weak teaching of theory lessons
- unsatisfactory pass rates for adults at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 1
- quality assurance of assessment and work-based learning
- procedures for initial assessment
- strategies for widening participation
- access to computerised management information systems for staff
- enrichment activities.

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

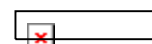
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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
Construction (fabric studies)	Satisfactory. There are very good retention rates on level 3 NVQs and good pass rates on level 2 NVQ programmes. Internal verification is rigorous. Tutor-devised learning materials are of a high quality. Pass rates for NVQs at levels 1 and 3 are poor. The setting and monitoring of targets for students is poor. Too much of the teaching observed was satisfactory but uninspiring.
Construction (timber studies)	Outstanding. Retention, attendance and pass rates on all programmes are well above the national average. The quality of classroom teaching is very good and excellent in practical craft sessions. Students achieve high standards in practical work. Specialist workshops and classrooms are very well equipped and there are very good learning resources. The division and its learning programmes are very well managed.
Construction (service craft studies)	Satisfactory. Lessons are well structured and planned by appropriately qualified and enthusiastic staff. Pass rates on levels 2 and 3 heating and ventilation, and on level 3 gas courses are good, but pass rates for levels 2 and 3 plumbing are poor. There is poor management of the division's work-based learning programmes.
Construction (management and technician studies)	Good. Teaching and learning are underpinned by an appropriate use of good quality teacher-devised learning materials. Retention rates on nearly all courses are good. Pass rates are good on level 3 building services, supplementary studies and level 4 management diploma programmes, but poor on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced course. Assignment briefs are set in an industrial context, with clear assessment criteria. There is a broad range of courses and good progression to other FE and HE courses. Support for students is good.

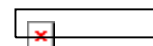
How well is the college led and managed?



The leadership and management of the college are good. Governors and managers provide a clear sense of direction. Governors carefully monitor the progress of the college. Financial management

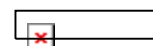
improving the pass rates in many areas. The quality assurance system does not cover work-based learning. There is a well-developed lesson observation scheme and much good teaching. Staff development is well managed. Insufficient use is made of benchmark data in setting improvement targets at course level. Divisional heads are not linked to the college's management information software and are not able to access management information from their own computers. The college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



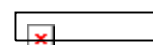
The college's approach to social inclusion is satisfactory. The college has developed a range of pre-16, level 1 NVQs and occupational taster programmes to encourage participation by women, adult learners on certain programmes, students from minority ethnic groups and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily promoted in all college activities. However, initiatives to recruit women and students from minority ethnic groups have had little success. A part-time community liaison officer has been appointed to improve community links. The college carries out insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities trends in students' recruitment, retention, achievement and progression. Students, through analysis of their views by inspectors, report good levels of satisfaction with the way they are treated. The college recruits an increasing number of disadvantaged students aged 16 to 18. Between 1997 and 2001 the college has increased its participation rates for adult students by 22%, for women by 24% and for those students aged 16 to 18 living further afield by 40%. Over the same period, recruitment rates for students from the minority ethnic community have reduced by 8%.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students during their course is good. Student surveys show most students are positive about the support they receive. Students speak highly of the informal help and guidance they receive from their teachers and clearly value this. An initiative introduced in 2001 involves workshop assistants, who work with teachers in the practical workshops to support students' skill development. Induction arrangements are coherent and provide students with detailed information about the course of study and their responsibilities as college students. A common core of activities is included for students on full-time programmes and this is supplemented with course-specific activities. Students who enrol late do not always receive a full induction. Attendance is good and there are effective arrangements to monitor absenteeism. Parents and employers are informed about students' progress. The initial assessment of students' learning support needs is not systematic. Action plans and records that are prepared after individual tutorials do not always show clear targets or accurately record progress.

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

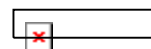
- tuition and guidance provided by tutors
- realistic workshop practical activities
- good refectory facilities
- resources and technical equipment
- IT resources and library
- friendly atmosphere and teamwork
- educational support grant appreciated
- additional learning support provided by the college.

What they feel could be improved

- support for mature students
- staff shortages and missed sessions
- space in some workshops
- temperature control in some rooms - too hot and glare from the sun
- information about the college in local schools

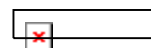
- queuing at the refectory.

Other information

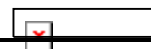


The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors must agree the plan and send copies of it to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

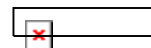


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	70	24	6
19+	71	21	8
WBL*	65	29	6
Learning 16 to 18	70	21	9
19+	71	25	4
WBL*	65	35	0

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. In Leeds in 2001, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C was

Construction courses account for over 90% of full-time equivalent students. Two thirds of all students at the college are adults. One third of the enrolled students aged 16 to 18 live in districts of Leeds shown to have a high level of deprivation.

2. Pass rates for all students at level 1 have improved over the past two years, when compared with those achieved by general FE and tertiary colleges. Retention rates are good for adult students. For 16 to 18 year olds, retention rates have declined since 1997, but are still near to the national average. The pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have improved from poor levels in 1999 to close to the national average in 2001.

3. Pass rates at level 2 are good for adult students and have been the same as, or well above, national averages for the past four years, 1997 to 2001. Pass rates fluctuate for students aged 16 to 18. Pass rates at level 2 declined to 51% in 2000, but have improved to a high level of 80% in 2001. Retention rates at level 2 are good, and above average for both age groups.

4. Pass rates at level 3 are good. Pass rates for adult students have been consistently above the national average and at a high level for the past two years. Retention rates are very good for all students. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have improved over the past two years to a level of 78%. The national average in 2001 was around 73%.

5. In fabric studies, students' portfolios were well presented and organised, containing detailed and concisely written answers. During the inspection, attendance at lessons observed was good, at 83%.

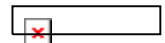
16 to 18 year old students

6. There are large numbers of student enrolments on NVQs at levels 1 and 2. At level 1, there are currently over 300 enrolments, which account for 54% of NVQ enrolments. NVQ pass rates improved in 2001 to 84%, well above the national average. Retention rates are good. Enrolments in 2001/02 have increased considerably at level 2 and level 3 to 344 and 107 respectively. Retention rates are consistently very good. Pass rates for NVQs at level 2 have improved significantly in the past two years, reaching 85% in 2001, significantly above the national average. Pass rates for level 3 NVQs were very good at 90%.

19+ students

7. In 2001, pass rates for NVQs at level 1 have fallen to 54% from the previously satisfactory pass rates in 2000. A large number of student enrolments are for NVQs at level 2. Pass rates at NVQ level 2 have improved significantly in 2001, to 83%, well above the national average. Retention rates are good. Pass rates for NVQs at level 3 have fallen from 77% in 2000, to 65% in 2001. Retention rates are consistently good.

