



South Devon College

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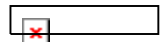
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Basic information about the college

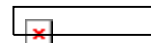


Name of college:	South Devon College
Type of college:	Further Education
Principal:	Dr Ian Bentley
Address of college:	Newton Road Torquay Devon TQ2 5BY
Telephone number:	01803 400700
Fax number:	01803 400701
Chair of governors:	Jim Putz
Unique reference number:	130648
Name of reporting inspector:	Keith Abbott HMI

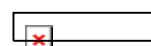
Dates of inspection:

22-26 April 2002

Part A: Summary



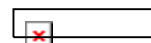
Information about the college



South Devon College is a general further education (FE) college primarily serving Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. It also recruits students from other parts of South Devon. Around 320,000 people live in the area served by the college. The communities of South Devon are very diverse. Some areas are affluent, but Torbay has several wards with very high levels of deprivation. Some 29% of the Torbay population are aged over 60, compared with 19% nationally. The main college site is in Torquay. Motor vehicle engineering is located in Paignton. In 2000, a new 'Learning in the Community' centre was opened in Newton Abbot. The college also runs courses at its Learning in the Community centres in Brixham, Chudleigh, Teignmouth, Mortenhampstead, Plymouth and Paignton. It has partnership arrangements with a range of community colleges and private providers in South Devon. Since the mid-1990s, most local schools have developed sixth form provision. Since that time, the number of students aged 16 to 18 at the college has fallen and the proportion of adult students has increased.

The college offers courses in all the curriculum areas funding by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In 2001, it enrolled 11,160 students on FE courses. There were 1,197 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 646 full-time adult students. Of the remaining 9,587 part-time students, 927 were aged 16 to 18 and 8,660 were adults. The purpose of the college, set out in its mission statement, is to 'raise educational standards in South Devon by providing high quality learning opportunities'.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be inadequate. Six of the fourteen curriculum areas inspected are unsatisfactory and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. In five curriculum areas provision is good. The overall standard of teaching and levels of retention and achievement, however, are too low. The college operates in a very competitive environment, but it has consistently failed to meet its student number targets. The college is in a weak financial position. Management information is wholly inadequate. Official data for 1999 and 2000 show that the college was unaware of the results of over 25% of its students. For these two years, it also shows that less than 40% of students who enrolled at the college achieved a qualification. Governors and managers have addressed many of the weaknesses in governance identified at the last inspection. Students are well supported by their personal tutors. There is a wide range of courses and good links with local schools and the community. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- good tutorial support for students

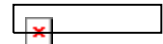
- good links with local schools and community organisations
- wide range of courses
- good new centre in Newton Abbot.

What should be improved?

- quality of teaching in many curriculum areas
- retention and pass rates
- curriculum management
- financial management
- management information systems
- specialist resources in several curriculum areas
- assessment practices on many courses
- key skills provision
- students' punctuality and attendance

- timetabling arrangements
- health and safety practice in some curriculum areas.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

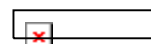


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Unsatisfactory. A high proportion of teaching is unsatisfactory. There are low levels of attendance and low retention and pass rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses, although General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) mathematics and GCSE science pass rates are slightly above the national average. Some students are not given enough work to be assessed. Aspects of course management are unsatisfactory.
Animal care and horticulture	Unsatisfactory. A high proportion of animal care teaching is unsatisfactory. Pass rates in National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) amenity horticulture are low. Physical resources for horticulture are poor. The animal care practical room is too small for safe working practice. Retention rates are generally good.
Construction	Unsatisfactory. There is a wide range of full-time programmes at levels 1 and 2. Students produce some good practical work, but retention and pass rates are below the national average on most programmes. Teaching and learning is poorly planned and teaching was unsatisfactory in more than 45% of lessons observed by inspectors.
Engineering	Satisfactory. Provision in motor vehicle engineering is good, but retention and pass rates on some general engineering courses are low. Most teaching is satisfactory or good, but there is little sharing of good practice. There is no systematic monitoring of students' progress and internal verification is inadequate. Links with local schools are good.
Business studies	Unsatisfactory. Pass rates on the access and professional courses are high. On other courses, retention and pass rates are below national averages and attendance at lessons is low. Many lessons are dull. Some learning materials are poor and there is too little use of information technology (IT) in lessons.
Computing and information and communication technology	Unsatisfactory. There is a wide range of courses, but many part-time students do not seek accreditation and overall pass rates are low. Strategies to address low retention and pass rates have not been

	effective. Most teaching is satisfactory. Attendance rates are low.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Teaching and learning are good, though attendance at some lessons is low. Pass rates on NVQ level 3 programmes are high. Students gain the knowledge, skills and experience to prepare them for work in the hospitality industry. Students appreciate the good academic and pastoral support they receive. There are good links with local employers. Courses are well managed.
Leisure and tourism	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates are below average on most courses. Practical sport and recreation is taught effectively, but much teaching and learning in leisure and tourism is unsatisfactory. Specialist resources for travel and tourism are unsatisfactory. Attendance at lessons is low.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Teaching is good and students' work is of a high standard. Retention and pass rates are high. Assessment and internal verification are rigorous. There are strong links with employers and good work experience arrangements.
Health, social care and public services	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on some courses, but retention rates on many courses are below average. There is much good teaching and learning, but key skills provision is inadequate. Courses are well managed, though some classrooms are noisy.
Visual and performing arts	Good. There are high pass rates and students' work is of a high standard on most courses. Many students progress to higher education (HE). Teaching is good. There is a wide range of courses and good enrichment opportunities. Retention rates are low on a few courses.
Humanities	Good. Adults students achieve high pass rates and a high proportion of students aged 16 to 18 achieve grades A to C in their GCE A levels. There is much good teaching and helpful guidance for students. Pass rates at GCE A level are rising, but retention rates on many courses are below average.
Foundation programmes	Good. There is a wide range of courses for school-leavers and adults. Students are appropriately supported and levels of achievement are high. Most teaching is good, though teachers sometimes fail to address individuals' needs.
Basic skills	Satisfactory. There is good teaching on the specific basic skills programmes, but some unsatisfactory teaching of basic skills, low attendance and lack of punctuality on foundation courses. Many adults on the return to learn programme progress to other college courses. The progress of some students receiving additional learning support is not well monitored.

How well is the college led and managed?



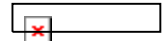
Senior managers have integrity. They are very concerned for the welfare of staff and students and they have ensured that the college has good links with local schools and community organisations. However, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Some curriculum areas are well managed, but managers have failed to ensure that all students receive a satisfactory standard of education. The quality of much of the teaching is unsatisfactory and retention and pass rates are too low. The college has consistently failed to meet its enrolment targets. Financial management is

inadequate.

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

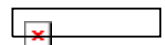
Although student numbers have declined significantly in recent years, the college is committed to providing for all members of the community. It recognises the difficulties of maintaining a very wide range of provision for school-leavers aged 16 in an area where most local schools have sixth forms. In recent years, it has provided a wider range of programmes for adults. School-leavers remain in the majority on full-time courses, but adults make up the vast majority of enrolments. The college offers courses in all 14 LSC areas of learning. It has increased its provision across South Devon through Learning in the Community centres in neighbouring towns and through franchise arrangements with local partners. It provides appropriate programmes for many adults and school-leavers with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. It has specifically sought to provide for students with basic skills needs, people who have been in care, people with mental health problems, disaffected school pupils and ex-offenders.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



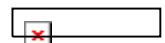
Students receive good pre-course guidance and advice. There are strong links between the college careers co-ordinator and careers teachers in local schools. Soon after enrolment, all students take an initial assessment test. In some curriculum areas, however, the results are not used effectively to plan individual students' learning. Thorough induction takes place on most courses. Tutorial support in most curriculum areas is good. Tutors formally review most students' progress twice each year and, where appropriate, the results are sent to parents. Students on most courses speak highly of the value and effectiveness of their tutorials. However, many tutors have not been effective in their implementation of the college's policy on attendance and attendance levels are unsatisfactory in several curriculum areas. The college has a sound approach to guidance and support, careers advice and counselling. The new 'helpzone', located close to reception, offers advice and assistance from trained counsellors and other specialist staff. Students may also use 'helpzone' on computers to find information for themselves.

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

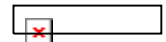


- friendly approachable teachers

- mutual respect between staff and students

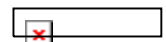
- useful tutorials
- good atmosphere for learning.

What they feel could be improved



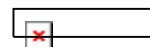
- social and sports facilities
- reliability of computer networks
- number of quiet study areas
- timetabling of rooms
- cafeteria facilities in the evening
- number of car parking spaces.

Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the LLSC. The LLSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) receives the college's post inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



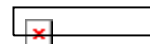
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	57	28	15
19+ and WBL*	61	31	8
Learning 16-18	56	31	13
19+ and WBL*	68	27	5

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. Overall judgements about achievement and standards are normally based on aggregate information in the college performance report produced by OFSTED. This is derived from data supplied by the college in its individualised student return (ISR). Aggregate information for South Devon college shows that for 1999 and 2000, the last two years for which there is ISR data, the college was unaware of the results of over 3,750 students. This is more than 25% of the students who completed their courses. The problem affects full-time and part-time students in all programme areas. The effect is that overall pass rates, stated in the college performance report, are significantly overstated, since they are based on the number passing expressed as a percentage of students whose outcome is known rather than as a percentage of all students who completed their courses.

2. During the inspection, evidence held by college staff enabled inspectors to establish the outcomes of some of these students. This information was used in making inspection judgements, but it is not given in the data tables in the curriculum sections in this report, nor can it be used to amend aggregate data in the college performance report. On some courses, inspectors could not establish the results of students completing in 1999 and 2000. The results of many students who completed in 2001 are also unknown, but the problem is less widespread than in previous years.

3. The following judgements about achievements and standards must be read in the context of incomplete and unreliable data.

16-18 year olds

4. Two thirds of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. These students take a wide range of academic

and vocational qualifications. In the three years ending in 2001, overall retention rates on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were generally below the national average for students aged 16 to 18 in FE colleges. In 2001, retention rates at level 2 were slightly above the national average. At both levels 1 and 3, overall retention rates fell significantly between 2000 and 2001. Retention rates are unsatisfactory on many full-time courses. For example, in 2001, less than two thirds of the students were retained on GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, business studies, computing, psychology, and English language. In 2001, several General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), first and national diploma courses also retained less than two thirds of their students. These courses enrol a few adult students, but most students are aged 16 to 18. The curriculum areas involved were animal care, business studies, motor vehicle engineering, IT, leisure and tourism, public services, health and social care, and design.

5. The college performance report shows that pass rates in 2000 were above the national average for students aged 16 to 18. In 2001, however, pass rates appear to have fallen sharply, particularly at levels 1 and 2, partly due to a reduction in the number of students whose results are not known. The failure of many students to successfully complete the new key skills qualifications also led to significantly lower overall pass rates. The college performance report allows a comparison to be made between the number of students enrolled and the number known to have achieved a qualification. In both 1999 and 2000, only 43% of students aged 16 to 18 enrolled on November 1, on the first, or only, year of their course were successful in achieving their qualifications. This is unsatisfactory. However, there are good pass rates on some courses. For example, the first and national diplomas in art and design and performing arts had 100% pass rates in 2001.

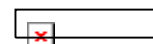
6. The quality of students' work in lessons observed during the inspection was generally satisfactory or better. Students in several curriculum areas produce good practical work. Examples include construction, hairdressing, art and design and public services. In 2001, all full-time students studied key skills. Most students, however, did not sit the key skills tests in application of number, IT and communications. Pass rates were higher in communication than in the other key skills. Overall pass rates in the key skills tests were broadly in line with national averages. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was unsatisfactory, at 70%. This figure includes all lessons, including lessons attended mainly by adult students.

