



# Herefordshire College of Technology

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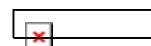
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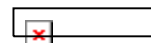
**Basic information about the college**



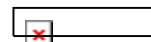
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Name of college:	Herefordshire College of Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Dr Paul Loncharich
Address of college:	Folly Lane Herefordshire Hereford HR1 1LS
Telephone number:	01432 352235
Fax number:	01432 353449
Chair of governors:	Magda Prail
Unique reference number:	130710
Name of reporting inspector:	Tony Nasta
Dates of inspection:	27-31 May 2002

## Part A: Summary

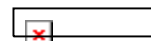


### Information about the college



Herefordshire College of Technology is the only general further education (FE) college in the county. It serves a population of about 170,000, which is widely dispersed over a rural area, and shares a campus in Hereford with the sixth form college and Herefordshire College of Art and Design. The college has a specialist rural crafts centre at Holme Lacy where it runs specialist courses for blacksmiths and farriers. Adult and community courses are provided in community venues and schools across the county and include Learndirect centres. Education and training is available in all areas of learning, and there is substantial provision of work-based training, modern apprenticeships and New Deal. There are some higher education (HE) courses and a degree programme in leisure and tourism management. In 2000/01, there were over 2,000 enrolments of students in the 16 to 18 age-range and over 6,000 enrolments of students aged 19 and over. In its mission, the college states its commitment to being Herefordshire's major centre of excellence in 'developing the potential of individuals and organisations through high quality programmes of education and training'.

### How effective is the college?



The college has been successful in widening access to vocational education in a predominantly rural area. Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be good in four of the curriculum areas inspected, satisfactory in six and unsatisfactory in three. Standards of teaching and attainment are generally good on courses for adult students and for students on foundation and entry level courses. There is much unsatisfactory teaching on intermediate and advanced level courses for students aged 16 to 18 and the curriculum offered to full-time students on humanities, information technology (IT) and secretarial courses is too narrow. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

#### **Key strengths**

- extensive opportunities to study for adults in isolated rural communities
- good attainment by most adult students
- good vocational skills in construction, professional studies and rural crafts

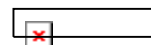
- good teaching in construction, IT courses for adults, humanities and foundation courses
- effective additional support in literacy and numeracy
- focus of staff development on improving teaching and learning
- good links with the employers of work-based learners.

***What should be improved***

- unsatisfactory teaching of many students aged 16 to 18
- narrow curriculum for full-time IT, secretarial and humanities students
- unsatisfactory student attainments on full-time courses in IT and courses in engineering and hospitality
- low retention rates on many full-time courses
- uneven quality of student guidance and curriculum planning
- some poor accommodation and equipment
- some weak self-assessment procedure and practice.

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

## Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Rural crafts	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is satisfactory; students develop relevant occupational skills and progress to employment. Specialist resources, including staff links with industry, are good. Retention and pass rates are high on part-time farriery and welding courses, but are low on full-time courses in blacksmithing. The planning and management of group work and tutorials is ineffective.
Construction crafts	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good in construction both in theory and practical classes. Students produce work of a good standard. The pass rates are high on most programmes. The programme area is well led and managed. There is poor co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job assessment for work-based learners.
Engineering	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Students are not achieving satisfactory standards in most engineering courses. There are inadequate workshop facilities and some poor teaching in theory classes. Student progress is not monitored effectively. However, in sound engineering standards are good and pass rates are high. Work-based learners gain a wide range of experience with employers.
Business administration	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students are well motivated and keen to learn and teachers provide good support and monitor progress well. Most students do not have the opportunity for work experience or other contact with employers. There has been little development of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. Curriculum management is generally effective, although there is insufficient target setting for individual students on courses in college.
Management and professional studies	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on professional and accounting courses. Teaching, learning and guidance are good and students on accounting and training programmes make substantial progress. Pass rates on some advanced management courses are declining. There is insufficient co-ordination where parts of a course are taught in different faculties.
Information and communications technology	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> There is good access to IT courses for adults. Retention and pass rates for full-time courses are below average or low; those for the part-time adult programmes are above average. Much of the teaching on the part-time programmes is good, but some teaching on the full-time courses is unsatisfactory.
Hospitality and catering	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> There is much unsatisfactory teaching and curriculum management is ineffective. Students do not develop adequate practical skills for the level of the qualifications. Assessment and internal verification are insufficiently thorough and the monitoring of students' progress is inadequate. Where pass rates are high on some National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses, retention rates are often low.

Leisure and tourism	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high pass rates on many courses, but retention rates are low. There are good practical activities for public service students at level 2. However, there is insufficient development of practical and investigative skills on advanced courses. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, and well-planned work experience on public services courses. There are insufficient resources for leisure and tourism.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is effective tutorial support for students, a wide range of provision and good progression opportunities. Teaching is satisfactory, except on complementary therapy courses, where it is good. There is insufficient accommodation.
Health and community care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is good teaching in revision classes and in counselling skills, but a significant number of lessons do not sufficiently challenge the students to extend their thinking and improve their achievements. Students' progress on full-time NVQ programmes is slow. Retention rates are high on many courses. Leadership and management roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined, although informal co-operation between staff is good.
English and humanities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching and learning are good and students produce work of a high standard. Pass rates are high, but retention rates are low. The provision consists of a narrow range of courses. Part-time students receive inadequate guidance and support.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Good.</b> Most teaching is very good and retention and pass rates are consistently high over a wide range of the provision. There are good progression routes within the programme area and courses are responsive to local need. Some resources and accommodation are poor. Individual target setting is insufficiently specific.
Basic skills	<b>Good.</b> There is a diverse range of provision to meet local needs. Students make good progress, retention rates are high, and teaching and guidance are good. The quality assurance system is not sufficiently thorough. Resources on the main site are poor.

#### How well is the college led and managed?

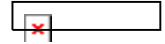
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have sought to maintain the overall quality of teaching and learning against a background of financial difficulty. They have been successful in widening participation for adult students and in expanding the range of courses in basic skills and for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Adults generally make good progress and benefit from good teaching. Managers have been less successful in maintaining satisfactory standards for students aged 16 to 18, particularly in IT, engineering and hospitality.

#### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college has expanded the opportunities for vocational education in a diverse rural community. Outreach provision for adults is available in many small towns and villages in rural Herefordshire

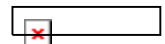
management level. However, the monitoring of equal opportunities policies is inadequate at curriculum level. The curriculum offered to many full-time students is too narrow. Very few students are able to widen their range of options by taking courses at the Hereford Sixth Form College or Herefordshire College of Art and Design.

### **How well are students and trainees guided and supported?**



Students benefit from good student services including careers, counselling, welfare advice and childcare facilities at the college nursery. There is good support for students with poor basic skills. Although the college has devised a sound tutorial curriculum, it is not followed systematically in many curriculum areas. As a result, student progress is not adequately monitored and there is insufficient use of target setting to improve attainments.

### **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***

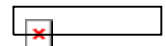
- well-organised practical work
- good additional learning support
- friendly, respectful treatment from staff
- provision of IT and learning resources
- good careers advice.

#### ***What they feel could be improved***

- organisation and teaching of key skills

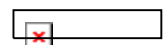
- opportunities for gaining work experience
- social areas and common rooms
- access for disabled students
- drab buildings.