Work-based learning

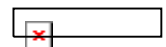


8. At the time of inspection, there were 266 students on advanced modern apprenticeships. Of these, 129 (48%) are on services programmes, with the majority being on plumbing courses. Some 86 (32%) are on timber programmes, most following carpentry and joinery programmes, and 51 (19%) are in fabric trades. Retention rates are good on all programmes. Progress towards the completion of the modern apprenticeship framework is slow for plumbing students.

9. Most students attend college on a day release basis and join classes of mixed-age groups. Employers are keen to provide a good range of skill development opportunities at work, and the standards of work produced by students in the workplace is good. A site carpentry and joinery

student, who is only halfway through a three-year training programme, is already competent to go out on his own to measure up for replacement windows, prepare the working drawings and machine the timber to produce and install the finished window. The college has not established arrangements that ensure students, employers and teachers accurately record the skills developed at work for qualification progression purposes. Opportunities for assessment and evidence collection in the workplace are not identified to assess progress and achievement. As a result, in college, students often repeat skills and competencies already acquired at work. Too little emphasis is placed on key skills development for work-based students, and insufficient information is provided to employers to enable them to effectively plan on-the-job training. Students' individual learning plans are often incomplete and do not record key elements of the students' programme, such as key skills requirements and the results of any initial assessment.

Quality of education and training



10. Attendance at the lessons observed during the inspection was 83%, which is above the national average. Attendance is very high on all level 3 programmes and particularly high overall in the divisions of service crafts and timber studies. The attendance rate of students aged 16 to 18 is higher than that for students aged over 19 in all divisions of the college.

11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 79 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 69.6% of these, satisfactory in 24.1% and less than satisfactory in 6.3%. In work-based learning, there was, overall, slightly more satisfactory teaching than that in the other groups. The respective standard of teaching and learning is the same for adults and 16 -18 year olds. In many lessons, there was a mixture of both age groups and work-based students. The best teaching was observed in timber studies, where 87% of lessons were good or better.

12. Nearly all teachers demonstrated relevant technical or vocational competence and a good knowledge of their subject or vocational area. Teachers on NVQ courses have appropriate assessor awards. Part-time teachers bring valuable, current industrial and professional experience to the classroom; some have little teaching experience. Technical and administrative support staff provide good support for teachers. Good classroom and workshop learning sessions were carefully planned and accompanied by schemes of work adapted to meet the needs of students. In these lessons, teachers gave clear instructions explaining the aims and objectives for what was to follow, and key skills training formed part of the learning session. Teachers encouraged learning by applying a good range of teaching styles and making good use of learning materials and equipment, including computer software, specialised machinery, excellent course literature and detailed information leaflets and handouts. When teachers carried out regular reviews of students' work, and set clear targets for improvement, students made very good progress.

13. Teachers in the more effective lessons ensured that students of different abilities within the group were able to progress, learn and attain at a level commensurate with their ability, experience and previous learning. In fabric and management and technical studies, teachers made effective use of their industrial experience to provide current examples to illustrate theoretical concepts. Additional, occupationally competent staff often support mixed-ability groups. These teachers provide extra help for those with learning difficulties and help all students in the group to maintain their focus on achieving their qualifications. Students' assignments and course work are regularly marked within agreed time scales and the teachers' feedback to students is clear, informative and developmental. There is good use of information technology (IT) to support learning. Students have access to, and are encouraged by staff to use, good library resources and IT and communications workshops.

14. In the few lessons where teaching was less than satisfactory, a narrow range of teaching and learning approaches was used. These lessons were not sufficiently managed or planned to differentiate between the different needs and interests of all the students. In the poorer lessons, the

teaching and learning was slow and uninspiring. The marking of students' work was insufficiently detailed to ensure that students were clear about the things they had done well and what they needed to do to improve.

15. Teaching at levels 2 and 3 was particularly effective on NVQ and GNVQ programmes. Teachers at these levels were sensitive to the learning needs of individuals. Teaching sessions were lively, interesting and focused on achieving examination success, progressing towards completing an individual learning plan, or meeting the appropriate awarding body's competence requirements. Group work was well managed: students were encouraged to thoroughly plan project work and prepare different types of portfolio evidence for assessment purposes. Attendance, retention and pass rates are very good on these programmes.

16. Overall, the practical teaching on level 1, 2 and 3 courses was judged to be slightly better than the classroom teaching. This was also recognised in the college's own observations of learning. Almost all workshop teaching is well organised and assessments are well planned and rigorous. Teachers carefully monitor students' progress on projects and assignments. The good relationships between teachers and students help to promote students' motivation and interest. However, few arrangements have been made on full-time courses for students to gain industrial practice or work experience.

17. The learning support needs of adult students on level 1 NVQ programmes are not being sufficiently met. The pass rates for these students at level 1 NVQ and on other level 1 programmes have been consistently lower than the national average for some years. This was not identified in the college's self-assessment report.

18. The standard of college-based teaching, training and learning for work-based students is generally good. However, individual learning plans are not well prepared and the teachers conducting reviews fail to identify and record skill development and agree targets for progression.

19. The college has two sites, very close together in the centre of Leeds. The reception area is attractive, spacious and welcoming, with comfortable seating for visitors. The canteen is bright, spacious and clean. There are two student common rooms and both are well equipped for recreation. These rooms are valued and well looked after by the students. There is a spacious and comfortable common room for staff.

20. Classrooms are bright and welcoming, with good furniture and comfortable seating. Furniture is arranged to allow students to work in small groups while also allowing easy circulation for staff. Most classrooms and workshops are allocated to a specific division of the college and specialist use is highlighted by technical posters and students' work displayed on the walls. Students value the accommodation and they also appreciate the fact that all divisions have a similar standard of accommodation. However, a number of classrooms overheat due to ineffective heating controls, have poor ventilation, and no blinds to reduce glare and solar heat gain.

21. Learning resource centres are conveniently sited adjacent to workshops and they are stocked with a sufficient amount of relevant learning support material. The college library and resource centres are well managed, well stocked with full-class sets of books, and regularly used by students. The library and resource centres are open from Monday to Thursday from 0830 to 2030 hours and until 1700 hours on Friday. A computerised library system is used to monitor loans and identify usage patterns. There is a well-furnished area for private study. There is good communication between library staff and teaching divisions. Library staff regularly join divisional meetings to report on library and resource centre usage, and ensure that students and staff have access to sufficient stocks of appropriate reference materials.