Adult learners

7. Overall levels of achievement among the college's adult students are poor. About a third of the college's full-time students are adults. Each year, a further 4,000 to 5,000 adults take part-time courses, mainly in IT and business studies. Many of these students study at the college's Learning in the Community centres in neighbouring towns. A comparison of the number of adult students enrolled and the number known to have achieved a qualification shows that, in 1999, 38% of those enrolled on November 1 were successful. In 2000, the comparable figure was 37%. The low pass rate is partly due to the large numbers of adults who enrol on IT courses, complete their courses, but choose not to enter for a qualification. The college has not done enough to discourage this practice.

8. On some courses, adults' levels of achievement are high. For example, pass rates on teacher education programmes are high and there are significantly higher pass rates on part-time professional courses in business studies than on other courses in the business studies curriculum area. There was a high pass rate on the access to humanities course in 2001, and on short courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 236 sessions. They judged that

13%. This is a low proportion of good or better lessons and a high proportion of unsatisfactory lessons. The quality of teaching varies significantly across the curriculum areas. It is effective in hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering, visual and performing arts and foundation programmes where, in each case, over 80% of lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better. The weaker areas are science and mathematics, animal care and horticulture, leisure and tourism, and construction where, in each case, over 25% of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or poor. Learning is also more effective in some curriculum areas than others. The lesson observation grades awarded for learning were similar to those awarded for teaching. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 60%, 29% and 11%, respectively.

10. In the more effective lessons, there are good relations between teachers and students. Students are highly motivated and lesson objectives are achieved. Teachers use examples that are relevant to the students; for example, a teacher of motor vehicle engineering made frequent references to the students' own cars. In the better IT lessons, teachers take account of the students' different abilities. In art and design, good teaching ensures that students are able to work productively on their own from the early stages of their courses. In humanities, group work is used well to enable students to learn from each other. On foundation programmes, teachers and support assistants work well together to facilitate learning.

11. Some practical lessons are well organised and effective. For example, in several curriculum areas, including leisure and tourism and public services, there are well-prepared outdoor activities such as rock climbing. Practical lessons in hospitality and catering enable the students to develop good skills. Current commercial techniques are taught to hairdressing and beauty therapy students. In several curriculum areas, in particular animal care and construction, observance of health and safety procedures in practical lessons is poor. In animal care, too little time is devoted to the development of practical skills. In leisure and tourism, students do not have the opportunity for practical experience in travel offices. In several areas, there is too little use of IT in lessons.

12. Many of the unsatisfactory lessons are dull. Teachers fail to provide enough stimulating and interesting activities for the students. Some teachers place too much emphasis on copying notes from overhead projectors or whiteboards. Some teachers do not encourage students to take part in discussions or to take appropriate notes. Some handouts were poor, for example, on engineering and business studies courses. In some lessons, teachers' questions only elicit answers from a minority of students, while the majority remains silent. In other lessons, there are inadequate checks on students' understanding.

13. In most curriculum areas, key skills provision is weak. Many students fail to appreciate the relevance of key skills to their courses and key skills lessons are poorly attended. The college has a clear policy on key skills, but it is not consistently followed across the college. On many courses, the teaching of key skills is not well integrated with the vocational elements of the course. For example, leisure and tourism students receive no teaching in application of number and other key skills were introduced too late in the programme.

14. Work experience arrangements vary in effectiveness across curriculum areas. In some curriculum areas, for example animal care, the college did not provide enough help for students who had difficulty finding their own placements. Consequently, some students had no work experience. In contrast, rewarding work placements are found for catering students and there is well-managed work experience for health and social care students.

15. In some curriculum areas, particularly hairdressing and beauty therapy, the visual and performing arts and health and social care, assessment is well planned and thorough. Students receive helpful written feedback on their work and their progress is monitored regularly. In these areas, internal verification is also good, as it is in hospitality and catering, motor vehicle engineering and teacher education. In science and mathematics, and animal care and horticulture, and on some engineering and business studies courses, assessment is poorly planned. Some science teachers rely entirely on tests set in lessons, which is poor practice. There is insufficient regular assessment in construction, science and mathematics, animal care and horticulture, and business studies. Students on hospitality, accounting, science and mathematics courses receive inadequate written

feedback on their work.

16. The college has clear policies for assessment and internal verification, but these policies are not implemented consistently across the college. A member of staff has cross-college responsibility for internal verification. Currently, however, the role involves responding to identified problems rather than assuring the quality of verification across the college. Internal verification in some curriculum areas, notably construction, engineering and accounting, is unsatisfactory. Weaknesses include lack of internal verification plans and failure to moderate assessment activity. In 2001, the college carried out a thorough review of internal verification, which revealed weaknesses in several areas. At the time of the inspection, in April 2002, many of the weaknesses remained.

17. The quality of general teaching accommodation and resources varies significantly across curriculum areas. Some classrooms are spacious, well lit and well maintained. There are imaginative displays of relevant educational material and students' work, and there is good access to a wide range of resources and computers. Other classrooms are too small, in a poor decorative state, with inadequate lighting and poor or out-of-date teaching resources and equipment.

18. In some curriculum areas, the specialist accommodation and resources are good. Engineering classrooms and workshops contain appropriate learning resources and hand tools and there are good resources for electronics and motor vehicle engineering. The specialist accommodation in several curriculum areas, however, is unsatisfactory. For example, in science and mathematics, there are too few computers in classrooms. There is only one small glass house for horticulture. Some construction workshops are cramped and classrooms are not located near enough to the workshops. The resources for leisure and tourism are unsatisfactory. Many items are old, there is too little access to specialist software and no retail outlet for students studying retail travel.

19. Most curriculum areas have a mix of good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory resources. The resource centre for business is well equipped, but some of the other accommodation is too small and poorly furnished, and offers little access to computers, audio-visual and consumable resources. In hospitality and catering, teaching areas are generally adequate, but there are too few utensils in the bistro and kitchens. In hair and beauty, accommodation is good and there are sufficient consumable resources. One of the hairdressing salons no longer reflects current industry standards, however, and there are insufficient workstations in the beauty therapy salon. The main accommodation and resources in the purpose-built art and design school are good, but accommodation for media is overcrowded and some performing arts resources are poorly maintained.

20. The large learning resource centre is used for lessons, as a drop-in IT centre and as a library. Some lessons benefit from the ready access to ample resource material, but other lessons are disrupted by noise and the use of the area as a thoroughfare. There are adequate computers for students. The ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers is 6:1. All computers are networked and have Internet access. A broad range of information is available on CD-ROMs.

21. The college has suitable catering outlets and common rooms, but few sports and recreational facilities. There is a shop where students can purchase books, stationery and art materials. There is also a well-equipped nursery for the children of students and staff. The nature of the site presents difficulties for car parking. The college has helped the situation by developing a green transport policy and incentives for car sharing. The many buildings, uneven surfaces and sloping ground also creates difficulties for students with restricted mobility. Two buildings are currently inaccessible to users of wheelchairs, but all main facilities are accessible and courses are located in such a way as to ensure that users of wheelchairs are not excluded from any college programme. Since the last inspection, the college has continued to develop the site. Improvements include the removal of several temporary buildings; improvements to parking and traffic flow; the introduction of closed-circuit television security; a refurbished reception area; new signage and display boards, and the re-roofing of three buildings.

22. Most teaching staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. Over 90% of the full-time staff have a teaching qualification. There are appropriate professional development opportunities, linked to the college's strategic priorities. Recent training has focused on widening participation,

improving the quality of tutorial support and raising the quality of basic skills teaching. The college has a good programme of training staff to support students' basic skills development. It has improved teachers' assessment of students' needs and of their own teaching skills. The college has recently been re-accredited as an 'Investor in People'.

23. The college offers a wide range of courses with provision in each of the LSC's 14 areas of learning. There is a good range of vocational and academic provision for school-leavers at level 3. The range at levels 1 and 2 is satisfactory. At levels 1 and 2, there is a wide range of courses in some areas, for example construction, but a narrow range in other areas, for example business studies. From September 2002, the college plans to extend the range of level 1 courses and discontinue some GCE A levels; for example, in chemistry and physics. In most curriculum areas, there are good opportunities for students to progress to HE.

24. The college provides good opportunities for students to combine academic and vocational qualifications. In 2001/02, 83 students studied for GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) qualifications, in addition to their vocational course. Poor timetabling arrangements, however, prevent some students who need to re-sit GCSE English from attending all their scheduled lessons. The college policy on enrichment is to encourage each curriculum area to arrange two suitable enrichment activities each year. This rather loose guidance has resulted in interesting and useful activities in some areas and nothing in others. For example, leisure and tourism students have been on a Territorial Army training day, and art and design students have visited television studios, theatres and galleries and had the opportunity to visit Madrid and New York.

25. The college has productive partnerships with local community organisations. The principal chairs the South Devon and Torbay Learning Partnership. Consultation with community groups has helped the college to identify needs and provide learning opportunities and support for students from deprived local areas. The college is involved in many worthwhile local projects, for example, the 'foyer project' to provide accommodation for 24 homeless young people on the college campus, the 'Devon bridges project' to support unemployed or disadvantaged students with mental health problems, and the 'pathways for Torbay project' to provide computers for community organisations.

26. There are good links between the college and local schools. The college provides a work-related curriculum for 70 Year 10 and 11 pupils from 6 schools. These pupils attend the college for one day a week to study construction, motor vehicle engineering, catering, animal care, hairdressing or engineering. The college also provides mathematics, science and English and courses for disaffected Year 11 pupils, many of whom have been excluded from school. Links with local industry vary across the college. Advisory groups operate in catering, public services and social care, but there are no advisory groups in most curriculum areas and employers are not involved in course reviews.

27. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is low, reflecting the low proportion within the local community. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are sensitively integrated with other students on many courses; for example, in catering. A longstanding link with the Royal National Institute for the Blind helps the college to provide effective support for students with impaired sight. A positive feature of the college's work for adults is its growing provision of Learning in the Community centres. These are located in Plymouth, Newton Abbot, Brixham, Chudleigh, Teignmouth Mortenhampstead, and Paignton and they offer a range of IT and business courses. The college also has well-established franchise arrangements with seven local partners, mainly for IT and basic skills courses. The college provides some help with students' transport, providing bus passes for students who do not qualify for a local authority pass. It has also subsidised a bus route from Brixham to Torquay. The route includes the motor vehicle training centre at Yalberton.

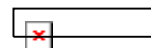
28. Students receive good pre-course guidance and advice. There are strong links between the college careers co-ordinator and careers teachers in local schools. Many school pupils who attend vocational taster courses subsequently enrol at the college. Soon after enrolment, all students take an initial assessment test, the results of which are used to allocate students to guidance tutors. Too often, however, the results of initial assessments are not used effectively in planning individual students' learning. Additional support has helped to raise attendance and pass rates in GCSE mathematics. Staff based in the additional support centre work with students who are judged to be

at risk, or of failing to complete their courses. In 2001, the retention rate for over 200 students identified as at risk was 75%.

29. Thorough induction takes place on most courses. There is a good policy and clear advice to tutors on how to implement it. Tutorial support in most curriculum areas is good. All full-time students are allocated a personal tutor. Part-time students are tutored by their subject teachers. Tutors hold group tutorials and individual meetings with students. They formally review most students' progress twice each year. Where appropriate, the results are sent to parents. Students on most courses speak highly of the value and effectiveness of their tutorials. However, many tutors have not been effective in their implementation of the college's policy on attendance and attendance levels are too low in several curriculum areas.

30. The college has a sound and comprehensive approach towards guidance and support, careers advice and counselling. The new 'helpzone', located close to reception, offers advice and assistance from trained counsellors and other specialist staff. Students may also use a 'helpzone' computer programme to find information for themselves. The college provides good support for dyslexic students, and students with mental health problems and learning difficulties, such as Down's syndrome, are integrated effectively within the college community.

Leadership and management



31. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Some curriculum areas are well managed. For example, course teams responsible for hair and beauty, art and design, and catering, hold regular team meetings and courses are thoroughly reviewed. The centre for art and design has detailed information on its students' destinations. However, senior managers do not ensure that all centres and courses are effectively managed. The management of many curriculum areas is unsatisfactory. Weaknesses include: poor co-ordination of basic skills and foundation programmes; inappropriate timetabling and frequent room changes on humanities, leisure and tourism, public services and construction courses; inadequate action planning on foundation, engineering, science and mathematics courses; and poor tracking and recording of students' progress in humanities subjects.