### 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

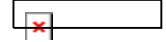
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	38	44	18
19+ and WBL*	64	31	5
Learning 16-18	56	31	13
19+ and WBL*	67	26	7

*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. A wide range of full-time and part-time courses is offered. All 14 of the LSC's areas of learning are covered. Courses for adults are available on the main campus and in a variety of community venues in small towns and villages across Herefordshire. The number of students on science, art and design courses is small. Given the close proximity of the sixth form and specialist art and design colleges, the college specialises in vocational courses. About two thirds of students are following courses at entry, foundation and intermediate levels. The remainder study advanced level and HE courses.

2. Overall students' achievements vary significantly. For students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 and level 2 courses, the retention rate has been close to the national average for FE colleges. Pass rates for students on level 1 courses have been above the national average. For level 2 courses, pass rates have declined over the three years to 2001 from above to below the national average. For students on level 3 courses both retention and pass rates are low in many subjects. The college has recognised this weakness and identified pass rates on level 3 courses as a significant cause for concern. There are low levels of student progression on full-time courses from level 1 to level 2 and level 2 to level 3. College data for 2000/01 indicated that less than one third of students at these levels continue their studies by taking a more advanced course at the college.

3. For adult students, the retention rate at all levels has been broadly in line with national averages. However, the college's own analysis shows a declining trend in overall retention rates over the four-year period 1997/98 to 2000/01. Initial analysis of in-year retention rates for 2001/02 indicates that the college has been successful in reversing this trend, particularly at levels 1 and 2. Pass rates for adult students at all levels are above the national averages, reflecting the high levels of attainment on many of the part-time courses taken by adults.

4. At the time of the inspection, over 200 work-based learners were managed by the college's training division. They included 110 advanced modern apprentices and 91 foundation modern apprentices. Over half of the work-based learners are on construction programmes, and the remainder are on programmes for motor vehicle, accountancy, IT, business administration, customer services, warehousing and hairdressing. Foundation modern apprentices achieve well in brickwork, carpentry, painting and decoration. Pass rates in the advanced modern apprenticeships are poor. Few trainees complete the full range of NVQ or key skills units.

### **16-18 year olds**

5. About 40% of the students, as measured by full-time equivalent numbers, are aged 16 to 18. Most are following vocational courses with a strong emphasis upon the development of relevant occupational skills. The standard of practical work is good on courses in construction, rural crafts, business administration and leisure and tourism. For example, farriery students develop sound blacksmithing skills and knowledge of equine anatomy through working with experienced farriers in well-equipped and modern forges and workshops. They have a good record of success in national competitions. The standard of students' assessed work is also generally good at foundation level and on courses for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, on courses in hospitality and catering, IT and engineering, many students do not reach a satisfactory standard of vocational competence.

6. Levels of achievement in key skills are low. Pass rates in external tests are low and many students do not complete in-course assessment. There is not a consistently effective approach to the development of students' key skills. In some curriculum areas, for example hospitality and catering, students receive insufficient teaching and guidance on key skills. The assessment is

unrelated to their vocational area and few students are successful. In other curriculum areas, for example business, there is better integration between course and key skills assessment, which enables more students to pass the key skills units.

7. The opportunities for full-time students to gain experience of work, to participate in voluntary activities and to take additional qualifications are uneven across the college. They are good for students at the rural craft centre where links with employers are strong and students have a good record of success in gaining welding qualifications. They are also good in health and social care where students are able to gain experience of voluntary work by participating in fund-raising activities for local charities. They are inadequate in courses in humanities and IT where students are taught for less than 15 hours a week on a timetable which requires attendance for only 2 or 3 days a week. Their curriculum is not sufficiently enriched by a wider programme of activities. Few students are able to extend their curriculum by taking general education courses at the sixth form college.

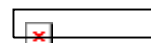
### **Adult learners**

8. About 60% of the students, as measured by full-time equivalent numbers, are aged 19 and over. Many short courses are run in the college and in small towns and villages in rural Herefordshire. They provide good opportunities for adults to achieve a basic competence in IT. These students learn to deal confidently with basic software such as word processing, spreadsheets and desktop publishing. They work well on their own and help one another. Pass rates across the range of qualifications gained by adults are above the national averages. On secretarial and administration courses, students develop good communication skills through taking part in role-play exercises such as mock interviews. On courses in furniture making and bricklaying part-time students produce work to a good industrial standard. They work well both on individual tasks in the workshops and as part of wider project groups. However, there is poor co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Teachers at the college are often not sufficiently aware of the practical skills that students are developing in the workplace.

9. The college works with the job centre to provide training courses for unemployed adults at Hereford, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. Assessment for basic skills, careers guidance and job-search training are provided as part of New Deal. The programme at Hereford has a good record of success; over half of the adults who have completed the programme have achieved employment. The smaller programmes outside Hereford have a lower record of success.

10. Students on basic skills programmes, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are well supported in their studies. The college works successfully with other statutory and voluntary agencies in the community. Students have a good record of success in completing qualifications. Teachers take account of the learning needs of individual students and the curriculum reflects the new national standards for basic skills. Retention and pass rates are high.

### **Quality of education and training**



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were judged by inspectors in 171 sessions and visited 16 workplaces to interview work-based learners, modern apprentices and employers to assess standards of teaching and learning. Most activities involving teaching, training and learning are of a satisfactory standard. Inspectors observed 171 lessons and visited 16 workplaces to interview work-based learners, modern apprentices and employers to assess standards of teaching, training and learning. As Table 4 shows, overall, 54% of the teaching and training is good or better, 36% is satisfactory and 10% is unsatisfactory. Teaching on courses for adults is better than on courses for students aged 16 to 18. Some 64% of the teaching for adult students was graded good or better, and only 4% was unsatisfactory compared with 38% graded good or better and 18% graded unsatisfactory for students aged 16 to 18. The most effective teaching was in humanities, where all

and/or disabilities was graded very good or outstanding. The highest proportions of unsatisfactory teaching were in hospitality, where 45% of lessons were graded as unsatisfactory, and on full-time courses in ICT where the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was 60%.

12. In the most effective lessons, the planning of teaching and learning was good. Schemes of work and lesson plans took into account the full ability range of students, and teaching methods allowed all students to make some progress. In humanities and English and in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities lessons make appropriate demands on learners. Where appropriate, students are given good individual learning support. In construction, teachers are effective at linking theory to industrial practice. Teachers have been swift to implement the basic skills curriculum. Training for young people in the workplace is good. Effective training is provided for unemployed adults. In the less effective lessons, which are mainly for students aged 16 to 18, the use of questioning to check that students are understanding the work is ineffective. Teachers take insufficient account of students' individual learning requirements. Often, in these lessons, the summing up of key points at the end of a lesson is unsatisfactory. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT in the curriculum. In ICT lessons for students aged 16 to 18, teachers do not plan lessons effectively and the range of teaching approaches is too narrow. Co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training is not effective.

13. Good practical teaching helps students to develop vocational skills. In construction, rural crafts and hair and beauty therapy, the occupational capabilities of students are developed to a high standard. Construction students make particularly effective use of their trade tools, and hair and beauty students have good standards of professional expertise including good social skills in dealing with clients. Teachers of basic skills and of courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good at improving the independent learning skills of students. In hospitality, teachers are poor at developing the vocational competences of students to levels appropriate for the hotel and catering industry. Teaching in this area does not make suitable demands on students or improve their knowledge and understanding of hospitality. Overall, teachers vary significantly in their capacity to motivate students to want to learn. In basic skills, professional studies, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or a disabilities and ICT for adult students, teachers are good at stimulating students' interest in their work. In other areas, for example ICT for students aged 16 to 18, teachers are unsuccessful in holding students' attention. Engineering teachers have difficulty in extending students' interest in the theoretical aspects of the subject.