22. Workshops are clean and well maintained. There are some outstanding project areas, particularly in roofing and in painting and decorating. The overall standard of workshop provision is very good. The whole college community has good health and safety awareness. Health and safety are given particularly high profiles in the college's workshops. There are ample stocks of tools, equipment and machinery of a good standard in all areas. Workshops are well stocked with good

materials for practical work and assessments. Learning materials, such as information booklets, learning support material, workshop drawings and assignments are prepared to a high standard and are in good supply. There are plenty of new computers and relevant software programmes for students' use on both college sites. Resources for computer-aided design courses are very good. There is a student network of 68 computers that can also provide Internet access. A portable computer projection system is available in classrooms when requested by a division. The first, fixed system was installed in services craft studies and is well used. A second system has recently been installed in painting and decorating.

23. Investment in, and the replacement of, equipment and resources are part of a well-planned resources strategy. The college sets, monitors and generally achieves demanding targets in use of space, cost per square metre, energy cost per square metre, maintenance response times and student satisfaction. The teaching divisions prepare the classroom and workshop timetables and the allocation of rooms is monitored centrally. Surveys on the use of rooms are carried out annually and are thorough and comprehensive. Results are monitored against internal targets and external benchmarks. Planned maintenance is based on an externally commissioned condition survey. Repairs and minor works are managed through request sheets and are prioritised according to health and safety requirements and impact on students. Response times are good, as the college employs a small team of specialist repair staff.

24. There is no lift to allow people with mobility difficulties to gain access to upper floors. Most of the other accommodation issues raised in the last inspection have been remedied. The heating system has been improved by the replacement of heating boilers, hot water boilers and the installation of a new control system. The extraction system in machine woodworking has been overhauled and new filters fitted. Significant improvements have been made for people with disabilities. Wheelchair access to the lecture theatre has been provided. A portable induction loop and payphones with induction loops are available for people with impaired hearing. Braille signing and tactile paving have been installed to help people with visual impairments.

25. Over the two years to 2001, staff shortages and long-term staff illnesses have had an adverse impact on students' learning in some areas. For example, some block release classes were postponed and some class sizes were too large for the classroom and workshop areas. In one division, there were delays in returning marked work, and classes were cancelled. The staffing levels are being well managed and the impact on students has now been minimised or eliminated. In most divisions, there are no longer shortages. However, staff shortages still exist in management and technical studies. The appointment of workshop assistants is providing a valuable resource, appreciated by students and teachers.

26. In some areas, there are too few qualified verifiers and assessors. However, many recently appointed staff are working towards assessor qualifications.

27. Assessments in the college are well planned. The arrangements for monitoring students' progress are well developed and are notably good in many subject areas. Assignments are set with a completion date and marked promptly in most courses. Students are aware of the criteria against which their work is assessed. Teachers have developed a range of carefully designed learning and assessment materials, which are used to good effect by many students. The materials enable teachers to assess work and monitor students' progress closely on a regular basis. For example, in timber studies, monitoring is highly effective, and students have an excellent understanding of how well they are progressing and what work they still need to do to achieve their qualification. However, in some areas the setting and monitoring of targets for students' work are less effective. Students receive good, detailed comments from teachers on how to improve their work. There are regular progress reports to employers and parents.

28. The college's arrangements for internal verification are insufficiently rigorous and are inconsistent. In fabric and timber studies, internal verification is well organised and thorough. This good practice is not evident across all the college programmes and there is insufficient sharing of good assessment practice between divisions. In the best examples, the internal verification commentary is thorough and comprehensive with detailed feedback to assessors and clear actions for improvement. However, some divisions' internal verification has been completed solely by

looking at students' portfolios, and with insufficient, or no, observation of assessors carrying out the assessment process. Little use is made of work-based evidence where opportunities exist to do so. On some courses, there are few qualified assessors and verifiers, which inhibits students' understanding of course requirements. The quality committee does not formally review the college's assessment practice.

29. For work-based students, reviews of progress are ineffective. The time between reviews is too long, and for some students, has extended beyond the contractual maximum period allowed by the college's contract with the local LSC. Reviews often fail to set clear progression targets and milestones linked to the qualification framework requirements. The college has recognised these and other shortcomings in its work-based provision and a rigorous action plan has been drawn up to rectify the identified problems. At the time of the inspection, many of the improvement plans were in their early stages of implementation and inspectors were unable to judge the effectiveness of these action points.

30. The college offers a wide range of courses within the context of its role as a specialist construction college. This includes courses in surveying, plumbing and heating, wall and floor tiling, painting and decorating, carpentry and joinery, brickwork, roofing, shopfitting, heating and ventilation, plastering, and gas installation. Courses are offered at all levels from entry to degree level and include full-time, part-time, day-release, block-release and short courses to meet the needs of students aged 16 to 18, adult students and employers. There are bridging courses to support students progressing from craft courses to management and technical qualifications. Work-based programmes form a significant part of the college's work.

31. There are good links with employers. Consultative panels meet regularly and are well attended. Issues discussed include the requirements of industry and the courses the college provides, as well as retention and pass rates. Employers also participate in the annual awards ceremony. Teaching staff maintain strong links with employers through the events described and students' progress reviews. A very high percentage of employers asked in an annual survey, agreed that the college provides good-quality learning opportunities and programmes which meet the needs of both employers and employees, and would recommend the college to others. The results compare favourably with surveys from other local colleges. There are also good links with Leeds Metropolitan University.

32. Students, particularly those in fabric and timber studies, are actively encouraged to participate in regional and national competitions and a number have won medals. Three timber students and one fabric student have represented themselves, the college and the United Kingdom in international events and two received international diplomas of excellence. Students clearly value these opportunities. Students' achievements are celebrated in the college division and at an annual awards ceremony. Many students and trainees are able to gain additional qualifications, such as those in first aid. The range of enrichment activities provided by the college for full-time students aged 16 to 18 is limited. Football and rugby are available on Wednesday afternoons and the student union organises additional events such as ten-pin bowling. Students can join enrichment activities at other colleges, but this is not widely advertised. Very few students take up these opportunities and there is little encouragement for them to do so.

33. The college has established working groups to look at increasing the recruitment of women students and people from the minority ethnic groups, but there has been no significant impact on student enrolments or on the college's strategic planning for social inclusion and widening participation. Overall, the proportion of minority ethnic students in the college has declined and is lower than the ratio of such groups in the Leeds area. The overall proportion of female students has increased slightly to 12%. Publicity materials include photographs of women and black and Asian students working in construction. Leaflets about the college are available in minority languages commonly spoken in the community.