32. Senior managers have integrity. They are very concerned for the welfare of staff and students and they are committed to maintaining a broad range of FE programmes for school-leavers and adults in the Torbay area. They have good links with the local community. However, the college operates in an extremely competitive environment. Most local schools have sixth forms. Few young people in the area are not either in school or employment. Recruitment problems were exacerbated in 2001, when the largest local employer recruited hundreds of new staff over a three-month period. The college's response has been to seek to recruit more adult students, expand its work in the local community and develop new training contracts. This reasonable strategy has not yet succeeded in reversing the college's decline in enrolments.

33. Since the last inspection, the college has faced serious financial difficulties. In each of the last three years, it has been more than 10% below its enrolment targets, expressed as funding units. During this period, the college has contracted by over 25%, which has significantly reduced its income. In addition, the college sensibly withdrew from distant franchising in 2000, further reducing its income by approximately £1 million. In 2000, the college was restructured and there was a programme of voluntary redundancies. In the current year, 2001/02, poor budgetary control has compounded the college's problems. The college originally forecast a deficit of £960,000 for the year. In January 2002, however, it was discovered that the deficit was likely to be increased by an overspend of £480,000 on part-time staff. Although this was offset by an underspend of £200,000 on full-time staff, emergency savings were needed, including staff savings through the merger of teaching groups and the blocking of non-essential expenditure. The college remains in financial difficulties.

34. College data on students' achievements are incomplete and unreliable. The college does not have an accurate picture of students' retention and pass rates. Official data based on the college's Individualised Student Record (ISR) returns for 1999 and 2000 show that the college was unaware of the achievement of over 25% of the students who completed their college courses in these two years. Inspectors relied primarily on data provided by course teams, some of which was also unreliable. The lack of reliable data precludes effective self-assessment and action planning in the curriculum areas. At the time of the inspection, the college was installing a new management information system, but it was not fully operational.

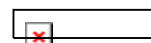
35. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of new governors and many of the administrative weaknesses in governance identified at the last inspection have been addressed. Governors are very aware of the key issues facing the college. Their expertise is used appropriately. For example, business governors sit on the audit and human resources committees. Systematic training for all governors has been introduced and new governors receive a thorough induction. Minutes of governors' meetings are detailed. They show that governors ask searching questions when presented with reports. Some papers prepared for governors, particularly those linked to management restructuring, are not sufficiently detailed. Governors have developed productive links with managers. Each governor is linked to a senior manager and to a curriculum centre.

36. The comprehensive quality assurance system includes self-assessment, student surveys, lesson observations, staff appraisal and course reviews. Detailed reports on all aspects of quality assurance are produced for the senior management team, the academic board and the governors. Course reviews are completed annually. Some reviews are thorough; some are of poor quality. The lesson observation programme is valued by staff, but the findings are not used to inform course reviews. Staff appraisal is up to date in most curriculum areas. Staff development needs are identified at appraisals, but the outcomes are not used in drawing up the annual staff development plan. So far as inspectors could tell from the data, quality assurance has not been effective in raising retention and pass rates.

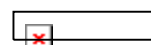
37. Detailed equal opportunities policies for staff and students were reviewed and updated in 2001. Equal opportunities monitoring was a weakness at the last inspection. Monitoring now takes place through the equal opportunities committee, which meets twice each term. The committee has wide representation from all areas of the college including governors and the executive team. They closely monitor staff recruitment and analyse all applications for posts at all stages of the process. The broad range of data, which has recently started to be collected, is being used to analyse trends in the staff and student population.

38. The college's New Deal contract is well managed. Clients on full-time education and training programmes are integrated effectively with other college students particularly in construction, motor vehicle engineering and hospitality. Programmes in these areas have been modified to allow clients to start at any time of year. Good reviews with clients take place each month and issues are quickly addressed by the New Deal contract team.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- good teaching at Newton Abbot
- good informal support for students
- high proportion of students progressing to HE from the access course.

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- low retention and pass rates in GCE A levels in science
- poor practice in setting and marking homework
- insufficient use of IT in lessons
- poor curriculum management
- low levels of attendance.

Scope of provision

39. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. There is a national diploma in sports science and GCSE courses in science (biology) and science (double award). GCSE mathematics is offered on the main site and at the college's centre in Newton Abbot. An access course provides a route to HE for adult students returning to study. GCE AS and A-level courses in physics and chemistry will not be offered from September 2002.

Achievement and standards

40. Pass rates for GCE A-level physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics were low in 1999 and 2000. For example, in 2000, pass rates for biology and chemistry were 31% and 20%, respectively. Some pass rates rose in 2001, and in chemistry and biology they were slightly above the national

average. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses have also been below the national average. Pass rates for GCSE mathematics, GCSE science courses and the national diploma in sports science were slightly above the national average in 2001 and, over the last three years, retention rates on these courses have been close to the national average. Many students progress from science access courses to degree programmes in related subjects; for example, physiotherapy, nursing, archaeology and science teaching.

41. Students' attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low, at 58%. Although practical work was carried out with due regard to health and safety, the standard of much of the work observed in lessons and in students' files was low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE science 1 year	2	No. of starts	124	59	39
		% retention	65	75	67
		% pass rate	49	64	46
GCSE mathematics 1 year	2	No. of starts	467	334	284
		% retention	67	75	67
		% pass rate	44	45	40
National diploma in sports science	3	No. of starts	*	*	14
		% retention	*	*	86
		% pass rate	*	*	91
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	34	21	20
		% retention	79	67	50
		% pass rate	45	31	80
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	15	12
		% retention	*	73	50
		% pass rate	*	20	83
GCE A-level mathematics 2 year	3	No. of starts	*	*	16
		% retention	*	*	75
		% pass rate	*	*	50

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

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

42. Much teaching is unsatisfactory. Of the 16 lessons observed by inspectors, 5 were unsatisfactory and only 3 were good or very good. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects, although, in one lesson, students received an unsatisfactory answer to a question about the practical application of simultaneous equations. Many lessons are poorly planned and some are dull. Teachers often talk for too long. They fail to provide enough stimulating and interesting activities for the students. In some cases, classroom management is unsatisfactory. For example, in one lesson, the few students were scattered around the large room in which they were being taught. There are some useful teaching resources for students. GCSE mathematics students are given helpful progress booklets and adult students are provided with appropriate resources in addition to

the schemes of work.

43. Some of the good lessons took place at the Newton Abbot centre. In one lively mathematics lesson for adults, an enthusiastic teacher ensured that levels of attainment were high. Some GCSE students benefit from a pilot scheme that gives them access to relevant mathematics Internet sites. In general, however, there is insufficient use of IT in lessons. The science laboratories and the mathematics classroom on the main site are satisfactory, although the mathematics room lacks computing facilities. A drop-in mathematics workshop area is mainly used by students seeking additional help in mathematics. Some mathematics lessons take place in a noisy open plan area.

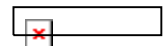
44. Some teachers set homework every week. Others set no homework, relying entirely on marked tests carried out in lessons. This is poor practice. Students receive inadequate feedback on their work. Often teachers merely mark work with ticks and crosses and most written comments are negative. In one case, an inappropriate derogatory comment was written on a student's work.

45. Teachers are well qualified. Several have higher degrees or are working towards one. Both teachers and technicians give good informal support to students outside timetabled lessons. In one case, the college is providing additional lessons for a student who has moved into the area and needs to make up lost ground. Students receive helpful impartial advice and guidance about their choice of courses. They are introduced to their rights and responsibilities during an effective induction programme. Subject teachers also provide students with useful information on careers and progression to HE.

Leadership and management

46. Management of the curriculum area is ineffective. Meetings between teachers are informal and there are few instances of minutes or action plans. The self-assessment process lacked rigour. Teachers have a poor understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. The grades awarded to lessons as part of the college's programme of lesson observations were higher than those awarded by inspectors. Teachers fail to share good practice. Some good enrichment activities are arranged for science students. These include trips to the Eden Project and to Bristol University. There are no formal arrangements for work experience and very few links with local business or industry.

Animal care and horticulture



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

Strengths

- good commercial horticulture training on NVQ 1
- high retention rates on most courses.

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching

- low pass rates in NVQ level 1 and 2 amenity horticulture
- poor resources in animal care
- poor health and safety practices in animal care
- inadequate development and assessment of practical skills.

Scope of provision

47. Fifteen students are enrolled on the first diploma in animal care course. There are 11 first-year students following the national diploma in animal care and 3 national certificate students. There are also 12 students on NVQ levels 1 and 2 animal care programmes. Courses in amenity and commercial horticulture are franchised to other training providers in the area. One partner has 13 students taking NVQ level 1 amenity horticulture and NVQ level 2 decorative horticulture. Another partner provides commercial horticultural intensive crop production NVQ level 1 and 2 for 23 students. All horticulture students study part-time and over half of them have learning difficulties. A further 31 students study part-time gardening courses.

Achievement and standards

48. Horticulture pass rates are low. Five students achieved an NVQ amenity horticulture level 1 in 2000 and one student in 2001. Only 3 of the 10 students taking the NVQ level 2 commercial horticulture intensive crop production course in the last two years have achieved the award. Retention rates on NVQ amenity horticulture courses are high, with a 100% retention rate in 2001. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 animal care were unsatisfactory in 1999 and 2000, but, in 2001, all five students gained the award. Pass rates on the first diploma in animal care have risen over the last three years and, in 2001, the pass rate was slightly above the national average.

49. Attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was 69%. Some registers indicate low levels of attendance, particularly at key skills lessons. Lessons are often disrupted by late arrivals and students are not questioned about their reasons for being late.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
NVQ animal care	1	No. of starts	*	*	11
		% retention	*	*	91
		% pass rate	*	*	70
NVQ amenity horticulture	1	No. of starts	**	*	11
		% retention	**	*	100

		% pass rate	**	*	9
NVQ commercial horticulture	1	No. of starts	*	9	7
		% retention	*	89	71
		% pass rate	*	71	57
NVQ animal care	2	No. of starts	8	*	5
		% retention	88	*	100
		% pass rate	57	*	100
First diploma in animal care	2	No. of starts	15	21	17
		% retention	93	90	59
		% pass rate	83	89	90

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

* unreliable data

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

50. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 40% of the lessons observed by inspectors. Teachers failed to stimulate and interest students. They often talked too much in lessons and students' attention wandered. Learning activities are not sufficiently varied. There is an over-emphasis on copying notes from whiteboards or overhead projections. On the full-time animal care courses there is too little development of practical skills. First diploma animal care students have an inadequate weekly allocation of time for the development of their practical skills. The time is inappropriately restricted to cleaning out pens and cages and feeding animals. In some of the good lessons students were provided with well designed handouts and, in one lesson, effective use was made of animal skulls and teeth to describe the difference between carnivores and herbivores.

51. Assignments for animal care students are appropriately scheduled throughout the year. Written work is marked promptly and corrected clearly. The standard of some national diploma students' theoretical work is high. Assignments over-emphasise the theoretical aspects of the animal care programmes. There are not enough assignments based on practical activities with animals and students are not gaining the necessary practical skills.

52. There is too little workplace assessment of NVQ students. Knowledge to support NVQ animal care students' practical competence is only assessed by written questioning. Of the 20 students currently working towards an NVQ level 1 or 2 in animal care, none had completed any units by the time of the inspection in late April. Assessment will take place at the end of the course, but there was no evidence of competencies acquired in NVQ students' portfolios at the time of the inspection.

53. The practical resources for animal care are poor. The animal care unit consists of a small pre-fabricated hut. It is much too small for effective practical teaching. It can not accommodate the number of students timetabled to use it. The unit contains a small selection of rodents, invertebrates, reptiles and fish. There is insufficient space to ensure that all animals are kept according to codes of welfare. Some rodents are kept on shelving that has too little natural light. All animals are kept in the same room together with food and waste bedding. There is no isolation unit for sick animals. There is also an aviary containing about eight birds. Students do not get experience in college of a sufficient range of animals.