14. Most work-based learners enjoy appropriate work placements where they receive a good variety of learning experiences. Those on modern apprenticeships develop a wide range of skills and knowledge whilst on the job. The theory training at college is sometimes unsatisfactory; it is not always relevant or linked to the work carried out in the placements. Off-the-job training in IT and business administration is more closely co-ordinated with on-the-job training. College staff have good contacts with employers. They regularly visit learners in the workplace to carry out assessments and reviews.

15. Assessment is carried out regularly and is generally fair and accurate. There are clear and up-to-date policies and procedures on assessment and internal verification. They are consistent with awarding bodies requirements. However, policies and procedures are not implemented consistently across the college. There is good assessment practice on courses in construction, English, humanities, and management and professional studies. Students are sometimes required to carry out assessment tasks under simulated conditions when evidence could have been obtained from the workplace. Assessment and internal verification are poor on courses in hospitality and catering and students do not achieve the necessary standards for the awards. Internal verification in basic skills is also ineffective. There is too much reliance on feedback from external verifiers and insufficient college-wide monitoring of assessment practices and standards.

16. The college shares a site with two other colleges. There is little collaboration between the three colleges over the sharing of resources. Each college has separate communal facilities, car parking and arrangements for managing its estate. However, a library is shared with the College of Art, which has enhanced the learning resources available to students. Many of the college buildings are drab and reflect a lack of investment due to the college's poor financial situation. For example, there are problems with deteriorating concrete structures, which, at the time of the inspection, were

undergoing remedial work. There have been few improvements since the last Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspection of October 1999. The quality of learning and of student attainment is inhibited in several curriculum areas by poor accommodation and equipment. Hairdressing and beauty courses are located in a Victorian building where the rooms are too small for the purposes of beauty salons. In engineering, much of the equipment in the workshops is outdated and no longer meets industrial requirements. Managers and staff are working hard to mitigate the effects of a restricted maintenance and refurbishment budget. Bright technical displays and documents celebrating student achievements hide poorly decorated walls in some areas. In contrast to the main campus, there are attractive outreach centres, for example in South Wye, and a modern specialist rural crafts centre at Holme Lacey.

17. Students and visitors benefit from a welcoming reception area that is located in the centre of the student services accommodation. The layout of the area is well designed and provides a good atmosphere for students receiving advice and guidance. The library and independent learning centres are well managed. Reprographics facilities are good and have the capacity to produce ample course materials to a high standard. Poor access to some areas for people with restricted mobility was identified as a weakness in the last inspection and remains a weakness. There are insufficient social and communal areas for students. IT resources are good and well managed. There are 390 workstations for students and 158 workstations for staff on the central computer network. The ratio of students to machines is 8 to 1. There is a carefully planned replacement programme. Progress on providing electronic learning resources, for example through a college intranet, is slow.

18. Staff are well qualified and experienced. There are adequate numbers of qualified assessors and internal verifiers. Staff development procedures are well managed and records are comprehensive and up to date. Staff development priorities are identified through the strategic plan and through appraisal. Staff development activities are strongly focused upon improving teaching and learning.

19. As the only general FE college in the county, the college maintains a broad vocational curriculum, including high cost areas such as construction and engineering. There is good full-time and part-time provision for adult learners, especially in ICT, business and professional studies. The college is one of three national providers for blacksmiths and farriers. There is a good range of learning opportunities for work-based learning, particularly in construction and engineering. A small number of General Certificate of Secondary Education courses (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education Advanced-level courses (GCE A-level) is also available, taken mainly by adults. The range of general educational provision is narrow because of the close proximity of the Hereford Sixth Form College. The college has been slow to respond to many of the demands of the Curriculum 2000 initiative. Few students are able to combine vocational and academic subjects at advanced level. Very few students from the college choose to study additional GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) or GCE A-level subjects at the sixth form college and, at the time of the inspection, no students from the sixth form college were taking vocational GCE A-levels at the FE college.

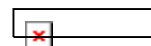
20. Students can study for three key skills alongside their chosen course, but there has been an uneven pattern of development and take-up across the vocational areas; most results have been poor, particularly in IT key skills. In some curriculum areas, for example rural crafts and public services, full-time students have good opportunities to take additional qualifications and to participate in enrichment activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. However, the opportunities for students to benefit from enrichment activities vary significantly across the college and are not effectively co-ordinated.

21. There are good links with community groups and local employers. There is an appropriate variety of courses and work-based provision to meet the needs of employers. The college has well-developed provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, it works closely with the nearby Royal National College for the Blind to run courses in sound engineering. The college has effectively implemented the new national curriculum for basic skills. There is a good range of partnerships and projects with other agencies and groups to encourage new learners from areas of relative social deprivation in the rural communities to enrol. This positive approach has led to large increases in the numbers of students enrolling in family learning and basic skills. The

college has also supported the development of new centres, such as the South Wye learning centre.

22. Students benefit from well-organised student services. The staff consists of a central admissions team, careers and guidance officers, student support officers and a student adviser from the county youth service. Adult students can obtain specialist advice and counselling and use the childcare facilities at the college nursery. Those involved in New Deal benefit from good one-to-one job-search training and guidance. Student applications are dealt with effectively in line with college procedures. College publicity materials are attractively presented, clear and relevant to potential students' needs. They outline the entry requirements clearly and are widely available across the county. Students are positive about induction to their courses and to the college. There is a good range of additional learning support for students. A specialist team of additional support staff works closely with personal tutors. Diagnostic assessment is thorough and about 80% of the students assessed as needing additional help with literacy and numeracy take up their entitlement. The quality of tutorial support is uneven across different curriculum areas. Although the college has devised a common tutorial curriculum, it is not fully implemented by many tutors. Group tutorials are infrequent. There is inadequate attention to the setting and monitoring of individual targets for student attainment.

## Leadership and management



23. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have sought to maintain the overall quality of teaching and learning against a background of increasingly severe financial difficulty. The college's finances have deteriorated significantly since the last inspection as a result of withdrawal from franchised provision which had previously formed part of a strategy for growth. Much of the funding for this provision was subsequently reclaimed by the FEFC on the grounds of ineligibility. The college is now in receipt of substantial LSC standards fund monies in support of its financial recovery and has been granted 90% cash protection of its income for the current financial year. Officers from the local LSC work closely with the college and have been in attendance at corporation meetings and college management team meetings by invitation of the college.

24. The college has successfully addressed some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection, but others remain to be tackled. The college has made recent changes to the management structure in order to improve the quality of provision. The number of senior managers has been reduced. More responsibility for financial management and curriculum development has been given to faculty heads and a new tier of team leaders introduced across the college. Roles and responsibilities are generally clear, although the structure is yet to be fully established in some areas of the college. Managers are clear on what is required of them and display high levels of commitment to their work. There is effective teamwork within faculties and a greater emphasis on cross-college collaboration. Communications within the college are good. There is an open management style and effective dissemination of information through the faculty and team leader structure. The principal holds regular 'surgeries' and open staff meetings. There is an appropriately detailed and informative college newsletter. Staff considered that, despite the severe difficulties faced by the college, senior managers and governors are open and consultative in their approach.

25. The standard of curriculum management across the college is uneven. There is good management in construction, management and professional studies, business studies and administration and foundation studies. Course teams in these areas benefit from strong leadership and course provision is well planned; there is good adherence to college procedures and policies and a clear emphasis on continuous improvement. A few curriculum areas, however, are poorly managed. For example, in hospitality and catering, curriculum management is ineffective and there are no plans to address declining enrolments. In health and care there is a lack of clarity on management roles and responsibilities. Provision in ICT lacks overall co-ordination. Some curriculum areas are not following college procedures on tutorial provision, assessment and internal

verification. There is inadequate co-ordination between the work-based training division and some curriculum areas. In most curriculum areas, however, course management is at least satisfactory and there is some evidence of improvement as team leaders become more familiar and confident in their roles.