34. The college has for some years provided local schools with the opportunity for children to study and experience the construction industry by attending the college's school curriculum centre. Taster courses are provided in many different trades for 20 or more local secondary schools. Children also attend from the local pupil referral unit, which works with young people who are no longer attending

mainstream education as a result of behavioural or other difficulties. The attendees clearly value these opportunities and enjoy their experiences, and, for some, this experience is a significant influence on their career decisions. Approximately 20% of Year 11 students who attended the centre joined college courses in 2001. There are also examples of individuals who were not engaged in mainstream education up to the age of 16 successfully completing college courses. A summer school providing young people with the opportunity to sample all areas of construction studies is also available before enrolment in September.

35. An attractive student services area close to the main college entrance provides both an admissions service and advice and guidance to enrolled students. The management of the service and the arrangements for advice are good. A range of leaflets on relevant subjects is available. Friendly, helpful staff respond quickly to personal and telephone enquiries. Applicants are interviewed to help them make an appropriate course choice. A counselling service is available through a collaborative arrangement with another local college. Publicity materials are informative and give information about careers in the construction industry, as well as college courses. There are sound links with local schools through the work of the curriculum centre, the college's student service staff and the marketing team.

36. Careers guidance for students not already in employment is good. Students on full-time programmes have a number of group tutorial sessions provided by a careers specialist. The careers library has relevant books and videos, Internet access and CD-ROMs, including those providing specific information on careers in construction. Students during their full-time course have an individual careers guidance interview. Staff from the college's student services section provide careers advice and guidance and keep a book with details of vacancies notified by local employers, and information about companies and their services. Subject teachers also assist students with finding suitable positions through their networks of employer contacts. Guidance is given to students who wish to apply to university. A recent development is the appointment of a Connexions service personal adviser to liaise with learning mentors in local schools and work with young people to support them in their transition from school to college. It is too early to assess the impact of this initiative.

37. Support for students during their courses is good. Student surveys show that a high proportion of students are positive about the support they receive. Students speak highly of and value the informal help they receive from their teachers. A new initiative in 2001 involves workshop assistants who work with teachers in the practical workshops to support students' skill development. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. A common core of activities is included for students on full-time programmes and this is supplemented with course-specific activities. Students who enrol late do not always receive a full induction. Attendance is good and there are effective arrangements for monitoring absenteeism. Parents and employers are informed about students' qualification progress.

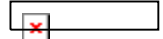
38. Initial assessment of basic skills support needs is carried out for many students, but some students who need additional support are not identified at an early enough stage of their course. Most students so identified receive relevant support. Learning support is provided in a variety of ways. The most effective learning support provision is from learning support assistants, who go into classrooms and workshops to work with whole groups or individuals. One-to-one sessions and small group tuition outside the normal lessons are also effective. There are also facilities for supporting students with specific difficulties, such as dyslexia or impaired hearing.

39. Similar tutorial arrangements are arranged across the college. All students are allocated a personal tutor. Full-time students are entitled to a one-hour group tutorial each week and an individual review once each term. Group tutorial sessions often focus on portfolio building. Specialist staff provide group tutorials on specific topics including equal opportunities and health and safety. Students on full-time programmes also have a pastoral review with a member of student services' staff twice a year. The distinction between the roles of the pastoral advisors and personal tutors is not entirely clear to staff or students. For example, on some courses, pastoral advisers ask for information about students' perceptions of their additional learning support needs, which personal tutors regard as part of their role. This provides a useful back up for students who may be experiencing difficulty but who have not been formally identified as needing additional help. Such

students are referred for learning support.

40. Personal tutors' individual reviews result in a written record which grades progress. The criteria for these reviews differ across the college. In some areas, the tutor negotiates an action plan with the student, identifying the specific issues the student needs to address. These plans do not include deadlines and many do not focus on short-term goals. In other areas, no targets are set or action plans drawn up.

Leadership and management



41. Leadership and management are good. The governors and managers of the college provide a clear sense of purpose and direction. The college's brief mission statement states its intent to provide good quality learning, relevant to construction and the built environment.

42. The management structure is clearly understood by staff and is effective. The senior management team consists of the principal and three directors, whose responsibilities are finance, support services and operations. The latter is also the deputy principal. Most courses are organised by four divisions: fabric studies, management and technician studies, services craft studies, and timber studies. A recently created division of learning support organises the support for those students with learning needs. The provision of work-based learning is the responsibility of the director of finance and forms part of the college's business development unit. The senior management team meets weekly. The college management team, which comprises senior and divisional and support managers and the work-based learning manager, meets monthly. The principal and the director of operations meet formally with each head of division or co-ordinator every month to review progress against key performance indicators such as enrolments, retention and pass rates. These meetings, which are minuted, also cover other relevant issues such as staff development and resources.

43. Governors have a good awareness of the work of the college. The links between governors and the curriculum areas have improved since the last inspection. Each meeting of the college corporation is preceded by a visit to one of the curriculum divisions. A presentation by a manager is followed by an opportunity for governors to meet students and teachers. Each governor maintains a link with a particular division of the college and governors chair the industrial consultative committees. Governors attend a two-day staff conference, which is held every two years. A well-attended day away from college devoted to strategic planning has helped to actively involve governors in determining the strategic direction of the college. This event also included senior and middle managers. Governors monitor the performance of the college through the information given to the quality committee. A governor with an educational background chairs the committee, which meets termly. Governors are aware of the college's strengths and weaknesses in relation to enrolment, retention and pass rates. They are also aware of those areas of the college which the internal inspection team found to be unsatisfactory. Governors with legal and accounting skills complement the strong construction background of several members of the governing body. Governors appointed a new governor with knowledge of marketing in January 2002, in order to strengthen the corporation's expertise in this area.

44. Communications across the college have improved since 2000. The results of a college management survey in 2000 indicated that more than 40% of staff felt that communications were unsatisfactory, although the monthly newsletters were highly regarded. The principal now holds termly meetings to inform all staff of progress in achieving the college's strategic objectives and to provide an update of new developments. He also holds informal lunchtime meetings where any issues can be raised. Students' successes in national and international competitions, for example, the achievements of those college students who succeed in international skill events, are well publicised.