54. Health and safety practice in the animal care unit is very poor. For example, the same table is used for food preparation and the cleaning of animal cages. There is only one wash basin in the unit and this is used for washing animal food and faecal matter. Few students wash their hands after

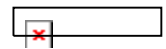
practical lessons. Those who do wash, use the sink in the animal care unit. The induction programme for animal care places insufficient emphasis on health and safety and safe lifting. The course handbook does not make sufficient reference to health and safety. Poor lifting techniques were observed during the inspection. Students do not wear any protective clothing while cleaning animal pens. At the time of the inspection, there was a mite infection among the rabbits and guinea pigs, yet students were not cautioned that they could infect other animals by handling them.

55. Amenity and commercial horticulture training is provided by partners with whom the college has franchise contracts. One partner has no storage facilities for tools. Consequently, hand tools have to be transported in a minibus with the students. Partners' sites, however, provide suitable facilities for planting and vegetable propagation. The college has good training facilities for commercial horticulture. There is a well-equipped training room, a large garden and an organic vegetable production area. Amenity horticulture students have adequate facilities. There is a small greenhouse for horticulture students on the college site. Teachers of animal care and horticulture are suitably qualified. Of the two staff in animal care, one is a veterinarian and the other a veterinary nurse.

Leadership and management

56. The management of animal care courses is satisfactory. The annual course review in animal care is suitably thorough. Retention and pass rates are examined and targets set for the following year. Strategies for raising retention rates have not yet been effective. This year the section has retained about 75% of its full-time students.

Construction



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

Strengths

- good practical work in brickwork and in painting and decorating
- strong links with employers.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention and pass rates on most courses
- high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching
- inadequate classroom accommodation

- some poor practice in health and safety
- low attendance.

Scope of provision

57. The college offers a good range of construction courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Full-time programmes offered at NVQ levels 1 and 2 include wood trades, trowel trades, plumbing, painting and decorating, signwork and interior decorative techniques. There is also a full-time advanced GNVQ course in construction and the built environment. NVQs at levels 2 and 3 are offered on a part-time basis in the same trades. The part-time provision includes sub-contracted off-the-job training for the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) in carpentry and joinery, brickwork and painting and decorating. Other part-time courses include furniture production, 'autocad' short courses, and health and safety courses. Over 360 students study construction at the college. However, over 100 of these are on programmes sub-contracted from the CITB and another private provider. Sub-contracted programmes were not included in the inspection.

Achievement and standards

58. Retention rates have been consistently well below the national average of 74% on NVQ level 1 programmes in trowel and wood trades. Over the last two years, retention rates on the NVQ level 2 plumbing course have also been low. In 2000, the rate was 21% and in 2001 it was 29%. In 2001, the retention rate of 91% on the NVQ painting and decorating course was well above the national average, after having been well below average in the previous two years. In general, pass rates are below the national average. In particular, the pass rates of 45% for NVQ level 2 painting and decorating and 44% for the advanced GNVQ in construction and the built environment are low.

59. Many students produce practical work of an industrial standard. There was a lot of good work in bricklaying, painting and decorating, and interior decorative techniques. For example, students produced well-built brick arches and there was good use of spraying, stencil and marbling techniques by interior decorative technique students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	16	*	14
		% retention	69	*	65
		% pass rate	40	*	77
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	*	*	20
		% retention	*	*	65
		% pass rate	*	*	77
NVQ painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	*	*	11
		% retention	*	*	91
		% pass rate	*	*	45

NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	10	*	8
		% retention	90	*	88
		% pass rate	78	*	71
NVQ wood occupations	3	No. of starts	*	*	17
		% retention	*	*	29
		% pass rate	*	*	60
GNVQ advanced construction and built environment	3	No. of starts	*	*	11
		% retention	*	*	82
		% pass rate	*	*	44

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

* unreliable data

Quality of education and training

60. Teaching was unsatisfactory in more than 45% of lessons observed by inspectors. Teaching and learning are not well planned. Schemes of work contain too little detail about intended learning outcomes. Many lesson plans lack specific objectives against which teachers can check learning. Many theory lessons are dull. There is little effective use of overhead projectors or other teaching aids. The range of learning activities is narrow and students often lose interest in their lessons. Teachers do not encourage students to take part in discussions or to take appropriate notes and they fail to summarise the key points of the lesson. Tutorial support is generally good. Students receive helpful feedback on their assignments and on how to complete the teaching packs covering the theoretical knowledge for NVQs.

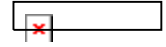
61. In most practical lessons, students are trained to work to industry standards. In carpentry and joinery, and plumbing, however, health and safety practices are poor. For example, students wear inappropriate footwear in workshops. Teachers generally pay appropriate attention to individuals' needs in practical lessons, and students appreciate the help they get in developing their craft skills. Most practical facilities are adequate. However, there is insufficient space in the plumbing workshop for practical assessments to be conducted properly. On some occasions, the brickwork workshop is overcrowded. In one lesson with a class of 24 students, the split-level floor made it difficult for the teacher to see all the students. Some students made slow progress because they had to wait for the teacher to explain matters before proceeding.

62. Classroom accommodation is unsatisfactory. There are no specialist classrooms for craft programmes and there are no displays of industry information or subject material to help students learn. Teachers of brickwork, and painting and decorating, use workshop areas for theory lessons. Some carpentry and joinery lessons are timetabled into rooms with an inadequate number of seats for the whole class. Plumbing students have been timetabled in specialist accommodation used for engineering, catering and biology. Construction and built environment students have had numerous timetable changes since the start of their course.

Leadership and management

63. Course management is unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are disrupted by frequent timetable changes. Staff meetings are poorly attended. Course team meetings are difficult to arrange because of the high proportion of staff who are part time. Communication is not as effective as it might be because staff rooms are not equipped with IT facilities for e-mail. There was little staff involvement in the development of the self-assessment report. Links with employers are good. The construction advisory group has recently been re-established, which helps the college, amongst other things, to keep employers informed about changes to validating bodies' requirements. The college is working with the CITB on a project to train and recruit work-based assessors.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- much good teaching
- good motor vehicle provision
- high pass rates on the computer-aided engineering course
- productive links with local schools.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on the telecommunication and electronics course
- low retention rates on NVQ foundation production engineering
- poor assessment practice in electronics and general engineering
- unsatisfactory learning support
- unsatisfactory management.

Scope of provision

64. Full-time and part-time courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels provide students with good opportunities to progress to HE. Courses are offered in electronic, mechanical

and production, and motor vehicle engineering. Electronics courses include telecommunications, electronic servicing and a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in electronic engineering. Mechanical and production courses include mechanical and production engineering, computer numerical control (CNC) programming, computer-aided engineering and welding. Motor vehicle courses include vehicle maintenance, body repair and vehicle refinishing. At the time of the inspection, 114 full-time and 145 part-time students were enrolled on engineering courses at the college. In addition, the college provides off-the-job training for over 100 trainees contracted to other local training providers. The motor vehicle section is located at Yalberton, three miles away from the main site.

Achievement and standards

65. There is no consistent pattern of retention and pass rates on engineering courses. Pass rates on the computer-aided engineering course have been high over the last three years and pass rates on the national diploma course in motor vehicle engineering were also high in 2000 and 2001. On some other courses, pass rates are close to the national average, but the pass rate on the level 1 telecommunication and electronics course has been very low in each of the last three years. Retention rates have generally been high on the computer-aided engineering course, the first diploma in motor vehicle engineering and the national certificate in mechanical engineering. They have been low on the national diploma in motor vehicle engineering and the NVQ level 2 production engineering course.

66. Most students' work is of an average standard. Students demonstrate appropriate practical skills during practical lessons in workshops and laboratories. The attendance rate at lessons observed by inspectors was 75%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds telecommunication and electronic engineering	1	No. of starts	19	44	31
		% retention	100	82	84
		% pass rate	26	28	35
First diploma in motor vehicle engineering	2	No. of starts	*	*	14
		% retention	*	*	86
		% pass rate	*	*	60
National certificate in mechanical engineering	2	No. of starts	*	*	24
		% retention	*	*	92
		% pass rate	*	*	50
City and Guilds computer-aided engineering	2	No. of starts	*	*	22
		% retention	*	*	91
		% pass rate	*	*	90
NVQ production engineering	2	No. of starts	*	*	28
		% retention	*	*	18
		% pass rate	*	*	100
National diploma in motor vehicle engineering	3	No. of starts	*	*	14
		% retention	*	*	57
		% pass rate	*	*	100

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

* *unreliable data*

Quality of education and training

67. Teaching was good or better in 53% of lessons observed by inspectors, and satisfactory in 37%. The best lessons have a lively atmosphere and learning objectives are achieved. Examples chosen by teachers are related to students' interests and experience. For example, in a motor vehicle lesson, the teacher was aware of the make and model of students' cars and his frequent references to individual students' cars helped to maintain their interest. In many lessons, students are fully involved in using the engineering equipment. Electronics students are confident in using test equipment and they make good progress with their practical tasks. The teaching of some theory lessons is dull and students' attention often wanders; there is little rapport between teachers and students, and students are reluctant to ask questions or volunteer opinions. In most lessons, teachers make good use of overhead transparencies and handouts. A minority of handouts, however, are poorly produced.

68. Learning support for engineering students is unsatisfactory. Some students had no initial assessment, and between 15% and 20% of the students that were assessed have been identified as needing help with literacy or numeracy. There is no systematic monitoring of these students' progress, or of their attendance at the learning support centre. Staff fail to encourage students to take advantage of the learning support available. Managers and teachers show little appreciation of the notion that effective learning support can raise retention and pass rates.

69. Internal verification in the motor vehicle section is effective. Plans to sample work are comprehensive and weaknesses in assessment procedures have been identified and rectified. The monitoring and recording of motor vehicle students' progress is satisfactory. There is some good workplace assessment of engineering students, but the process of setting targets and reviewing progress is weak. These students are making slow progress towards their learning goals. Electronics students' assessment is not well planned. Internal verification of assessments in electronics and mechanical engineering is poor. There is no procedure for ensuring that an appropriate sample of assignments and portfolios is verified across the range of courses. This issue has not yet been addressed. There is no sharing of good practice in assessment and internal verification across the department.

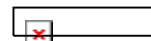
70. Engineering staff have appropriate qualifications and relevant industrial experience. They keep up to date through staff training and visits to assess students in the workplace. Learning resources are generally adequate. Equipment in the electronics laboratories is well maintained. A good range of hand tools is available in the workshops. There is some new equipment in the electronics and motor vehicle workshops, but much of the general engineering equipment is old.

71. Some students undertake work experience. For example, 12 motor vehicle students currently have work placements. Enrichment activities for students include visits to manufacturers' premises and training sessions to help students pass their driving test. The department has also hosted a visit from Swedish students. Good links with local schools means that school pupils attend elements of some of the part-time programmes.

Leadership and management

72. The motor vehicle section is well managed, but management of the engineering department as a whole is unsatisfactory. Course review is weak. There is too little analysis of pass and retention rates. Plans for improving the quality of provision are inadequate. Course files are not well maintained in all areas. There is too little sharing of good practice among teachers. Different sections in the department also follow different procedures.

Business studies



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

Strengths

- good access courses
- effective teaching on professional courses
- high pass rate on the certificate in personnel practice course.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on most full-time programmes
- much uninspiring teaching
- insufficient learning in many lessons
- low attendance
- poorly equipped classrooms.

Scope of provision

73. The college offers full-time and part-time GCE AS and A levels in law and business studies, intermediate GNVQ and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in business, business administration and NVQ courses, access provision and professional courses. There is also a wide range of courses in accounting including computerised accounting, book-keeping, and Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) NVQ courses at levels 2 to 4. The AAT courses are offered on a full-time, part-time or evening basis. Other day-release, professional courses include the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) levels 3 and 4, certificate of management, certificate in personnel practices and certificate in marketing. There are no level 1 programmes. There is a successful community centre in Newton Abbot where IT and computerised accounts courses are taught.