26. The college's strategic plan is comprehensive and clearly written. It sets appropriate aims for the college. A detailed recovery plan has been produced with the objective of moving the college on to a sound financial base. It contains a comprehensive analysis of the underlying difficulties and matters that require urgent action. The accompanying curriculum plan identifies the scope for achieving additional income either through changes and improvements to existing curriculum provision or through the introduction of new areas of work. However, the plan lacks sufficient targets for achievement. Insufficient attention has been paid to identifying the risks associated with non-achievement of funding units. For the three years to 2001, the college has failed to achieve its funding target.

27. Governors demonstrate high levels of commitment to the college. Recent changes to the governing body have brought valuable new skills in financial management to the corporation. Governors and senior managers have formed a recovery group. It meets fortnightly to monitor progress against the targets in the financial recovery plan. The introduction of a link governor scheme has improved communication between governors and college staff and increased governors' awareness of the college's work. The scheme is well thought of by staff. The introduction of a standards committee, since the last inspection, has enabled the governors to monitor the educational performance of the college more effectively. The committee receives regular reports on retention and pass rate data and has scrutinised the annual self-assessment report. However, some of the information received by the committee is too detailed and is not easy to interpret. It lacks an effective accompanying analysis.

28. The college has well-documented quality assurance procedures. Service standards of performance have been established for most areas of the college's work. However, there are few measurable performance indicators associated with them. There is a system for regular quality audits of curriculum areas, which identifies where improvement is required. However, there is no overall college analysis of the outcomes of lesson observations and insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning. Student evaluation questionnaires are used effectively to gather student feedback. Scrutiny of the returns leads to appropriate action that is recorded and shared with students. Additional information on students' views is gained from student focus groups. The gathering and analysis of information from trainees and employers on the quality of work-based learning has improved since the last inspection.

29. The college's approach to self-assessment is insufficiently thorough and lacks rigour. Very detailed self-assessment reports are compiled for each curriculum area and for service areas of the college. However, there is no synthesis of these reports to form an overall view of the college's performance and no ordering of key strengths and weaknesses. Several curriculum area reports failed to identify significant weaknesses in teaching and learning and students' achievements. Some contained too much description and too little analysis. Action plans arising from self-assessment reports are not well monitored in many areas of the college.

30. The system of appraisal is thorough and effective. All staff are appraised on an annual basis. The appraisal interview uses information gained from lesson observation and identifies staff development requirements effectively. There is good follow up and support for those teachers identified as under-performing. The staff development programme has the improvement of teaching and learning as its primary aim. There has also been particular emphasis on management training and professional development to support changes in management roles and responsibilities. The college ensures that all teachers have a teaching qualification or are undergoing teacher training. There is no mentoring system for new members of staff.

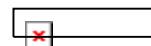
31. Since the last inspection, the college has taken steps to address the weaknesses in the monitoring of equal opportunities. An equal opportunities committee has been formed and is chaired by a senior manager. It has reviewed the equal opportunities policy and begun to monitor aspects of the college's approach to equal opportunities. Data relating to staff and student composition and

enrolments by gender and age have been scrutinised by the committee and an annual report is presented to the corporation. The college has yet to identify suitable performance indicators that relate to equal opportunities.

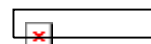
32. Since the last inspection, management information systems have improved significantly both in terms of the availability and accuracy of information. A good range of reports on enrolments, retention, and achievement is available online to managers. Additional reports can be produced on request. The college has also improved the central monitoring of student attendance. However, the system relies on manual entry of register data. The unavailability of some registers for monitoring limits the accuracy and reduces the value of the centrally held data. The college recognises that there is insufficient rigour in target setting and performance monitoring at faculty and team leader levels. An appropriately detailed and useful analysis on retention rate patterns has enabled the college to begin to identify factors that may be affecting the poor retention rate on some courses. There are good data collection and tracking systems for work-based learning. The college has begun a process of benchmarking so that it can compare its performance with that of similar colleges.

33. There have been significant weaknesses in financial management. Until very recently, the level and accuracy of financial reporting to senior managers and to the corporation was very poor and failed to make transparent the full severity of the college's financial position. Following the resignation of the finance director in August 2001, the college employed an external consultant to assist with financial monitoring. A new finance director was appointed in March 2002 and some of the weaknesses in financial reporting had been addressed by the time of the inspection. Budget holders are clear about their responsibilities and receive appropriate support and good levels of information from the finance team. The college recognises the need to reduce its staffing costs, which are above the sector average, and to ensure that there is more efficient deployment of staff. These issues are addressed in the recovery plan.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Rural crafts



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

#### **Strengths**

- good specialist resources for farriery and blacksmithing
- high retention and pass rates on farriery and welding courses
- good, creative, blacksmithing work

- substantial links with industry
- good progression to employment.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on full-time courses
- ineffective planning and management of group work
- deficiencies in tutorial provision
- insufficient attention to completion of full qualifications
- lack of full-time provision at level 1.

### ***Scope of provision***

34. The college offers three full-time courses in blacksmithing at first diploma, national certificate and national diploma level. Off-the-job training is provided for farriery apprentices studying on a block-release course for the diploma qualification of the Worshipful Company of Farriers. Additional qualifications are available in introductory welding skills at level 1. There is no full-time level 1 provision. Students on level 3 programmes have opportunities to progress to HE as the college offers a Higher National Diploma (HND) in forged metals in conjunction with Herefordshire College of Art and Design. A high proportion of students also progress to apprenticeships within farriery and to employment within the blacksmithing industry.

35. In the academic year 2001/02, just under half of the 73 full-time students, as well as most of the block-release farriery apprentices, were aged 19 and over. Specialist, purpose built workshops for blacksmithing, farriery, welding and fabrication are located at the Rural Crafts centre at Holme Lacy, which is approximately six miles from the main campus. The Rural Crafts centre hosts national blacksmithing and farriery events.

### ***Achievement and standards***

36. Retention and pass rates are high in farriery apprenticeships and welding courses taken as additional qualifications. Pass rates are low on full-time courses in blacksmithing at national certificate/diploma and first diploma level. Only 1 student achieved a first diploma in 2000/01 out of 15 retained students. High proportions of students, for example 10 on the first diploma of 2000/01,



leave before completing their courses because they are offered employment linked to an apprenticeship.

37. Students achieve high levels of competence in practical blacksmithing work and demonstrate good skills in research and creative design. They are confident in the use of many types of specialist tools including power hammers, welding and fabrication equipment and gas and coke forges. Students make good progress and achieve good results in project work, which encourages a high level of creativity and research. Written parts of practical assignments are often of a lower standard. Attendance levels are good; students are highly motivated by the relevance of the occupational tasks.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in rural crafts, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Introductory welding skills - arc welding	1	No. of starts	52	60	53
		% retention	83	73	77
		% pass rate	92	61	90
Introductory welding skills - gas shielded	1	No. of starts	60	76	56
		% retention	85	79	78
		% pass rate	84	85	93
Introductory welding skills - oxy-acetylene	1	No. of starts	52	60	53
		% retention	83	73	77
		% pass rate	97	91	90
First diploma blacksmithing and equine studies	2	No. of starts	21	28	22
		% retention	86	64	68
		% pass rate	56	39	7
National certificate land countryside studies	3	No. of starts	32	32	32
		% retention	81	78	78
		% pass rate	62	56	77
National diploma land countryside studies	3	No. of starts	12	8	7
		% retention	100	75	57
		% pass rate	58	83	50
Worshipful Company of Farriers diploma	3	No. of starts	80	58	44
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	81	82

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

***Quality of education and training***

38. Teachers demonstrate high levels of practical skill. They are familiar with and apply current industrial standards. Students are encouraged to work independently on creative, practical tasks, but the management of group work within classes is weak and lacks appropriate planning. The theoretical aspects of the subjects are not adequately explained and illustrated in practical sessions. Tutors do not always ensure that students take adequate notes on techniques and dimensions. There is too much dependence on the teacher for explanations of theory and not enough emphasis

upon students thinking for themselves.