45. The process of setting targets for the retention and pass rates of students begins with the team responsible for individual courses. Teaching teams consider current retention and pass rate data for their courses, but many are not familiar with relevant national averages at course level. Course team leaders work with divisional heads to set targets. Following an end-of-year course review, to which students and employers can make a direct contribution, an action plan based on the strengths and weaknesses of each course is produced. This end-of-year review forms the basis of the divisional self-assessment report. These reports, along with those produced by other sections of the college, contribute to the college's overall self-assessment report. Most staff contribute to the unit or divisional self-assessment process. Representatives from each division and an external consultant consider the college's overall self-assessment report. The self-assessment report accurately identified many of the college's strengths and weaknesses, but in some areas, was not sufficiently self-critical; for example, work-based learning arrangements and low NVQ level 1 achievements by adult learners.

46. Quality assurance arrangements have improved since the last inspection. Quality assurance arrangements now monitor individual progress more effectively and ensure support arrangements are in place to be effective in raising overall retention and pass rates. However, there are a few courses with poor or declining pass rates. There is much good teaching in the college. Lesson observation is now an established feature of quality assurance. External moderation by staff from local colleges is arranged to help ensure that judgements are realistic. Most full-time and many part-time staff are observed teaching each year. The overall profile of grades for lessons observed by inspectors is very close to the grade profile, which came from a similar number of observations, carried out by the college's lesson observation team during the past year 2000/01. There is a well-planned quality assurance cycle, with clearly defined activities scheduled to occur at particular times of the year.

47. The arrangements for gathering and acting upon the views of students and employers have improved since the last inspection. A comprehensive student survey is conducted twice each year and the views of employers are gathered at least annually. The results are carefully analysed. This analysis enables managers to identify, and respond to, issues of concern. The survey of employers has been used to identify companies that are prepared to offer work placements. Until 2002, work-based learning was not included in the main quality assurance system. The college did not identify a number of serious weaknesses in work-based learning, for example, the ineffective progress and pastoral reviews and the high proportion of trainees who failed to achieve all the targets in their individual learning plans. The college introduced steps to remedy these weaknesses, for example, by appointing new staff, introducing new review arrangements and planning for a more effective use of work-based learning for qualification progression purposes. Many of these new arrangements have not yet had an impact on pass rates.

48. Financial management is good. The college's financial position has improved in the past year. The college achieved its funding target and has no dependency on outside collaborative work to increase funding. The method of allocating resources for staffing and materials is well understood by staff. Resources are given to divisions on the basis of a financial model that adjusts the allocation in response to the extent to which targets for enrolment, retention and pass rates are being met. The college aims to have 30% of its teaching given by part-time staff. In fact, as a consequence of staff sickness, the figure is currently nearer 50%. This places a significant administrative burden on full-time staff and reduces the time they have to attend meetings or engage in course and college development activities. The college has re-deployed a member of staff to mentor newly appointed part-time staff, but this arrangement has not proved to be sufficient to resolve the problems. Space is used effectively in most workshops and imaginative recycling methods are used to reduce wastage of materials. Most students that come to the college achieve their qualification aim. The college provides good value for money.

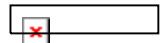
49. The college is careful to match its resources to reduce early leaver rates and increase achievements. It closely monitors heat and light and materials, and promotes through budget allocations, efficient use of resources. Teaching and assessment materials were in good supply and the college had secured cheap supplies of items like paint, wallpaper and plasterboarding. The overall impression was of a college keen to give good value for money.

50. The college has a computerised management information system that provides mostly reliable and accurate data. College managers do not have good access to computerised management information and at present, rely on monthly paper-based reports that focus on enrolment data and student withdrawals. They do not compare retention rates with targets or appropriate benchmark and national average data. Staff can use the college's intranet, but they do not have access to the management information system other than for routine information about students. The management information requirements of the business development unit responsible for work-based learning are not well served by the existing system. Information is not routinely prepared or easily drawn from existing systems to enable the college to analyse performance trends of different programmes, in different divisions and at different levels.

51. Staff development is well managed. Staff are appraised annually. The appraisal process concentrates on professional development. It does not explicitly focus on performance or issues relating to retention and pass rates. The outcomes of staff appraisals contribute to defining the college's strategic aims and are reflected in the staff development plan. A monthly newsletter on staff and curriculum development tells staff about opportunities for training, and includes a section on sharing good practice. The college co-operates with other colleges in the city to provide staff development activities. Staffing shortages in some areas of the college mean that staff are not always able to attend training activities and part-time staff have too few opportunities to do so.

52. The equal opportunities committee should meet twice a year, but it does not meet so frequently. Its membership does not cover all of the college's divisions. Two working groups have been set up to consider the recruitment of minority ethnic students and women. At present, these groups are gathering information and have not had any impact on recruitment trends, or on initiatives and strategies to widen participation.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction (fabric studies)

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

Strengths

- very good level 3 NVQ retention rates
- good level 2 NVQ pass rates
- good learning materials devised by teachers
- rigorous internal verification.

Weaknesses

- poor NVQ pass rates at levels 1 and 3
- inadequate setting and monitoring of targets for students
- some uninspiring teaching.

Scope of provision

53. The fabric studies division provides training in bricklaying, painting and decorating, plastering, wall and floor tiling, sign writing, roof slating and tiling, built-up felt roofing and mason pavior. Courses range from entry level to level 3. The division also provides training in foundation and intermediate construction awards. These awards are designed for those students who are unemployed or unable to complete all the qualification requirements of a NVQ because of insufficient opportunities for assessment or evidence of competence drawn from a workplace. Approximately 48% of enrolments are in bricklaying and painting and decorating. There has been a slight increase in enrolments on most courses in 2000/01 compared with 1999/00. There are currently 501 students in the fabric studies division. Some 56% are aged 16 to 18. The others are adult students. The college's work-based learning unit manages 11% of the division's students. The division also provides short courses and on-site assessment and training for experienced construction workers.

Achievement and standards

54. There are good pass rates on level 2 NVQ programmes. Pass rates have increased from 57% in 1998/99 to 91% in 2000/01, and are well above the national average. The pass rate in decorative occupations at level 1 has increased over the past three years from 1999 to 2001, but is still well below the national average. The pass rates for bricklaying and painting and decorating at level 3 have been below the national average for the last two years. Bricklaying has been particularly low, at 17% in 2000/01. Students produce a good standard of practical work. For example, plastering students worked skilfully on complex plastering systems.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction (fabric studies), 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ decorative occupations (1 year)	1	No. of starts	82	82	68
		% retention	82	86	50
		% pass rate	8	39	62
NVQ trowel occupations (1 year)	1	No. of starts	137	161	189
		% retention	77	69	79
		% pass rate	37	68	69
NVQ painting and decorating (1 year)	2	No. of starts	71	6	28
		% retention	76	50	89

		% pass rate	43	67	96
NVQ wall and floor tiling (1 year)	2	No. of starts	42	24	32
		% retention	71	79	78
		% pass rate	53	53	80
NVQ painting and decorating (1 year)	3	No. of starts	17	23	23
		% retention	76	100	100
		% pass rate	62	78	65

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

Quality of education and training

55. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Practical workshops and classrooms display good examples of students' work. These displays are used effectively by teachers to encourage students and often form the basis of group discussions. Many teachers have recent industrial experience. They use this effectively in practical and theory sessions, to provide a good range of industrial contexts in which to demonstrate up-to-date methods of work. Information in textbooks is summarised well by teachers to help students understand the complex procedures and techniques. In the more interesting lessons, teachers used a wide range of learning resources, including IT, to provide students with a stimulating learning environment. However, in nearly half the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was dull. In the uninspiring sessions, teachers followed no scheme of work or lesson plan and failed to use a sufficiently broad range of teaching methods to maintain students' interest.