Achievement and standards

74. Overall, levels of achievement are unsatisfactory. Many retention and pass rates are below national averages. The pass rates on full-time business studies courses are low; only two students passed the intermediate GNVQ course in 2001. On the advanced GNVQ courses, both retention and pass rates were below the national average in each of the last three years. The GNVQ advanced course has now been replaced by the AVCE in business, but there has been no rise in the levels of achievement. Only 8 of the 30 students who took the AVCE course in 2001 were successful. Pass rates in GCE A-level business studies have also been below the national average in each of the last three years. Business administration pass rates have been very low at both level 2 and level 3 in each of the last three years. Pass rates on some of the professional programmes are high. Both the AAT NVQ level 3 course and the certificate in personnel practice had pass rates above the national average in 2000 and 2001. Following changes in the structure of the access course, retention and pass rates have risen and are now well above average.

75. Students' work is generally satisfactory. On professional courses and access it is good. However, many students' critical and evaluative skills are not well developed. Students' written work is satisfactory, but it frequently lacks detail and depth. Strategies for improving the performance of individual students are underdeveloped.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate business studies	2	No. of starts	*	*	15
		% retention	*	*	60
		% pass rate	*	*	22
Business administration (1 year)	2	No. of starts	*	9	24
		% retention	*	100	67
		% pass rate	*	22	44
GNVQ advanced business studies	3	No. of starts	44	27	36
		% retention	59	63	67
		% pass rate	62	71	71
Business administration (1 year)	3	No. of starts	11	9	10
		% retention	73	100	80
		% pass rate	0	0	25
NVQ accounting (AAT)	3	No. of starts	42	50	30
		% retention	69	74	93
		% pass rate	41	62	68
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	19	18	24
		% retention	95	94	92
		% pass rate	100	100	95
GCE A-level business studies (2 year)	3	No. of starts	23	*	21
		% retention	61	*	48
		% pass rate	85	*	50
GCE A-level business studies (1 year)	3	No. of starts	38	41	32
		% retention	76	56	56

		% pass rate	62	35	50
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Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* *unreliable data*

Quality of education and training

76. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects. Professional courses and the access programme are well structured and well taught. Although 32% of lessons observed by inspectors were good or better and 53% were satisfactory, too little of the teaching inspires students. Many lessons were conducted too slowly. For example, in an intermediate GNVQ lesson, students were allowed half the lesson to respond to a set of questions that they had already discussed. Many handouts are of poor quality or are used ineffectively. For example, in a level 2 business administration lesson, a typewritten handout was used as an overhead transparency and the tutor asked the students to call out answers to fill in the gaps left in the text.

77. In many subjects, schemes of work merely list the topics to be covered, and staff fail to record progress against the scheme, so that staff absences make it difficult to ensure continuity of learning for students. Lesson planning is also weak. Many teachers do not identify the aims of their lesson clearly, the teaching strategies to be used and the structure and timing of the lesson.

78. In most subjects, students' work is returned promptly. Teachers provide written comments indicating that students need to do to improve. Spelling and grammar are corrected. However, teachers fail to pursue students who miss deadlines for handing in their work with sufficient rigour. In some cases, students are not set enough written work; for example, GCE AS business studies evening students. Students' academic progress is monitored by subject teachers and by personal tutors and most students have termly review meetings with their personal tutor. Staff also provide good support for students outside lessons; for example, by providing advice on opportunities for progression.

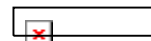
79. Students have access to sufficient computers in the college's learning centres on the main site. Books and other materials in the learning centres are adequate. Classrooms lack computers, audio-visual equipment and other learning resources. Consequently, teachers make little use of visual aids. In one AVCE lesson, the students had to move to another room during the lesson to use computers. Staff are appropriately qualified and trained. Most staff who teach on vocational courses undertake professional updating as part of their annual staff development.

80. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low, at 66%. Lateness and absence are not handled consistently by tutors and students do not understand the reasons for the differing approaches. A new system for monitoring and taking action on lateness and absence has recently been introduced, but it is not being applied consistently across the department. There has been no evaluation to date of the effectiveness of the new procedures.

Leadership and management

81. Course management is unsatisfactory. Procedures are not being implemented consistently by staff. Data on retention and pass rates are not adequately checked, and are not being used to evaluate students' performance and plan future course development. Team meetings are minuted, but few decisions are taken at these meetings and issues often remain unresolved. Course timetables are not well organised. Lessons are timetabled in three buildings to no consistent pattern. There is good informal liaison between staff on the main site and staff at the centre in Newton Abbot.

Computing and information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- wide range of provision
- good learning resources for part-time students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on many courses
- lack of accreditation on CLAIT and IBT courses
- ineffective strategies for improving retention rates
- poor attendance.

Scope of provision

82. The college offers full-time courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. In 2001/02, over 100 students aged 16 to 18 were enrolled on these courses. An access course in computing is provided for adult students. There is a wide range of provision for part-time students, including basic IT, software applications, European computer driving licence (ECDL) and telematics courses. The full-time courses are run at the main site. Part-time courses are run at the Newton Abbot centre and other community venues. Each year, over 3,000 students enrol on part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

83. Full-time students' achievements are unsatisfactory. Approximately 30% of those who start their courses achieve their qualification in the time expected. Pass rates on many courses are below average. Only 4 of the 29 students who started the foundation GNVQ course in 2001 were successful. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate were below the national average in 1999 and 2001. The 39% pass rate on the AVCE course in 2001 is low. The pass rate on the GCE A-level computing course is in line with the national average, but retention rates have been low for the last two years.

84. There are high pass rates on some part-time courses, for example, the Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examination (OCR) Internet technologies course. Several thousand students are recruited each year to CLAIT and IBT courses. Retention rates on these courses are satisfactory, but most

students do not submit work for assessment or seek accreditation. The standards reached by these students are therefore unknown, which is a highly unsatisfactory situation. Pass rate data on these programmes are unreliable and misleading and are omitted from the table below. Some part-time courses, such as the computer application certificate and the telematics course, have pass rates well below the national average.

85. Approximately 80% of successful GCE A-level students progress to HE. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low, at 68%. Students who are late for lessons are often not asked to explain the reason for their late arrival.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation in IT	1	No. of starts	**	*	29
		% retention	**	*	66
		% pass rate	**	*	21
OCR Internet technologies	1	No. of starts	**	*	50
		% retention	**	*	86
		% pass rate	**	*	95
GNVQ intermediate in information and communication technology	2	No. of starts	*	*	45
		% retention	*	*	71
		% pass rate	*	*	53
AVCE information and communication technology	3	No. of starts	**	**	41
		% retention	**	**	76
		% pass rate	**	**	39
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	*	*	14
		% retention	*	*	57
		% pass rate	*	*	63

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

* *unreliable data*

** *course did not run*

Quality of education and training

86. Half the lessons observed by inspectors were good or better. The best lessons are well prepared and effectively managed. Constructive relations between staff and student give students the confidence to express their ideas. In one lesson, the teacher used a good range of questions that took account of the different abilities of the students. In several lessons, there was a suitable balance of group and individual activities that enabled the students to produce good work. Although only 8% of lessons were unsatisfactory, many lessons were uninspiring. The range of teaching methods was narrow. In most cases, teachers talked to the class, then set exercises for the students. Many learning activities did not take account of students' differing levels of ability. In one unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher simply read aloud from a handout. This failed to generate any meaningful discussion and there was little effective learning.

87. Students' written work is satisfactory. Full-time students are given assignments on a regular basis. These are carefully marked and staff provide good written and verbal feedback to help students improve their work. The lack of a clear assessment schedule, however, leads to students having too many assignments to complete at certain times of year. There are inconsistencies in monitoring the progress of full-time students. Many staff use their own methods of monitoring. The department does not have standardised documentation.

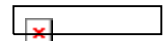
88. Students have access to good IT facilities and suitable software during lessons. Part-time students are able to take what they need by combining lessons with drop-in sessions in the learning centre. The learning materials used in lessons and the resources used by students when they study on their own are good, but the range of software available outside lessons is narrow. Classrooms on the main site are unsatisfactory. There is no display material on the walls and teachers have too little access to modern audio-visual teaching aids such as data projectors or interactive whiteboards. Library stock is adequate to support the range of courses offered. There is no work experience for full-time students, but visits are arranged for them to investigate the use of computers in the world of business and commerce.

89. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced. All staff have teaching qualifications or are working towards them. Staff development has been related to curriculum development, but there has been too little opportunity for staff to update their IT skills and to develop the skills needed to raise retention and pass rates.

Leadership and management

90. Management is satisfactory. There is improving teamwork, some sharing of good practice and a commitment to widening participation by developing provision in the community. Teachers meet regularly to review individual students' progress. Course reviews contribute to the department's self-assessment. However, college strategies for improving retention and pass rates are not being implemented effectively at course level. Teachers are unclear about the specific targets for their courses and are unaware of college targets for retention and pass rate data.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- high pass rates on NVQ level 3 programmes
- good individual support for students
- productive links with local schools and industry.

Weaknesses

- resources below current industry standards
- ineffective development of key skills
- low levels of attendance.

Scope of provision

91. The college provides a good range of catering and hospitality programmes from foundation to Higher National Diploma (HND) level. There are good progression routes for students and students may study for additional qualifications that complement their main studies. A recent review of the curriculum has been undertaken with local employers to ensure that programmes meet the needs of industry. There are part-time programmes in cake decoration, vegetarian cookery, licensed trade and food hygiene. Link programmes in catering for Year 10 and 11 pupils from local schools help to promote the college's provision. Students with learning difficulties are successfully integrated with other students and work towards full NVQ qualifications. In recent years, the number of students on hospitality and catering courses has declined.

Achievements and standards

92. There are high retention and pass rates on some courses. In 2001, retention rates on the two NVQ level 1 programmes were above the national average. There has been a high retention rate on the NVQ level 3 programme over the last three years, but at NVQ level 2, the retention rate was below average in 2001. In general, retention rates have risen over the last three years. In 2001, the pass rate on the advanced GNVQ programme was above the national average. NVQ level 3 pass rates are high and NVQ level 1 and level 2 pass rates are close to the national average. There are high retention and pass rates on most short programmes in food hygiene and cake decoration.

93. Students achieve high standards in practical skills and theoretical knowledge. First-year students work well in teams in practical classes and develop good technical skills. As students' technical skills are developed, they become capable of working independently with little supervision from tutors. Practical skills and theoretical knowledge are demonstrated well during assessments. There are displays of students' work throughout the department and good photographic evidence in students' portfolios. Students on food service programmes acquire good social skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ catering and hospitality food and drink service 1 year	1	No. of starts	*	*	15
		% retention	*	*	87
		% pass rate	*	*	77
NVQ catering and	1	No. of starts	11	*	20

hospitality food preparation and cook 1 year		% retention	100	*	85
		% pass rate	90	*	71
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cook 2 year	2	No. of starts	*	*	23
		% retention	*	*	39
		% pass rate	*	*	67
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	No. of starts	*	*	11
		% retention	*	*	70
		% pass rate	*	*	86
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation 1 year	3	No. of starts	*	*	11
		% retention	*	*	91
		% pass rate	*	*	89

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

* unreliable data

Quality of education and training

94. Courses are effective and well developed and schemes of work are good. The range of options enables students to specialise in food preparation or to develop a broad base of knowledge. Practical lessons in the college's realistic working environments enable the students to develop their skills effectively. The recent addition of a bistro has helped to broaden their knowledge and skills. Assessment of practical and theoretical work is thorough and students are encouraged to be self-critical about their performance. Assessment outcomes help shape individual development plans and students are kept well informed of the progress they are making. Schemes of work provide good coverage of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, but there is not enough attention to the development of key skills as an integral part of the course. There is an over-emphasis on preparation for key skills tests. Many students do not understand why they have to study key skills.

95. Good use of work experience increases students' understanding of the industry. However, work experience for full-time students is not always monitored effectively by teachers. Teachers regularly visit part-time students in their workplace. These visits improve links with the industry, help teachers to support and guide individual students and provide opportunities for assessment.