39. Purpose-built specialist accommodation is extensive, well equipped and well used. Roomy, bright classrooms are situated near to workshops. Horses are available for shoeing in the stable yard and other horses are brought in from the surrounding area. The importance of health and safety regulations is emphasised during teaching. The small library is underdeveloped and procedures for securing the return of books are poor. There is no specialist technician support for IT.

40. There are satisfactory arrangements for the assessment of both written and practical work. All full-time members of the teaching team contribute effectively to good internal verification systems. Some assignment briefs are too rudimentary; they include only basic tasks and do not explain the wider skills that students should demonstrate. Feedback on student assignments is often inadequate and lacks advice on how students can improve. Teachers make insufficient use of the results of assessments monitoring students' progress towards completion of their qualification aims.

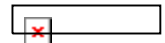
41. Provision of full-time courses is good at levels 2 and 3. However, some students on level 2 courses struggle to achieve the required standards. The course team has recognised this problem and a level 1 course is to be introduced from September 2002. Progression routes from level 2 to level 3 courses and also into HE are available and are well used by students. A significant number succeeds in gaining apprenticeships in farriery from level 2 and level 3 courses.

42. Most students receive good personal attention from tutors in class, but there are deficiencies in the formal organisation of tutorial provision. Group tutorials are infrequent and student progress is not systematically monitored with reference to the targets for achievement. The college tutorial system is only partially implemented. Staff are more experienced in dealing with students aged 19 and over than those in the 16 to 18 age-range.

### ***Leadership and management***

43. There is good teamwork. Staff share good practice. Issues raised by students are dealt with quickly and effectively. However, many teachers are unfamiliar with college systems and college policies are not fully implemented. The self-assessment process lacks rigour. Action points are not followed up. Managers fail to pursue key issues such as low achievement on some courses. The self-assessment report fails to assess and evaluate some important areas such as the quality of teaching.

### **Construction crafts**



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

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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching
  
- a good standard of practical work

- high pass rates on most courses
- a wide range of learning opportunities for work-based learners
- good leadership and management
- good internal moderation of assessment.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training for work-based learners
- inadequate monitoring of progress for work-based learners
- low achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework for electricians.

### ***Scope of provision***

44. The college offers a range of construction programmes covering craft courses at levels 1 to 3 in bricklaying, wood trades, painting and decorating and electrical installations. The course for a supplementary studies certificate in construction craft is also available. Students attend full time, part time and on an evening only basis. At the time of the inspection there were 501 students enrolled, of whom 86 were attending on a full-time basis. There were 112 modern apprentices on work-based programmes, of whom 15 were bricklaying apprentices, 8 painting and decorating apprentices, 32 carpentry and joinery apprentices and 48 electrician apprentices. There were 9 plumbing apprentices within the college's training agency; their off-the-job training has been subcontracted to a neighbouring college.

### ***Achievement and standards***

45. Students produce work of a good industrial standard, which in many cases is higher than the level of competence necessary to satisfy the demands of the awarding bodies. Students are active and attentive and enjoy practising their craft. Bricklaying students are able to produce complex structures, including corbeled brickwork. In carpentry and joinery, students work in pairs to assemble flights of stairs with winders and a quarter turn. This work requires a good understanding of geometry. Furniture students produced a trinket box in Brazilian mahogany with a hinged lid and set on a shaped plinth. Teachers encourage their students to enter for skill-build competitions. In 2001, a carpentry and joinery student from the college was a competitor at the United Kingdom finals in Ballymena in Northern Ireland. Students have good project planning skills. They engage in

reasoned argument on the planning and sequence of workshop tasks. They are able to work independently both in the classroom and workshop.

46. Retention and pass rates have improved steadily over recent years and are now generally at or above the national average. In-year retention rates for the year 2001/02 are high on many programmes. Pass rates are high and well above the national average on many courses. However, electrician trainees of the modern apprenticeship framework show low levels of achievement.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ in decorative occupations	1	No. of starts	13	9	5
		% retention	46	56	80
		% pass rate	83	100	75
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	16	18	13
		% retention	63	61	92
		% pass rate	100	100	82
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	19	28	18
		% retention	79	100	83
		% pass rate	73	90	91
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	12	23	15
		% retention	58	74	80
		% pass rate	57	71	55
City and Guilds 5550 hand-crafted furniture	2	No. of starts	10	11	11
		% retention	60	27	90
		% pass rate	33	100	100
NVQ in painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	16	11	11
		% retention	63	45	73
		% pass rate	90	80	100
NVQ electrical systems and equipment	3	No. of starts	11	23	24
		% retention	64	87	71
		% pass rate	43	100	41

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

***Quality of education and training***

47. Most lessons are well planned and based upon comprehensive schemes of work. Coursework and assignments are marked promptly and returned with comments, which help students to improve the weak areas of their work. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to engage the attention of all students and to check that they understand the work. Many students are mature, motivated and keen to learn. The staff use good industrial examples to make the learning more relevant especially for part-time students. Teachers are up to date and have good subject knowledge and industrial experience.

48. Project work is well managed. Project briefs give precise instructions and assessment criteria.

As workshop tasks are completed, they are assessed and appropriate verbal feedback is given. Teachers are very approachable and there is much discussion in practical lessons about systems, techniques and processes. They set high standards in practical projects and insist that unsatisfactory work is redone. Students' progress is recorded in charts displayed in the workshops.

49. Teachers are suitably qualified and have good opportunities to update their technical knowledge. Classrooms have good visual aids and displays to celebrate student work that has been well done. The construction workshops are bright and airy and generally provide realistic working environments. However, a few areas are too cluttered and this impedes students in their work. Teachers make good use of the space that is available to them. For example, in a practical surveying lesson students divided up a sports field, adjacent to the college, to set out a large grid. The scale of the task made the whole exercise very realistic. Most staff have relevant assessor qualifications and internal verifier awards. Facilities and equipment meet health and safety equipment requirements.

50. The college has run a programme for employers to train their work-based recorders. The aim is to encourage construction employers to become involved in the practical training of their apprentices. Employers are aware of the range of work experience that their trainees need if they are to meet NVQ requirements; they ensure that trainees gain a wide experience.

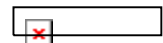
51. Internal verification procedures are thorough. There is good monitoring of students' progress. There are clear records of students' attempts at assessments, particularly in bricklaying courses. The co-ordination of training at work and college is not always satisfactory. Insufficient use is made of workplace evidence. In one instance, a modern apprentice was judged to be falling behind in the practical assessments, particularly in the making of a window frame. This apprentice had, in fact, made many frames in the workplace, but no use had been made of this evidence by college staff.

52. Although students receive good personal support from teachers, tutorial provision is not systematic. For example, there is not a regular system of tutorials and insufficient attention is given to action planning. Reviews for work-based learners do not focus on the progress of the apprentice towards completion of the NVQ or the framework. Teachers do not set appropriately demanding targets to encourage apprentices to improve their performances.