56. Most practical lessons are well organised and students are encouraged to observe safe working practices. Workshops are generally well equipped, and good quality materials and specialist tools and equipment are readily available. However, a practical working area in the floor and wall-tiling workshop is poorly lit. At work, employers provide good learning opportunities and students are placed with qualified and experienced supervisors who are able to support and encourage the development of students' skills.

57. The college's learning support pack for students is of a high standard. It has been carefully prepared, clearly cross-referenced to the qualification requirements, and provides students with an excellent source of course-related information. The packs contain clear guidelines on all training projects, including the assessment criteria. Students value the pack and use it in both the college and their workplaces. The pack also contains a tracking/qualification progress document that is regularly used by both students and teachers to monitor progress. Students fully understand how to use it and refer to it frequently. As a result, students' understanding of their progress towards their qualifications is good.

58. Internal verification arrangements are rigorous. The division uses the services of an associate internal verifier who undertakes regular internal verification visits. Internal verification records contain comprehensive commentary on the verification arrangements. Detailed feedback is given to assessors within 24 hours of a visit, to enable assessors to quickly amend or improve their practices. The internal verifier interviews all assessed students. Every assessor is observed carrying out assessments at least twice a term. Students' portfolios are rigorously verified on an ongoing basis.

59. Students' progress reviews and pastoral reviews are poor. The reviews fail to set specific targets for students linked to their progress towards their qualification. Students are unclear as to what they need to do to maintain good practical skill development and extend background knowledge between reviews. Where targets have been set at a previous review, teachers do not check what progress the student has made towards achieving these targets. Students on most programmes do not see a clear link between the progress they are making towards their qualifications and pastoral reviews. Progress reviews for students on work-based programmes are infrequent. Some students have had gaps of over 12 months between reviews. When these reviews

take place, teachers fail to set measurable progress targets with students.

Leadership and management

60. The division is well managed. There is good use of part-time staff for teaching and internal verification purposes. All staff have a good awareness of the divisional targets for retention and pass rates and these are discussed in detail at regular programme and divisional meetings. Students' attendance is monitored closely. Any trends in absenteeism are evaluated each month and parents, employers and managing agencies are contacted immediately if students do not attend. There is a comprehensive divisional action plan to achieve continuous improvement. The self-assessment report did not identify some important weaknesses, such as the inadequate setting and monitoring of progression targets for students and the poor guidance to students on opportunities to progress beyond level 3. At the time of the inspection, many students at this level were unclear about their future options or HE opportunities.

Construction (timber studies)

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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- mostly very good teaching

- very high pass and retention rates

- high standards of work achieved in practical workshop sessions

- well-equipped learning areas

- close matching of course programmes to students' needs

- specialist workshop support for students

- well-managed courses.

Weaknesses

- weak reviews for work-based learning.

Scope of provision

61. The division of timber studies offers a broad range of NVQs in carpentry and joinery, shopfitting, and machine woodworking up to and including NVQ level 3. There are 142 students on full-time programmes and 94 students on part-time programmes. Approximately 80% of the students are aged 16 to 18. There are 86 work-based trainees on advanced modern apprenticeships. The division also provides work-based assessment for a large, local joinery manufacturer. For example, during the past three years, some of the teachers have spent two or three days each week in the employer's premises assessing the trainees and have helped to teach some 300 level 2 NVQ students. The division runs a number of short courses in health and safety and machine woodworking for local companies. These courses are run on the employers' premises.

Achievement and standards

62. Retention and pass rates in all of the timber crafts are well above national averages. For example, for level 3 NVQ students in wood machining the retention rate is 89% and the pass rate is 100%, and at level 2, the retention rate is 83% and the pass rate is 76%. Overall, the pass rates have been consistently high during the past three years. The standard of the students' practical work is high. The division's students regularly participate in national and international craft competitions.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction,(timber studies) 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Wood occupations	1	No. of starts	131	171	188
		% retention	76	80	76
		% pass rate	77	78	82
Carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	60	70	94
		% retention	88	87	83
		% pass rate	94	90	76
Woodmachining	2	No. of starts	17	42	80
		% retention	100	98	99
		% pass rate	94	95	100
Wood occupations	3	No. of starts	39	46	55
		% retention	79	96	87
		% pass rate	94	89	100
Woodmachining	3	No. of starts	7	14	9
		% retention	71	93	89
		% pass rate	80	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

63. Students are highly productive in the practical workshop sessions; they are confident and determined to succeed. All the students displayed a high level of skill while working on their practical tasks. They value the practical craft activities and consider them highly relevant to their particular employment needs. The students demonstrated competence in the use of complex machines and power tools. There were examples of good team-working and mutual support among

students in solving practical craft problems during the workshop sessions.

64. The teachers were enthusiastic and very supportive in these sessions They provided close supervision and readily interacted with individual students, often demonstrating particular craft techniques, which the students appreciated. Teachers were aware of the different skill levels of students and provided good support. There are occupationally competent teachers in the division who are trained to provide specialist workshop support for those students requiring extra help. There were good working relationships between all parties in the workshops.

65. In the theory classes, students benefit from informative handouts and workbooks, and from the regular use by the teacher of relevant industrial anecdotes to help illustrate the practical applications. Students were attentive and gained new knowledge about their craft. Teachers also made good use of models and visual aids to demonstrate aspects of craft construction. These enlivened the sessions and helped to generate genuine discussion of the topics. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and there is a sound internal verification system. No significant issues have been raised in external verifiers' reports.

66. Teaching staff have appropriate vocational experience and qualifications. A high proportion have recent industrial experience. There are good relationships between staff, students and employers. There is a very good range of specialist workshop and classroom equipment. Most of the classrooms have interesting and informative displays on the walls, which include a roll of honour for past prizewinners and photographs of the major craft competitions.