96. There is good individual support for students. On application, students are given good guidance about the most appropriate programme to join. Their aspirations and abilities are taken into account. Learning support needs are assessed. Students with additional learning needs are well supported and fully integrated with other students on NVQ programmes. Classroom assistants, with knowledge of the industry, provide support and help ensure their progress. There is a well-developed tutorial system that caters for students' academic and pastoral welfare. Students appreciate the support provided by staff.

97. There are good links with industry and local schools. A recent careers guidance day with local employers provided useful information on industry's needs and employment prospects for students. There is a strong relationship with the Catering Advisory Board. Board members advise the college about local industry needs. As a result, the college has introduced a programme for hoteliers who are new to the area. Pupils involved in the school-link programme appreciate the opportunity to work with college students. Many of them progress to college programmes. Regular parents' evenings ensure that parents or guardians are informed of their children's progress.

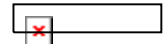
98. Teachers are well qualified. They have up-to-date knowledge and experience of the industry. Effective staff development includes local and national secondments to industry. The college has

some prestigious links. For example, tutors and students were recently invited to undertake a 10-day work placement at Buckingham Palace where they were involved in producing food for a variety of events. Physical resources in the college are old and in need of replacement. They are adequate to meet the basic requirements of the programmes, but they do not reflect resources that are currently used in industry for food preparation and production. The volume and variety of utensils are also unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management

99. Leadership and management are satisfactory. For a period of time there was no head of department. The new head of department has reviewed the curriculum and is focusing on the development of vocational skills to meet the needs of local industry. There is effective communication within the department through a programme of departmental and course team meetings. These meetings help in drawing up the self-assessment report. Retention and pass rates are monitored against course targets and national averages, though targets are not always well understood by all staff. Students' absenteeism is monitored at team meetings. Registers indicate that levels of attendance are often low. The attendance rate at lessons observed by inspectors was 71%, which is unsatisfactory. Attendance at key skills lessons is low. No students attended one lesson, scheduled for observation by an inspector.

Leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass rate on the NVQ in sport and recreation in 2001
- effective and stimulating practical lessons in sport and recreation.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most courses
- low pass rates on many courses
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning in leisure and tourism
- weak management of leisure and tourism courses

- lack of specialist resources for travel and tourism
- low attendance.

Scope of provision

100. The college provides a good range of full-time courses in leisure and tourism. A foundation GNVQ course was introduced in 2001. There is an intermediate GNVQ and an AVCE in travel and tourism. A one-year AVCE course is available for people who have experience in the sector or who have previously studied at level 3. A proposed AVCE in leisure and recreation did not recruit enough students in 2001 to be viable. Students may take further qualifications in addition to their main award. These qualifications include an NVQ level 2 in sport and recreation, the community sports leader award, and certificates in first aid, food hygiene, and health and safety. Part-time professional courses include British Airways fares and ticketing level 1 and the Association of British Travel Agents primary certificate. Full-time students can also join these courses.

Achievement and standards

101. Retention rates were below average on most full-time courses in 2001. Since 1999, retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism and the NVQ level 2 in sport and recreation have declined and retention rates on the advanced GNVQ course have been below the national average for the last two years. Of the 45 students who started the AVCE single award in travel and tourism in 2000, only 13 chose to progress to year 2 to pursue the double award. Low retention rates continue to be an issue in 2001/02. Of the 24 students who started the intermediate travel and tourism in 2001, only 16 remained by the time of the inspection in April 2002.

102. The pass rate for the NVQ level 2 in sport and recreation rose in 2001 and is high, at 94%. However, most 2001 pass rates are below average and lower than in previous years. During the inspection, attendance at many classes was low, averaging only 57%. Registers indicate that low attendance is a continual problem.

103. Students' practical skills in sport and recreation are good. Students work in a professional and safe way and skills such as preparing climbing ropes and analysing posture and gait are well developed. Leisure and tourism students produce good written work, which is usually neatly word processed. Some intermediate students copy too much from books and brochures and have difficulty summarising in their own words. Students on AVCE courses do not have well-developed research and analytical skills. They rely too heavily on their teachers for information.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	28	*	23
		% retention	75	*	49
		% pass rate	78	*	64
NVQ in sport and recreation	2	No. of starts	*	*	28
		% retention	*	*	61

		% pass rate	*	*	94
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	32	24	30
		% retention	72	58	63
		% pass rate	73	100	74
AVCE in travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	**	**	34
		% retention	**	**	79
		% pass rate	**	**	27
Travel agents certificate (primary)	3	No. of starts	28	25	13
		% retention	96	96	85
		% pass rate	63	75	55

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

Quality of education and training

104. Teaching of practical sport and recreation is good. Students undertaking rock climbing at a local sea cliff had a thorough briefing which involved assessing each other's preparation for the event. They showed excellent climbing techniques and their achievements were evaluated in an effective de-briefing. Students in a successful sports therapy class followed up the analysis of each other's gait by dissecting the knee joint of a pig's leg to explore the ligaments.

105. Teaching and learning in many leisure and tourism classes are unsatisfactory. Schemes of work are simply a list of topics and they lack sufficient detail. For example, there is no indication of appropriate teaching and learning strategies, of how key skills will be integrated with other aspects of work, or of opportunities for considering cultural and ethical issues. Many students do not have the opportunity to develop the research and analytical skills they will require in HE. In many lessons, teachers talk too much and there is too little opportunity for students to ask questions, express their ideas or discuss topics for themselves. There is an over-reliance on notes and slides displayed on overhead projectors. Many of the slides have small, faded print that is difficult to read. Questions directed at the whole group often elicit answers from the same individuals, while most students pay little attention.

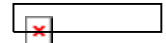
106. Specialist resources for sport and recreation include a sports hall and fitness room. Good use is made of local amenities for outdoor activities. Specialist equipment for sport and recreation is adequate. It includes climbing and camping sets, a fleet of ten kayaks, two sailing boats and two powerboats. Specialist resources for travel and tourism are poor. There is no facility for practising skills in retail travel. Resources such as travel guides and retail travel software are in short supply and the absence of a specialist facility or base room makes it difficult for students to access resources such as brochures and travel books. No arrangements are made for students to work in local travel agencies to compensate for the lack of college facilities. Students are therefore unable to fully develop their practical and customer service skills.

107. Some good outdoor activities and visits are arranged for students. Last year, outdoor activities students undertook a 10-day white-water kayaking expedition to the French Alps. Foundation and intermediate students in leisure and tourism have participated in a range of visits and study tours that are relevant to their studies, including a visit to Disneyland, Paris. The students have also organised events to raise over £750 for charities. There have been few visits and study tours for students on advanced courses in recent years. Insufficient use is made of tourist attractions in the region. Final-year advanced travel and tourism students receive too little careers guidance and are not supported adequately in applying for HE. Insufficient use is made of local employers in providing careers advice and other information about the sector.

Leadership and management

108. Course management in leisure and tourism is unsatisfactory. Course review and evaluation is weak. The self-assessment report for advanced courses does not include current retention and pass rates or findings from student surveys. There are no strategies for responding to students' views or raising levels of achievement. Key skills in communication and IT are inappropriately scheduled at the end of the year. There is no teaching of application of number skills. Students and staff agree that timetabling difficulties have had a detrimental impact on learning, with students unable to find some lessons and other lessons being cancelled.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- well-developed practical skills
- above average or high retention and pass rates on level 2 courses
- high proportion of students gaining employment
- thorough assessment
- wide range of provision.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory provision of key skills
- some poor learning materials.

Scope of provision

109. There is a wide range of provision in hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies. Hairdressing courses are provided at NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 and beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. Day and evening courses in holistic therapies, aromatherapy, reflexology, body massage, epilation, baby massage, Indian head massage and salon hygiene are also provided. Most full-time students start their courses in September or January, but there are opportunities to join courses at other times. There are 51 full-time hairdressing students and 31 modern apprentices on part-time courses. Beauty therapy courses have enrolled 76 full-time and over 100 part-time students.

Achievements and standards

110. Retention and pass rates are above average or high on full-time NVQ level 2 hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. In 2001, retention rates on these courses were about 10% above the national average in each case and in both 2000 and 2001, pass rates were at or above the national average. Pass rates for NVQ level 3 beauty therapy have been high for the last three years. Retention and pass rates and levels of attendance are above average on most short courses and evening classes. For example, Indian head massage results have been above the national average in each of the last three years. In practical lessons, both hairdressing and beauty therapy students work productively and with confidence. Their skills are well developed and the work they produce is of a professional standard. Students' portfolios of evidence are well maintained and contain a wide range of relevant evidence. A high proportion of students progress to further qualifications or employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	**	*	38
		% retention	**	*	79
		% pass rate	**	*	83
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	*	*	34
		% retention	*	*	85
		% pass rate	*	*	82
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	32	44	54
		% retention	91	77	81
		% pass rate	79	90	86
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	12	*	12
		% retention	75	*	83
		% pass rate	89	*	90
Holistic therapy	3	No. of starts	36	*	22
		% retention	89	*	77
		% pass rate	90	*	84
Indian head massage (short course)	3	No. of starts	30	*	39
		% retention	90	*	100
		% pass rate	96	*	95
Reflexology (part time)	3	No. of starts	29	*	15
		% retention	90	*	100
		% pass rate	92	*	80

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

* *unreliable data*

** *course did not run*

Quality of education and training

111. Teaching was good or better in over 90% of lessons observed by inspectors. Lessons are well planned and interesting. Both hairdressing and beauty therapy teachers use a suitable variety of methods to motivate students and develop their skills. Teaching takes account of individuals' abilities. Students are given good feedback on their written work and their progress in practical lessons. They are told what they need to do to improve and praised for their effort and achievement. The monitoring of students' progress is excellent. There is good use of current commercial techniques in practical lessons. However, key skills are not well integrated with other aspects of work and students do not see the value of their key skills lessons. In other respects, students comment on the good teaching and speak highly of their experience at college.

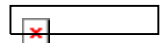
112. Teachers have up-to-date knowledge of practice in the industry. Most have recent experience of work in salons. Staff development is good. Each year most teachers have opportunities to develop their skills. Accommodation for beauty therapy is good, but there are insufficient beds in the salons to accommodate all students. The hairdressing salons are satisfactory. There is inadequate use of computers in lessons and by students when they work on their own. There are enough clients for most evening class students, but a shortage of clients during the day. Some written learning materials are unsatisfactory. Workbooks issued to students are based too much on pages copied from textbooks. Often the copies are of poor quality. Some handouts contain grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. There are no learning materials on the college intranet for students to use if they wish to study on their own.

113. Assessment and internal verification procedures are rigorous. Students' progress is effectively monitored and recorded. However, the shortage of clients sometimes restricts opportunities for assessment. Parents are well informed of students' progress. There are two parents evenings each year. There are good links with employers. Many employers provide work experience for full-time students. Some hairdressing students had work experience in Germany last year. Links with schools are well developed. There is a programme of taster sessions for Year 10 and 11 pupils. Support for students with additional needs is good. Effective procedures for testing, guidance and support ensure that students identified as needing additional support receive the help they need.

Leadership and management

114. Course management is good. There is good direction from the head of centre about setting targets, resource management, course review and curriculum development. Course reviews show that planned actions arising from self-assessment have generally been achieved. Procedures for lesson observation, staff appraisal and staff development work effectively. There is a heavy reliance on part-time staff, some of whom cannot attend team meetings. Procedures for monitoring and contacting absent students are not applied consistently.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on the GNVQ foundation in health and social care and NVQ level 2 early years education
- much good teaching and learning
- good practical activities for public services students
- wide range of provision in health and social care
- well-managed work experience programme in health and social care.

Weaknesses

- below average retention rates on many courses
- low pass rates on the advanced GNVQ in health and social care and the first diploma in public services
- ineffective key skills provision.