### ***Leadership and management***

53. Leadership and management at team level are good. Teamwork is strong and communication within the team is effective. There is a shared commitment to improving the area's performance. The attention given to improving student retention has led to a steady increase in the retention rate. Teachers have good access to further training and their development needs are identified at appraisal. Staff are aware of their current level of performance and the training opportunities available to them. Classroom observation, as part of self-assessment, is valued by teachers and used to address weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

## **Engineering**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass and retention rates in sound engineering

- good links with the employers of work-based learners.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass and retention rates on some courses
- inadequate resources in workshops
- insufficient resources in sound engineering
- lack of effective action planning for individual students
- much dull teaching of theoretical aspects of courses
- weak self-assessment procedures and practice.

### ***Scope of provision***

54. The college offers a range of qualifications from foundation to advanced level. The full-time courses include sound engineering and music technology alongside courses leading to traditional engineering qualifications. There are work-based learners working towards modern apprenticeship qualifications in motor vehicles. A new team leader was appointed in 2001/02, who, at the time of the inspection, was rationalising the curriculum by replacing poorly performing courses, such as agricultural engineering and the first certificate in engineering, with new courses.

### ***Achievement and standards***

55. Retention and pass rates in sound engineering courses are high and reflect the good standard of learners' work in this area. In contrast, the pass rates on general engineering and motor vehicle courses are poor. In two of the courses summarised in the table below the rate was less than 50%. Retention rates have been erratic; less than two thirds of students were retained on the engineering courses in 2001. The number of learners on motor vehicle courses and modern apprenticeship programmes has also declined significantly over the four years to 2001/02. The retention and pass rates for courses in agricultural engineering have been declining for several years and are below the national average. This course is being withdrawn and will be replaced with a new qualification in September 2002.

56. The standard of most students' work is unsatisfactory and progress is slow. Student attainment was unsatisfactory in over 40% of observed classes. There is little attempt to build upon the prior

learning and experience of mature students or to develop students' key skills. Some students had stopped attending key skills sessions, frustrated by lack of consideration for their prior experience and achievement. In general, the standard of work produced by trainees following modern apprenticeships in local garages is satisfactory. Employers provide good learning opportunities within the workplace and enable students to develop a good range of occupational skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First certificate in engineering	2	No. of starts	24	19	14
		% retention	88	84	71
		% pass rate	37	38	44
City and Guilds 2140, engineering systems maintenance	2	No. of starts	23	13	7
		% retention	87	62	100
		% pass rate	86	38	86
NVQ in service engineering (agricultural machinery)	2	No. of starts	20	24	21
		% retention	75	88	67
		% pass rate	80	57	40
City and Guilds 1820 - 01, sound engineering	2	No. of starts	37	37	32
		% retention	95	97	97
		% pass rate	91	75	94
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	16	14	10
		% retention	69	50	60
		% pass rate	40	71	83
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	31	22	23
		% retention	77	86	78
		% pass rate	82	94	76
City and Guilds 1820 - 02, sound engineering	3	No. of starts	35	36	31
		% retention	94	92	71
		% pass rate	76	70	45

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

***Quality of education and training***

57. In the more effective lessons, to provide relevance to a topic, teachers link the tasks undertaken to the students' experiences in the workplace or to their own practical experiences. Practical examples are used to aid learning. Teachers establish good links between practical work and theory. There are good learning opportunities for trainees in work placements. Practical sessions in sound engineering were very good. However, much of the teaching is dull and fails to motivate students. There is little attempt to plan activities that are appropriate for the full range of ability in the groups, and many students are insufficiently challenged. Schemes of work and lesson plans are cursory and often do not define what learning objectives are to be achieved. Teaching methods are often unsatisfactory. Students wasted time copying notes and complicated technical diagrams from the whiteboard. There is insufficient use of practical teaching aids, such as examples of suitable tools or models.

58. Many theory lessons are taught in inappropriate accommodation. Several classes are located in rooms that are too small for the numbers of students attending. Some classrooms are affected by obtrusive noise from adjacent teaching areas or corridors. There are insufficient checks in lessons to ensure that students understand the work. There is an over-reliance on undirected questioning sessions that are dominated by a few active students. Teachers failed to engage the quieter students in discussion and debate. Students in some classes were struggling with mathematical concepts and teachers were not giving them appropriate help.

59. The equipment and workshop facilities in the college are inadequate and some classrooms are in need of refurbishment. The motor vehicle equipment and vehicles and the mechanical workshop facilities are old. They do not match up-to-date industrial practices in the workplace. The main motor vehicle workshop is congested and the practical work area is cramped. Electronics laboratories are well equipped. There is good industry standard equipment in sound engineering, but a lack of sufficient equipment for the numbers of students.

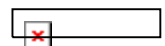
60. Students have scheduled tutorials that concentrate on academic support, but give insufficient attention to developing study and key skills. There are no effective individual action plans to focus on students' progress through their courses. Where action plans do exist, they are often superficial in nature and do not give clear targets related to learning goals. Employers are involved in the regular progress reviews, but these do not focus sufficiently on the progress of learners in terms of developing personal and work-related skills. Training co-ordinators are occupationally competent and develop a good rapport with employers and learners. Formal feedback on students' work is often late and does not provide the students with clear guidance on how to improve their work and make better progress. Many students make slow progress towards the completion of their awards.

### ***Leadership and management***

61. Many course leaders are unaware of the level of performance of their own courses against national averages. This significant oversight is reflected in the self-assessment report for engineering, which overstates strengths and does not recognise serious weaknesses in teaching, learning and attainment.

62. At the time of the inspection, the new team leader for engineering was attempting to draw together the different course teams and to adopt a more systematic approach to tackling under-performance. Most teaching staff have a teaching qualification and some have occupational experience, but there has been little industrial updating to bring full-time staff into line with current occupational practices. The new team leader has recognised this weakness and staff have attended conferences at which good practice was disseminated.

### **Business administration**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- well-motivated students
  
- good support for individual students in lessons



- good course provision for adults
- effective curriculum management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates in General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) advanced business and Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) book-keeping
- insufficient use of ICT to support learning
- few curriculum enrichment activities or employer links
- insufficient target setting for individual students on courses in college.

### ***Scope of provision***

63. Provision for full-time students aged 16 to 18 includes the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in business, which has replaced the GNVQ and an advanced secretarial course at level 3. A new course has been introduced at level 2 leading to the Cambridge business skills diploma and additional skills qualifications. This course has replaced the previous provision of the GNVQ intermediate in business and a full-time administration course. At the time of inspection there were 34 students aged 16 to 18. A few students aged 19 and over also attended these courses, but most of the 326 adult students attended either a full-time course for health service receptionists or part-time courses in secretarial skills offered during the day or in the evening. Evening classes are also offered for courses in book-keeping and for GCE AS and A-level accounting. Short courses are regularly offered in medical terminology. A small number of modern apprentice trainees in administration were recruited, monitored and assessed by the college's training division.

### ***Achievement and standards***

64. Most retention and pass rates on administration courses, which are taken mainly by adults, are high. There have been outstanding pass rates for the diploma in health service reception, where all students achieved the qualification in 2001. Pass rates on courses for students aged 16 to 18 are low. For example, the pass rate on the GNVQ advanced business has declined in the last three years from 100% in 1999 to 59% in 2001 against a national average of 80%. Pass rates on the OCR book-keeping course have declined from 63% in 1999 to 30% in 2001 against a national average of 51%. The retention rate has generally been below national averages for most courses over the same period but the in-year retention rate of students in 2001/02 has shown a significant improvement.