67. The college's library contains a good range and number of course textbooks. The students regularly use these books. There are learning resource rooms adjacent to some of the workshops. These are well equipped and also contain many of the essential textbooks as well as other learning support materials produced by the teachers.

68. There are good learning opportunities in the workplace. Employers take a keen interest in the progress of their students and some move students between different jobs to develop their range of skills. One employer is already making arrangements with the college to have his student seconded to another company to gain specific experience. While at work, students are placed with supervisors who are skilled and experienced, and who are prepared to spend time helping and encouraging students to develop their skills. Qualification review arrangements for work-based learners are poor. They are infrequent, they do not provide students with any measurable targets, and do not provide sufficient information to enable employers to effectively plan workplace training.

Leadership and management

69. The division and the programmes are very well managed. There are good communications between the team, and staff meet frequently. There is regular checking of the students' opinions of the courses. The teachers are keen to maintain high standards and to encourage their students to participate in skills competitions. Students' success is celebrated at awards ceremonies and by displaying photographs in the classrooms. Targets for retention and pass rates are set at programme level, based on the previous year's results. Staff training and development needs are identified and monitored annually. The section of the college's self-assessment report relating to the division of timber studies closely matched the judgement of the inspectors.

Construction (service craft studies)

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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good retention rates on all courses

- good pass rates in heating and ventilation at all levels
- good opportunities for work-based learning
- good quality learning materials
- additional qualifications gained by most students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in plumbing at all levels
- weak internal verification in plumbing
- unsatisfactory initial assessment strategy
- ineffective reviews for work-based students.

Scope of provision

70. The service crafts division is on the main college campus. The division provides a broad range of mechanical services engineering courses in gas, heating and ventilation and plumbing for full-time, part-time and work-based students. At the time of inspection, there were 402 students, of whom 66% were advanced modern apprentices. Courses range from a foundation level plumbing certificate course to NVQ level 3. The division has recently started to work with other organisations to provide training for unemployed adults in skill shortage areas such as plumbing.

Achievement and standards

71. Pass rates in heating and ventilation courses are good. Over the past three years, pass rates at levels 2 and 3 have been between 88% and 100%. These rates are consistently and significantly above the national average of 60% for level 2 and 84% for level 3. Retention rates are good across all areas of service crafts. Many courses have retention rates of 100%, and the average retention rate across the division is 90%. The standard of work that students produce at college is mostly good. Students' practical work is carefully carried out and accurate. Students' portfolios are good

and many contain detailed photographs of jobs students have completed at work.

72. Pass rates in plumbing are poor. On level 2 programmes over the past three years, 1999, 2000 and 2001, only 26%, 22% and 47% respectively have achieved their intended qualification. At level 3, no one passed in 1998/99 and only 14% passed in each of the following 2 years. These pass rates are well below national averages. Some 33% of the college's work-based learners are in the plumbing division, the largest proportion in any of the teaching divisions.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, (service craft studies) 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Plumbing	2	No. of starts	77	99	63
		% retention	60	76	65
		% pass rate	26	22	47
Gas services	2	No. of starts	20	50	27
		% retention	90	86	93
		% pass rate	50	27	75
Heating and ventilation	2	No. of starts	21	16	31
		% retention	100	100	87
		% pass rate	89	88	100
Plumbing	3	No. of starts	18	14	21
		% retention	94	93	90
		% pass rate	0	14	14
Gas services	3	No. of starts	20	11	6
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	40	100	100
Heating and ventilation	3	No. of starts	12	6	13
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	92	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

73. Around 70% of all teaching observed was good or better. Teachers were careful to plan lessons to ensure that there were clear links between theory and practical classes. Each lesson had a comprehensive plan which was used effectively. Additional support staff have been brought in to work on a one-to-one basis with those students who have been identified, through a process of initial assessment or through slow progression, as requiring extra help. Practical workshop sessions are well planned. Teachers provide students with a good range of demonstrations, individualised tasks, and guidance and support to allow students to progress at their own pace. In the best theory sessions, learning was planned to take into account students' different abilities and experiences. Teachers used a good range of learning support materials to ensure that the more able students progressed, while the less able received close supervision and support.

74. Teachers have developed good workbooks for students' use during practical activities. The books contain diagrams of practical tasks, with questions and problems for students to complete. Students' work is marked promptly by teachers, who give clear and concise feedback to students. Students value the workbooks and use them as a resource both at college and in the workplace. The workbooks also help teachers to monitor students' progress. Many students gain additional

qualifications including key skill awards, certificates for fire fighting and first aid, and units from the intermediate GNVQ built environment programmes.

75. All workshops, with one exception, are well equipped with machinery and hand tools that match current industrial standards. Most of the workshops are in need of redecoration. All students used the appropriate personal protection equipment in every practical session observed. However, in one lesson, insufficient attention was given to electrical cabling to ensure that it was not presenting a health and safety hazard. Classrooms are clean and newly decorated. They have good furniture and one classroom has a permanently installed computer projection system.

76. More than half the students in the division are modern apprentices and one third of all students are work-based trainees. Most work-based trainees carry out work on prestigious commercial and private building projects in Leeds and have very good opportunities to gain evidence for their NVQ portfolios. The division fails to exploit these assessment opportunities or to gather enough qualification-related evidence from the workplace. Initial assessment arrangements for work-based trainees are not systematic. Some modern apprentices have not been tested to identify any basic skill support needs or to check key skill competences, despite having been on their training programme for several months. Students' induction is thorough and takes place during their first week of attendance. They receive good handbooks, which provide information on their course of study, rights and responsibilities, assessment methods and college facilities.

77. Teachers are well qualified technically, and most are qualified as teachers and assessors. There are two forms of tutorials, one to provide pastoral support and the other to support learning activities. Tutorial support for students is very detailed and is valued by students. Reviews for work-based students are infrequent and often exceed contractual requirements with gaps of more than 12 weeks between reviews. At most progress reviews, teachers fail to set targets for progress or achievement. Students' individual learning plans are often incomplete and many contain inaccurate information on the level of key skills required for the modern apprenticeship framework. Employers are unclear about their role and responsibilities for work-based learning. They are not briefed sufficiently regarding the contribution that they can make to help their trainees gain a NVQ.

78. Internal verification is poor in plumbing. The division does not allow enough time to ensure that verification includes the observation of all assessors carrying out assessments across a range of assessment opportunities.