Scope of provision

115. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in health and social care, and childcare and education, for school-leavers and adults. Courses include full-time foundation, intermediate, advanced GNVQ health and social care courses, the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate and diploma in childcare and education, and a national diploma in early childhood studies. NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in care and at levels 2, 3 and 4 in early years education are offered on a part-time basis. Counselling courses are also available. Public services courses were introduced recently. The first students completed their first and national diploma courses in 2001. In 2001/02, 48 full-time students aged 16 to 18 enrolled on these two courses. They have good opportunities to take additional qualifications such as the community sports leader award, canoeing and activity leadership.

Achievement and standards

116. In 2001, retention rates were below the national average on most courses. They were low on the advanced GNVQ course and the national diploma in public services. Pass rates for the foundation GNVQ in health and social care and the NVQ level 2 early years courses were well

above national averages. However, pass rates were below average on the national diploma in nursery nursing and the first diploma in public service. Pass rates for additional qualifications taken by public service students were high. For example, all students who took the national pool life guard and community sports leader awards were successful. Lateness, low attendance and poor punctuality adversely affect learning in some public service theory lessons and tutorials, but practical lessons are well attended and students develop appropriate skills. Most public service students' assignments are satisfactory or better. A few are weak, particularly in respect of key skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation in health and social care	1	No. of starts	13	17	10
		% retention	77	65	70
		% pass rate	90	60	100
GNVQ intermediate in health and social care	2	No. of starts	24	14	10
		% retention	83	43	70
		% pass rate	74	83	71
NVQ early years care and education	2	No. of starts	*	*	44
		% retention	*	*	73
		% pass rate	*	*	78
National certificate basic counselling skills	2	No. of starts	*	*	63
		% retention	*	*	87
		% pass rate	*	*	65
First diploma in public service	2	No. of starts	**	**	23
		% retention	**	**	60
		% pass rate	**	**	50
National diploma in public service	3	No. of starts	**	**	18
		% retention	**	**	44
		% pass rate	**	**	75
GNVQ advanced in health and social care	3	No. of starts	*	*	24
		% retention	*	*	54
		% pass rate	*	*	23
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	24	*	14
		% retention	67	*	57
		% pass rate	93	*	88
National diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	15	*	19
		% retention	60	*	53
		% pass rate	78	*	70

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

* unreliable data

*** course did not run*

Quality of education and training

117. Teaching was good or better in 65% of lessons observed by inspectors. It was satisfactory in 35% of lessons and unsatisfactory in none. Most public service lessons are well planned and there is some excellent practical teaching. For example, first diploma students, learning rock climbing as part of their outdoor education, were well briefed on the techniques required to ensure safe and successful climbing. None of them had had previous climbing experience, and all acquired new skills and gained confidence and satisfaction from their experience. In a few lessons, students were inattentive but, in most lessons, they worked effectively and responded well to their teachers. Public service lessons and assignments are closely related to careers in the public services. Students' work is carefully marked and students value the guidance they receive. Their progress is monitored against individual goals developed from GCSE points scores.

118. In health and social care, teachers link theory to practice, making lessons relevant and understandable to the students. In one lesson, AVCE students were provided with good case study materials to facilitate discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of internal markets in healthcare, and were able to apply previously learned theory to this difficult topic. The lesson ended with effective questions to help consolidate and check students' learning. There are some examples of communications skills being effectively developed as part of vocational teaching, for example on the foundation GNVQ course, but, in most cases, key skills are not being taught effectively. Students do not see key skills as central to their course.

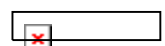
119. Teachers have appropriate professional qualifications and relevant experience of the industry. Many maintain their links with social and public services or undertake regular professional updating. Most classrooms are of sufficient size and are fit for purposes for which they are used. The base rooms designated for full-time health and social care groups contain good displays of students' work, but most contain no computers. Some lessons are held in the learning resource centre, but the centre is noisy and other users distract students. The college makes good use of nearby rivers, cliffs and moor land for the outdoor education of public services students. On-site gymnasium and fitness facilities are adequate. The library stock is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

120. Leadership and management in the health and social care area are satisfactory. During the last year, strategies for improving retention and pass rates have been developed and implemented. Students are given a 'second interview' after the initial advice and guidance to confirm their commitment to their chosen course. There are no strategies for raising levels of achievement related to specific courses, however, the organisation of most courses is good, although room changes disrupt some lessons and aggravate problems of punctuality and attendance. All students are provided with course handbooks. They receive good written feedback on assignments. Internal verification is effective and external verifiers' recommendations are acted on. A placement officer organises health and social care students' work experience. All full-time and part-time students have a tutor and they find the regular tutorials useful and supportive.

121. Managers and staff maintain good links with employers and industry liaison groups, for example, the Torbay Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. An advisory group for public services is representative of the sector. Awareness of, and good practice in, equal opportunities are a feature of public services courses. Young women and men co-operate effectively and show mutual respect in all aspects of the programme, including the arduous activities in which they are sometimes engaged.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- much good teaching
- high standard of students' work, particularly in art and design and media
- wide range of courses
- high proportion of students going on to HE.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on a few courses
- some inadequate and poorly maintained resources.

Scope of provision

122. There is a broad range of courses at levels 2 and 3. At level 2, the college offers a first diploma in performing arts, intermediate GNVQ art and design and GCSE dance. At GCE A level, there are courses in theatre and drama, photography, fine art and media. There are also vocational diplomas in graphic design, photography and in performing arts. A high proportion of students progress from level 2 to level 3 within the college, and a significant number go on to HE. In 2001, all the students on the foundation art and design course who applied for a degree course were accepted. Students on vocational diploma courses take additional qualifications in subjects such as dance and photography. The curriculum is enriched with an extensive programme of visits to galleries, industry and the theatre. There have been recent study visits to Madrid and New York.

Achievement and standards

123. Students' work is of a high standard, particularly in art and design, and media. In art and design, the work includes good personal research and skilful observation drawing. Students make effective use of a wide range of media, including print, photography, sculpture and three-dimensional design. Students use computers effectively to enhance and develop their imagery. Media students' videos and sound tapes demonstrate good technical ability and their written

production and advertising projects are well presented. Their best essays successfully use complex concepts and terminology in the analysis of film and television. The college has been successful in national competitions. An AVCE art and design student won an award in the Edexcel distant landscapes national competition and the college was highly commended for its graphic design entry in the national Beacon Award programme.

124. The high standard of work is reflected in consistently high pass rates on most courses. In 2001, the GCE A-level media pass rate was 96%, with 75% of the students gaining grades A to C. In GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts, 83% of students gained A to C grades. The percentage of students achieving high grades in these two subjects is well above the national average. Pass rates on the vocational diplomas in performing arts and art and design have been consistently high over the last three years. In 2001, the pass rate on both courses was 100%. There are below average retention rates on some courses. For example, in 2001 retention rates were below the national average on national diploma graphic design and the advanced GNVQ media courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First diploma performing arts	2	No. of starts	21	18	11
		% retention	62	94	73
		% pass rate	100	94	100
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	*	6	8
		% retention	*	67	75
		% pass rate	*	75	83
GCE A-level media (2 year)	3	No. of starts	43	44	42
		% retention	70	74	76
		% pass rate	93	87	96
GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts (2 year)	3	No. of starts	22	15	10
		% retention	68	60	70
		% pass rate	93	100	100
National diploma general art and design	3	No. of starts	21	24	14
		% retention	79	50	79
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	*	*	16
		% retention	*	*	65
		% pass rate	*	*	100
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	19	*	18
		% retention	58	*	81
		% pass rate	82	*	100
GNVQ advanced media	3	No. of starts	15	16	16
		% retention	64	75	65
		% pass rate	86	73	100
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	13	16	10
		% retention	77	88	80

		% pass rate	89	86	100
Pre-degree foundation art and design	3	No. of starts	23	39	36
		% retention	96	77	81
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

* unreliable data

Quality of education and training

125. There is much good teaching. Teaching was good or better in most lessons observed by inspectors. Well-planned lessons, for example in performing arts, ensure that students remain focused on the main lesson objective from the warm-up period until the end of the lesson. Good teaching of art and design and media enables students to work productively on their own. There is a professional studio atmosphere in the school of art and design with students using specialist workshops as demanded by their work. In a few lessons, poor class management limited the effectiveness of the learning. Rooms were cramped and equipment was not prepared prior to the lessons. In media, lateness and absence is affecting students' progress.

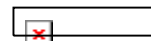
126. Assessment is regular and thorough. Feedback to students is detailed. Assignment briefs for class work and homework clearly describe the required tasks and the assessment criteria. Effective assessment techniques are used, including peer review of work conducted in groups. There is double marking of media assignments. Internal verification is carried out effectively in all areas. There are regular tutorials and students feel well supported. Staff keep tutorial records and draw up action plans to guide students' progress.

127. Most accommodation and most equipment for art and design in the purpose built art school are good. The new accommodation for performing arts is satisfactory. Accommodation for media is overcrowded, especially the media studio which is used for teaching and as a practical studio for editing and recording. There are also some weaknesses in the equipment available for media studies. For example, there is insufficient video equipment and insufficient access to colour copying for media and art students. There is no female toilet in the building used by dance students and no life drawing studio in art and design. The maintenance of performing arts resources is poor, and the equipment storage areas are untidy. Some of these problems have health and safety implications.

Leadership and management

128. The schools of art and design, media and performing arts have recently been combined to form one new centre. This has improved links between the vocational areas. Benefits for students have resulted; for example, there has been a widening of the options on the access to HE course. The new centre is well managed. There are good teams of staff in each of the three vocational areas. Staff support each other well. There are regular meetings and good records are kept. There are effective systems of staff appraisal, lesson observation and staff development. Courses are well managed and reviewed according to college procedures. The centre has its own accurate records of students' achievements and the destinations of students when they leave the college.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on teacher education and access to HE courses
- high proportion of students achieving grades A to C in GCE A levels
- much good teaching
- high standard of students' work.

Weaknesses

- below average and declining retention rates on many courses
- weak planning of lessons and assessment
- unsatisfactory timetabling and inappropriate room allocation.

Scope of provision

129. The college provides an adequate range of English and humanities subjects at GCE AS and A level and an access to HE course. There is also GCSE provision in English and psychology. Teacher education courses include the further and adult education teacher's certificate, the certificate in learning support and the diploma in IT for teachers. The number of students on teacher education courses is increasing. Recruitment to the access course is steady, but declining on other courses. The GCSE and GCE AS and A-level courses, taken mostly by students aged 16 to 18, account for about 55% of the students. The college offers courses at times and locations that are convenient for adult students. Local students have good opportunities for progression to HE courses within and beyond the college.

Achievement and standards

130. Standards of work are high. Most students display an appropriate depth of understanding and range of skills in their thinking and writing. In an English lesson, students expressed thoughtful and fresh responses as they probed beneath the surface of a novel. History students reached some well-argued conclusions, having weighed the merits of conflicting interpretations. In a psychology lesson, students completed a questionnaire, then critically evaluated it before devising a questionnaire of their own. Their discussion showed that they had a good understanding of issues involved in the design of questionnaires. Teacher education students made good individually researched presentations and worked effectively in small groups to prepare team contributions.

131. Pass rates on teacher education courses are high. The diploma in IT for teachers has recorded 100% pass rates and good retention rates over the past three years. High pass rates on the access course have enabled a high proportion of students to proceed to HE. Whilst GCE A level pass rates for adult students are consistently close to national averages, pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have improved and are now mostly above average. The proportion of GCE A-level students achieving grades A to C has also increased and is now above the national average. In 2001, pass rates on GCE AS courses were high in geography and history, above average in English, but low in psychology. GCSE pass rates match the national average in English, but are above average in psychology. Adult students generally achieve well in GCSE English.