65. In most lessons observed the attendance was good. Students arrive punctually and are well

motivated and keen to learn. Most students produce work of a good standard, are confident and have the ability to work independently.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
OCR book-keeping	1	No. of starts	42	57	15
		% retention	76	82	67
		% pass rate	63	45	30
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	21	14	14
		% retention	86	86	71
		% pass rate	100	75	90
Diploma in health service reception	2	No. of starts	30	17	29
		% retention	87	71	76
		% pass rate	88	92	100
Audio transcription II	2	No. of starts	66	47	34
		% retention	92	91	79
		% pass rate	82	72	81
Word processing III	3	No. of starts	23	44	33
		% retention	78	91	82
		% pass rate	72	83	67
GNVQ advanced in business	3	No. of starts	31	24	30
		% retention	71	54	73
		% pass rate	100	62	59

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

***Quality of education and training***

66. Much of the teaching in business studies and business administration is good. Lessons are well planned, take account of the individual needs of students and hold their interest. In secretarial skills workshops, where a number of different qualifications were being offered to learners who were working individually, the support offered by teachers was good. Group lessons were conducted briskly and many provided opportunities for revision for forthcoming examinations. Most students were able to complete the tasks they were set. In a few cases, teachers did not fully prepare students. For example, in a business studies class where company financial information was being calculated, the students were unsure how that information could be used to inform other decisions in the company. Useful exercises were conducted which developed skills in a practical situation. In a role-play exercise, as part of a communications class, adult students confidently participated in a mock job interview. The interview panel was drawn from other members of the group so that the students experienced both sides of the exercise. Good feedback was provided to students immediately after the interview and then discussed within the group. The feedback was presented in a constructive, but sensitive way and provided very helpful preparation for students for their forthcoming job interviews. Opportunities were taken for integration of key skills and vocational learning in a single piece of work, for example, level 2 students were conducting market research as part of their business programme. They had constructed and carried out a survey, and were entering the results into a spreadsheet for analysis, which would be presented graphically. This approach enabled them to develop relevant IT skills as well as communication and analytical skills.

67. Full-time secretarial students do not have a wide choice of enrichment activities or opportunities for work experience. The opportunity to apply skills and knowledge from the course to realistic business situations is thus restricted. This is a particularly significant drawback for students on the advanced secretarial course and the business and office skills diploma course, both of which are designed to prepare students for employment. On the AVCE in business, however, students in the second year have a period of work experience. They also participate in the Young Enterprise competition which requires the group to set up a company, decide on a product, make it, sell it and run the company; management functions are undertaken by the members of the group. The students set up a very successful company making clocks for which they won three awards as best company in the annual trade fair; they were runners-up in the regional finals. This activity contributed to the development of their business and administrative skills and, in a challenging and interesting way, gained material for the assessment of a unit of their course.

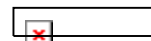
68. Work-based learners are managed by the college training division. Off-the-job training for the vocational qualifications and for key skills is provided by the training division at its offices in the town centre. Numbers are small, but the provision is well organised. Assessors support trainees and employers well. They make frequent visits and achieve effective action planning. Trainees were very enthusiastic about their training programmes and were well motivated to succeed. Employers were satisfied with the college's approach.

69. Most resources in the curriculum area are good. Staff are well qualified and experienced in their subject areas. Accommodation is spacious and appropriately furnished. Business classrooms are located on the upper floors of one of the main college blocks to which there is no access for persons with mobility problems. There are sufficient computing facilities, but not all rooms are connected to the college network and only one room has Internet connections. Students have good access to computer facilities in the college study centre. Some other specialist equipment is dated and there is no provision of technology based teaching aids such as interactive white boards or computer projectors to help teachers. Although students use computers in their class work, there is little development of materials to support learning based on information and communications technologies that would provide a resource for students' independent study.

### ***Leadership and management***

70. Management of the curriculum area is effective. Course teams work well together. They meet frequently either formally or informally to discuss student progress and consider issues relating to the course. College procedures are fully implemented in the curriculum area and the team leader has developed a sound approach to managing the teams. There is clear evidence of reviews leading to appropriate action to improve student learning. The tutorial system and additional support system are implemented to provide support for students, but, although students complete an individual action plan on entry, this plan is not followed through. There is insufficient target setting on college-based courses for individual students to encourage them to make specific improvement where needed. This approach contrasts with the thorough use of target setting in work-based learning.

### **Management and professional studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on NVQ accounting courses at level 2 and 3

- high retention and pass rates on level 3 training courses
- good progress by learners on professional courses
- effective teaching in most lessons
- good assessment and monitoring of students' progress
- a broad range of courses with good progression routes.

### ***Weaknesses***

- declining pass rates on some higher-level management courses
- inadequate professional and industrial updating of teachers
- insufficient co-ordination of provision across teams.

### ***Scope of provision***

71. The college offers a broad range of management and professional courses, including NVQ accounting at levels 2 to 4, NVQ management at levels 3 to 5, and the National Examination Board for Supervisory Management (NEBSM) introductory award and certificate in supervisory management. The NVQ accounting programme includes a successful full-time study option aimed at adult students with little prior accounting experience, and a small number of work-based learners. An expanding range of provision is offered in education and training, including teaching awards and an innovative programme of learning support qualifications at a variety of levels. A wide range of courses is also offered for trainers, including unit awards for assessors and verifiers and full training awards at NVQ levels 3 to 5. Overall the programme successfully meets the needs of adult students and employers, and provides good progression opportunities in management and in training and development.

### ***Achievement and standards***

72. Pass rates are high on NVQ accounting level 2 and level 3 courses. High retention and pass rates are above the national average on the NEBSM management certificate, the certificate in personnel practice, and across the advanced level provision in education, training and development,

including the certificate in learning support and NVQ level 3 in training and development. Pass rates and some retention rates have declined on higher-level management courses. Many students make significant progress relative to their prior attainment. For example, students on full-time NVQ level 3 and level 4 accounting courses and part-time training courses develop self-confidence and study skills, and produce work to a high standard. Many also progress to higher-level courses or employment. The overall standard of portfolios and written work is good.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in management and professional studies, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ accounting (1 year)	2	No. of starts	61	65	42
		% retention	67	82	76
		% pass rate	92	86	84
NVQ accounting (1 year)	3	No. of starts	58	49	47
		% retention	78	69	79
		% pass rate	97	79	74
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	9	22	15
		% retention	100	95	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National Examination Board Supervisory Management management certificate	3	No. of starts	12	12	15
		% retention	100	83	100
		% pass rate	91	90	100
City and Guilds 7321 certificate in learning support	3	No. of starts	58	44	61
		% retention	93	86	95
		% pass rate	96	97	100
City and Guilds 9281 initial certificate in teaching basic skills	3	No. of starts	15	18	52
		% retention	87	94	88
		% pass rate	75	71	98
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	32	32	26
		% retention	91	91	81
		% pass rate	76	77	52
Certificate in management studies	4	No. of starts	21	17	12
		% retention	100	82	100
		% pass rate	95	86	80

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

***Quality of education and training***

73. Teaching standards are good or better in most lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and have clear lesson objectives that they share with students. Teachers in education and training set theoretical concepts into a practical context, and are careful to relate teaching and learning tasks to students' own working experience. Teachers have good working relationships with students, and give effective support to individuals. In the most effective lessons teachers make good use of work in small groups, and encourage collaborative working as well as independent

learning. A number of courses have well-planned work placement programmes. Students are attentive and responsive, keen to learn, and make a positive contribution to group discussions. Learning and attainment levels on education and training programmes are good. In one example, a student working towards Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) awards made effective use of her knowledge to develop her role as an assessor in her workplace. In some lessons, teachers do not plan teaching and learning activities to match students' preferred learning styles, nor do they challenge able students sufficiently. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between the course teams teaching the accounting courses in the college and the staff teaching accounting courses for the training division.