Leadership and management

79. The division is managed satisfactorily. All teaching sessions are well managed. Two teachers teach large classes during the early stages of the course and teachers provide students with prompt feedback on the standard of their work. Students and employers are invited to be members of course review panels. Improvement targets at course level are set and agreed in consultation with staff. Poor pass rates in plumbing over the past three years have been identified and a comprehensive action plan has recently been implemented to remedy the situation. There are systems to follow up all absences and lateness. Retention rates that are higher than the national average are normal in this division. The division has developed courses with local partners to help unemployed people into work. A recent innovation has been the introduction of a course in gas installation and maintenance, an area which has been identified as a national skill shortage.

Construction (management and technician studies)

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

Strengths

- good teaching

- good pass rates on national certificate courses
- very good retention rates on City and Guilds supplementary studies courses
- very good learning materials devised by teachers
- effective learning support
- good opportunities for progression within the college.

Weaknesses

- some unsuitable accommodation
- staff shortages disrupt students' learning
- poor pass rates on advanced GNVQ.

Scope of provision

80. The division provides a broad range of management and technician courses at entry, foundation, intermediate, advanced and professional levels. These include Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), national and higher national certificates, City and Guilds construction craft supplementary studies, concrete technology, Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) site managers' education and training scheme and all levels of the CIOB professional examinations, including the direct membership examinations. The division also runs a degree programme in partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University. There are currently 67 full-time, 266 part-time and 128 evening-only students attending courses funded by the local LSC.

Achievement and standards

81. There are good retention rates on most courses and very good retention rates on the City and Guilds construction crafts supplementary studies course. Pass rates are above the national average on most courses and are especially high on national certificate courses. However, retention and pass rates are poor on City and Guilds concrete technology, and the AVCE courses. Opportunities for students to move to higher levels of courses are well mapped out and actively promoted to students by teachers. Many students move to higher levels and some have progressed from level 2

programmes to degree level.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction (management and technician studies), 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
National certificate in building service engineering	3	No. of starts	15	32	23
		% retention	87	75	91
		% pass rate	83	100	90
GNVQ construction (advanced)	3	No. of starts	17	27	15
		% retention	82	74	93
		% pass rate	64	50	57
City and Guilds 6000 series supplementary studies	3	No. of starts	25	18	22
		% retention	76	78	95
		% pass rate	74	100	71
City and Guilds concrete technology	4	No. of starts	22	21	14
		% retention	91	76	64
		% pass rate	80	44	67
CIOB site management diploma	4	No. of starts	9	9	14
		% retention	78	89	86
		% pass rate	86	100	83

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

Quality of education and training

82. Nearly all lessons were well planned and teachers have devised very comprehensive schemes of work. Many of the students are mature, motivated and keen to learn. Teachers make good use of questioning techniques, their own expertise and the experiences of students to create lively and interesting lessons. Industrial examples are used to make course work more relevant to the student. Students produce a good standard of course work, including designs and drawings. They carry out research work for assignments and assessments. Much of this rehearsal work is above the standard required for the programme. In one session, an evening-only group undertook a survey to measure classrooms and a corridor in the college; they produced a detailed schedule of dilapidation and a specification for refurbishment. In another lesson, students used advanced geometry and trigonometry to quantify the shade advantage of recessed windows on air-conditioning systems. The division relies heavily on part-time teachers, who bring up-to-date industrial experience, but do not always have appropriate teaching skills. In a few classes, teachers did not have the necessary skills to manage immature students who disrupted the learning of others.

83. There are some good classrooms, providing a welcoming learning environment. Students benefit from using up-to-date specialist equipment for surveying and there has been a considerable investment in computers for students' use. The use of rooms is centrally managed and some specialist rooms are inappropriately allocated for other divisions' use. For example, a technical drawing office was being used for teaching the key skill of communication, while a group of students who required the use of drawing equipment used an inappropriate room. Many of the rooms have poor ventilation and a high level of solar heat loss or gain, making them too cold or too hot. There are few working blinds at the windows to prevent glare when using videos, projectors or computers.

84. Most students' assessments and assignments are well planned by teachers who set an agreed completion date. Course work and assignments are marked and returned within a week. The

gathering of key skills evidence is integrated into the students' course work where appropriate. Additional classes are organised to allow students extra time to complete assignments and to prepare for external examinations. There are several teacher shortages which limit the amount of time teachers can commit to staff development, the marking of students' work and covering all time-tabled teaching sessions. There are some students who have not completed coursework from the previous academic year, some curriculum development of courses that is overdue and a small number of classes that go unstaffed. The divisional internal verification process has identified these weaknesses, along with other issues, but no action has been taken to resolve all of them.

Leadership and management

85. The division is well managed. Following a thorough annual course review, the division sets demanding targets to improve retention and pass rates to a level above national averages. Teachers are aware of these targets and work hard to achieve them. Staff shortages in the division have been generally well managed. However, staff shortages have reduced the time available for staff and curriculum development. Divisional staff have not been sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process and there has been insufficient staff development to raise teacher awareness about equality and widening participation issues. Some classes have a teacher and support teacher present and provide excellent student guidance and help, but with very few students in attendance. The college continues to offer these courses to maintain a very good range of provision. However, these programmes impose a disproportionate strain on the division's increasingly stretched teaching and support staff.

Part D: College data

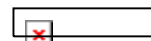
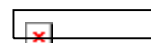


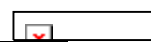
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	54	24
2	19	41
3	8	23
4/5	0	3
Other	19	9
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2000/01



Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total

	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	699	1,080	24
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	918	1,939	39
Engineering	6	193	3
Business	18	284	4
Hotel and catering	11	335	5
Health and community care	120	856	13
Art and design	3	8	0
Humanities	444	360	11
Basic education	0	41	1
Total	2,219	5,096	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/ 2000	1997/98	1998/99	1999/ 2000
1	Starters excluding transfers	622	786	880	277	491	650
	Retention rate (%)	82	84	78	91	86	86
	National average (%)	81	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	36	29	61	43	38	52
	National average (%)	59	62	66	62	63	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	285	389	502	1,084	748	698
	Retention rate (%)	90	90	91	95	91	91
	National average (%)	76	76	77	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	56	72	51	87	75	68
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
3	Starters excluding transfers	148	135	363	208	215	551
	Retention rate (%)	90	86	81	88	87	95
	National average (%)	77	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	72	65	94	76	71	92

	National average (%)	71	72	73	64	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	1	4	0	124	133	111
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	98	89	88
	National average (%)	83	84	80	84	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	59	66	57
	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).

** numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates in FE 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 spring 2001.*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	74	19	7	27
Level 2 (intermediate)	70	24	6	33
Level 1 (foundation)	70	20	10	10
Other sessions	56	44	0	9
Totals	70	24	6	79

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