132. Retention rates are low on two-year GCE A-level courses. There has been a marked decline since 2000 and in many subjects retention rates are below 50%. In half the GCE AS subjects in 2001, retention rates were below average or low. Fewer adult students leave their courses early and retention rates for these students are generally about the same as the national average. Students' attendance in some classes is irregular and a few lessons are disrupted through students' late arrival.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	223	*	143
		% retention	70	*	60
		% pass rate	47	*	48
GCE A-level English language (2 years)	3	No. of starts	29	*	17
		% retention	59	*	29
		% pass rate	56	*	100
GCE A-level psychology (2 years)	3	No. of starts	42	*	41
		% retention	60	*	32
		% pass rate	48	*	86
GCE A-level sociology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	*	*	15
		% retention	*	*	67
		% pass rate	*	*	50
Access to humanities	3	No. of starts	*	*	40
		% retention	*	*	68
		% pass rate	*	*	85
Further and adult education teachers certificate	3	No. of starts	*	*	53
		% retention	*	*	83
		% pass rate	*	*	100

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

* unreliable data

Quality of education and training

133. Most teaching is good or better. Students are learning to work at an appropriate standard. They are developing the ability to question, interpret and assess what they learn. Students' interest is often stimulated by well-prepared materials and suitably chosen activities. Teachers' questions

encourage students to justify their ideas and gain confidence in thinking for themselves. Students receive good opportunities to relate their own experience to the topic of the lesson. There is much productive group work in which students learn successfully from each other. In one teacher education lesson, students from diverse professional backgrounds were considering the resources and assessment strategies they might use in their own teaching. Lively discussion with careful analysis ensued and the group soon established which strategies were best suited to their students' preferred methods of learning. In a few lessons, teachers do not do enough to check that students have learned, or continue an activity too long to maintain students' interest. A few schemes of work and lesson plans pay inadequate attention to methods of teaching and learning.

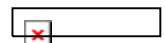
134. Students are given a lot of help. They value the detailed guidance given by teachers in individual discussions about coursework and in regular reviews of progress. On most courses, students receive assignment schedules to help them plan their work. Revision programmes include helpful opportunities for students to gain examination practice. On teacher education and access courses, teachers make explicit the criteria they use in marking work. Assessment practices among teachers on GCSE, GCE AS and A-level courses are not consistent and marking is sometimes unsatisfactory. There is not enough explanation of some of the grades that are awarded and too little guidance from teachers about how students can improve their performance. Teachers of English correct errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar; humanities teachers generally do not. Most students receive a great deal of support from their personal tutors. Teacher education students do not receive enough help from the college in finding work experience.

135. Teachers are experienced, well qualified and appropriately deployed. The sharing of good practice among teachers is not sufficiently formalised. The humanities learning centre provides a good range of up-to-date learning resources, including computers, conveniently close to the teaching accommodation. The fiction section of the library has recently been overhauled, but it remains barely adequate to meet the needs of English students. Information technology resources for teacher education courses are sophisticated and well used. For example, the diploma course in IT for teachers has its own intranet site. Students use information on the site to prepare assignments, and group work is digitally photographed so it can be shared among students. Frequent use is made of electronic books on relevant topics such as the assessment of students, multiple choice testing, lesson planning and questionnaire design. Students can work on material either in college or online at home or at work, using their own computers.

Leadership and management

136. Course management is satisfactory overall. Appropriate review and development of the provision in response to students' needs has resulted in improvements in teaching and resources. However, inappropriate timetabling and, in the case of some students, frequent changes of rooms and staffing have brought about disruption to learning. Quality assurance has had some impact in raising standards. Pass rates are now mostly above national averages, although low retention rates remain a weakness on some courses.

Foundation programmes



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates

- good teaching
- wide range of courses
- good provision for work experience
- good support from personal tutors and classroom assistants.

Weaknesses

- poor use of individual learning plans
- weak links between lesson plans and students' targets
- unsatisfactory management of the programme area.

Scope of provision

137. The college provides an appropriate range of courses for adults and young people with learning difficulties, and appropriate provision at entry level and level 1 for students who have not achieved well at school. In 2001, 116 full-time and 96 part-time students enrolled on foundation courses. Courses for students with severe learning difficulties include the 'special opportunities' full-time course for young people and the 'pathways' course for part-time students aged over 50. More than 50 full-time students study on the new 'essential skills award' aimed at helping young people with learning difficulties progress to other courses in college or directly into employment. There are also vocational courses in horticulture, office skills and retailing for students with learning disabilities. The 'vocational tasters' course, with 14 full-time and 29 part-time students aged 16 to 18, mixes a core of literacy, numeracy and IT with the opportunity to try out vocational areas in the college.

Achievement and standards

138. Most students on foundation programmes complete their studies and achieve their learning goals. In the last three years, over 90% of the students enrolled on courses for students with learning difficulties achieved their main learning goal. In the last two years, 80% of students on the vocational tasters course have been successful. In 2001, students on the vocational tasters course achieved basic skills accreditation appropriate to their ability and six students achieved entry level certificates in retail and office practice. Seven of the thirteen full-time students who completed this course in July 2001 progressed to other courses or to employment. Some students who complete

foundation programmes are not able to progress to other courses at the college because level 1 courses are not available in all vocational areas.

Quality of education and training

139. Most teaching is good or better. Students learn appropriate skills. For example, in one lesson, students were weighing and packaging goods for sale, serving customers and handling money in the 'Alternate Wholefoods' café. At the end of the day, the students reviewed the situations they had dealt with. Their progress during the day was monitored against criteria in the adult numeracy core curriculum and an OCR retail certificate. Tutors show a good understanding of students' needs and abilities and the working relationships between students and staff foster learning and help maintain students' motivation and interest. Support assistants and teachers work well together to facilitate learning. Lessons are carefully planned, although individual or collective learning outcomes are not made clear in some lesson plans. Individual learning plans are not well used, because they do not enable staff and students to set realistic short-term targets or assess progress. Lesson plans are not shared by teachers and support staff. Consequently, activities in lessons are often not related to the aims and targets on each student's plan.

140. Most teaching and support staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Unsatisfactory accommodation and inadequate resources adversely affect some students' learning. Some rooms are poorly decorated. They contain no computers, too few specialist resources and few displays of students' work. New open-plan teaching accommodation that is used by several groups of students at the same time is too noisy. Resources for the horticulture course are inadequate. In one lesson, the tutor had to teach in both a classroom and a greenhouse because neither had sufficient space for the whole group.

141. Information from a suitable range of internal and external sources is used to identify the existing skills and support needs of students. There is good initial assessment of students on the special opportunities course for young people with severe learning disabilities. The students were helped to complete a 'keys to independence' self-assessment questionnaire which was then checked with parents and carers. However, students' initial assessments fail, in many cases, to identify their preferred methods of learning and in most lessons, therefore, not enough account is taken of these. Students' progress is recorded, but assessment is too infrequent and is not always related to the individual learning goals agreed at the start of the course.

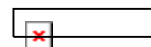
142. The provision of work experience for students is good. On the main courses for young people with learning disabilities, 57 out of 68 students had completed work placements by the end of the spring term 2002. In one work experience session, some students were briefed at college before going to external placements; others ran a successful market stall in the college reception area. Students benefit from a range of leisure and enrichment activities. For example, a group of students from the vocational tasters course went rock climbing during the inspection and a group of adults with severe learning difficulties took part in a skittles competition.

143. Tutors provide students with a lot of help and liaise effectively with parents, schools and other outside agencies. Students also receive a great deal of help from classroom assistants, both in their learning and in respect of their personal needs. Potential students and referral agencies do not have clear written information on the available courses. The current prospectus entries are not up to date.

Leadership and management

144. There is inadequate co-ordination and setting of targets at course and programme area level. The new essential skills award is the largest programme the college offers for students with learning disabilities. Its introduction is a positive development that should improve students' learning and development, but unsatisfactory planning and the slowness of curriculum change has limited its benefits to students. Course team meetings identify issues that directly affect students, but staff are sometimes unclear about who has responsibility to resolve these issues or when the necessary actions will be taken.

Basic skills



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

Strengths

- good teaching on the 'skills plus' and 'return to learn' programmes
- high rates of progression from the return to learn programme
- good provision for adults in Newton Abbot.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and lack of punctuality at vocational basic skills lessons
- unsatisfactory management and disruptive changes of staff
- unsatisfactory monitoring of the progress of students attending additional support sessions.

Scope of provision

145. Basic skills provision consists of discrete programmes called 'skills plus' and 'return to learn', additional support for students on a wide range of college courses, and teaching on foundation programmes in several curriculum areas. The skills plus programme for adults comprises workshop provision in primary basic skills, including literacy, numeracy, computing and skills for work. On the programme, individual learning plans are used for setting targets and monitoring progress. The return to learn programme offers qualification relevant to adults wishing to return to study; for example, key skills and personal development qualifications. Both programmes operate on the main site and in Newton Abbot. Additional support is provided in a variety of ways, including individual support for students whose needs were identified at an initial assessment, drop-in workshops for individuals and support for whole groups in their lessons. The college also runs a basic skills summer school and provides some basic skills training through local franchise partners.

Achievement and standards

146. Retention rates on the skills plus programme are high. Many of the students are well motivated and their work shows evidence of good progress. Rates of progression from the return to learn

programme are also good. In 2001, 72% of the students progressed to access programmes or other college courses. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low at 55%. The lowest attendance was at basic skills lessons on foundation level vocational courses. The achievements of these students are unsatisfactory. For example, one group had taken a mock examination in the week prior to inspection. The teacher went through the multiple-choice examination paper, asking the students about their answers, and their replies showed that they had largely relied on guesswork. They remained confused about the correct answer, even after a reasonable explanation by the teacher.

Quality of education and training

147. Most basic skills teaching is satisfactory or better. The better teaching was observed on the skills plus and return to learn programmes. Lessons are well planned and take account of the different abilities and interests of students of different ages. Students have individual learning plans that are reviewed at each lesson. Work is carefully marked, often with the student present, and difficulties are dealt with immediately. Many lessons are staffed with both teachers and learning support specialists. This enables students to have more individual attention. Teachers are consistently supportive and encouraging. Adult students express satisfaction with both the teaching and the level of personal support.

148. Some of the basic skills teaching on vocational programmes is unsatisfactory. Attendance rates, which were as low as 25% at one lesson observed by inspectors, seriously affect attainment. Frequent lateness delays lessons and demoralises the students who arrive on time. Some staff accept lateness as normal and do not respond in a suitable manner to late students. Although basic skills learning materials are relevant to the appropriate vocational area, students remain unable to appreciate the relevance of basic skills to their vocational education. The monitoring of the progress of some of the students attending for additional learning support is unsatisfactory. The students have individual learning plans, but some plans are not updated with new targets following progress reviews with the students.

149. Some basic skills teachers do not have appropriate qualifications. There is a programme of training for these staff, but staff changes have been frequent and disruptive on some programmes. Some schemes of work are not up to date, consequently new teachers do not know what their predecessors have taught. In one case, students' work was lost when the member of staff changed. The main basic skills workshop area on the main site contains good equipment and learning materials, for example, large print computer programmes. This helps improve the quality of some students' work and increases their self-confidence. However, the workshop area is sometimes crowded and noisy. The centre in Newton Abbot is a positive development, widening the opportunity for adults from the surrounding area to participate in FE.

Leadership and management

150. Leadership and management of basic skills are unsatisfactory. Many part-time staff do not attend team meetings. The high number of staff changes has led to a lack of continuity in teaching and contributed to the failure of some students to complete their portfolios. Course reviews are held twice a term, but the records of them could not be found.

Part D: College data

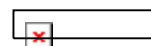


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	30	38
2	40	24
3	21	18
4/5	1	3
Other	7	17
Total	100	100

Source :Provided by the college in spring 2002.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	1,454	4,527	28
Agriculture	26	112	1
Construction	271	285	3
Engineering	367	1,084	7
Business studies	615	2,588	15
Hospitality and catering	559	1,149	8
Health, social care and public services	369	1,227	7
Art and design	360	430	4
Humanities	2,343	2,212	21
Basic education	175	1,041	6
Total	6,539	14,655	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2002.

Table 3: 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)	55	33	12	100

Level 2 (intermediate)	54	29	17	81
Level 1 (foundation)	66	22	12	32
Other sessions	82	18	0	23
Totals	58	29	13	236

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