74. Assessment activities are an effective part of the learning and monitoring cycle. Teachers regularly meet students on the full-time NVQ level 2 and level 3 accounting courses to discuss progress. There is detailed tracking of students' work on the course for the certificate in learning support through the use of personal learning logs.

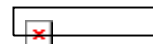
75. There are appropriate arrangements for monitoring attendance and punctuality, the provision of additional support needs, and tutorial support. Effective guidance and support is given to individual students through well-organised and carefully recorded reviews of progress. For example, in a meeting with students on the NVQ 4 training and development programme, the tutor enabled students to identify progress towards agreed learning goals and set out clear action points. Some tutorial support, for example in business, is less formal, but successfully meets the learning and support needs of students. Some management students are not given sufficient advice on future study and career options at the end of their programmes.

76. Teachers are well qualified, and those on professional courses in the faculty of education and the faculty of training and external development have significant experience in their field. There has been insufficient professional and industrial updating by staff in the management and professional studies team. Classrooms, and IT and resource centre facilities are satisfactory. Good learning materials have been developed for education and training courses, for example for the certificate in learning support. There is insufficient use of learning materials and case studies that reflect current management practice.

### ***Leadership and management***

77. Management and professional courses are located within three different faculties in the college. Courses are well organised and managed. Most schemes of work are well structured and courses are well planned. There is sound leadership and management of education and training, and training and development. The self-assessment process lacks rigour. There is insufficient co-ordination of management and professional courses between course teams in the business school and in the faculty of training and external development.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates for part-time adult programmes
- good teaching on adult programmes

- a wide range of part-time courses
- good management of part-time adult courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory retention and pass rates for full-time courses
- poor pass rates for key skills programmes
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning on full-time courses
- no manager with overall responsibility for ICT
- ineffective management of full-time courses.

### ***Scope of provision***

78. Full-time courses at intermediate and advanced levels are offered at the main college site. Most students recruited to the full-time courses are male and in the 16 to 18 age-range. There is a particularly wide range of part-time courses, mainly for adults, at the main site and at a range of community locations across Herefordshire. The part-time courses range from levels 1 to 3 and provide significant progression opportunities for adult students. In 2000/01, some 2,000 students were enrolled on the three main part-time level 1 and level 2 programmes. Full-time and part-time courses are managed, independent from each other, within two different faculties in the college. In addition to these courses, the college is responsible for training and assessing a small number of work-based students. Although there is a large number of adult enrolments, using the measure of full-time equivalence, full-time students constitute approximately 40% of the IT provision.

### ***Achievement and standards***

79. Retention and pass rates are high for the adult short courses, but below national averages or low for the full-time courses. There are above average retention and pass rates for the introductory course 'discovering computers' and the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) programmes. Pass rates for the CLAIT course have been particularly high and well above the national average. Pass rates for the level 2 programme in Integrated Business Technology (IBT) have also been good and, in 2000/01, were approaching 30% above the national average. Many mature students on the short courses at the time of the inspection had no previous experience of

using ICT. They quickly became competent and confident in handling a range of applications software. Retention and pass rates for the GNVQ intermediate course have declined since the previous inspection. Both were particularly poor in 2001; only 1 student out of the 21 originally enrolled on the course was successful. The retention rate for the AVCE programme improved in 2001 from a previously low level and was above average. However, pass rates for this course were well below the national averages in 2000 and 2001. Standards of work were well below expected levels for most students on these two programmes. Pass rates for the key skills units in IT have been mainly below average and a number of students failed to complete these courses within the planned timescale. Pass rates for the work-based students following NVQ programmes are above average.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Discovering computers	1	No. of starts	702	994	997
		% retention	98	96	97
		% pass rate	85	84	86
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	678	557	605
		% retention	95	94	91
		% pass rate	82	85	93
Key skills IT	1	No. of starts	56	18	473
		% retention	88	78	81
		% pass rate	67	0	27
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	18	17	21
		% retention	94	88	57
		% pass rate	82	80	8
IBT 2	2	No. of starts	*	211	249
		% retention	*	93	90
		% pass rate	*	84	85
GNVQ advanced/AVCE IT	3	No. of starts	24	26	32
		% retention	54	52	78
		% pass rate	91	50	57

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

\*course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

80. The quality of the teaching is significantly better for the part-time adult classes than for the full-time courses. Part-time lessons are consistently well planned and contain a suitable range of approaches to teaching and learning that are complemented by good paper resources. In the community-based classes, mature students new to IT quickly develop skills and confidence in using application software. Teachers combine good support of individual students with effective questioning of the whole group to check that concepts are understood. In some teaching, the tasks set failed to meet the needs of the full range of ability in the class. For example, some students who had completed the task needed to wait too long while others were slowly keying in a passage. Adult



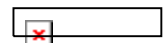
students are motivated and enthusiastic learners. In contrast, in some full-time classes, students arrived late and attendance was poor. The boisterous behaviour of full-time students in one class disrupted learning and one lesson was unsatisfactory due to technical problems with newly installed equipment. In another lesson for full-time students, students were not sufficiently attentive or responsive and the teacher failed to check if they understood the work. Timetabling problems have adversely affected full-time students' performances. For example, AVCE students did not have sufficient time to complete certain assignments and one class received inadequate support because its members were spread across three rooms.

81. Staff have a sound knowledge of the subject, even though only a few teachers hold specific computing qualifications. Opportunities to attend external IT staff training are inadequate. The computer resources and specialist rooms in use are mainly good. There are adequate open-access and drop-in workshop facilities available to students. Some machines support out-of-date versions of software and some computer laboratories used by the full-time students do not have Internet access. AVCE students need to do much of their web development at home because they do not have access to facilities to upload to a web site at college. Part-time adult classes make good use of a multimedia projector. Laptops are used effectively to teach IT skills in isolated rural communities in venues such as village halls.

### ***Leadership and management***

82. The part-time adult short course provision is very well managed and co-ordinated. However, there is a lack of effective management of the full-time courses in computing. Although almost all the staff teaching on the short course programmes are employed on a part-time or fractional basis, they work to common and agreed high standards. Suitably detailed, good schemes of work have been developed and agreed. Teaching and learning materials are shared across the teaching teams. Individual students' progress is monitored closely using common documentation. There is little evidence of effective action being taken to improve the poor retention and pass rates for the full-time courses. College policies for the support and guidance of students are not being implemented for all students and course teams do not always meet on a regular basis. There is a lack of overall co-ordination and management of ICT in the college. The teachers of computing courses are based in different faculties that operate independently of each other. There is no evidence of the sharing of good practice and of resources and expertise between the two sets of staff.

### **Hospitality and catering**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good links with schools
- good progression from NVQ level 2 to NVQ level 3 courses.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- much unsatisfactory teaching

- poor development and low standard of students' practical skills
- poor development and low levels of achievement in key skills
- low retention rates on NVQ courses
- insufficiently rigorous assessment and internal verification
- inadequate individual learning plans to monitor student progress
- a narrow range of hospitality and catering provision
- ineffective management of the curriculum area.

### ***Scope of provision***

83. The college offers a narrow range of provision in hospitality and catering. Courses include: NVQs at levels 1 to 3 in food preparation and cooking, and serving food and drink; and the AVCE in hospitality and catering. Nearly all full-time students work towards qualifications in both food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service at either level 2 or level 3. There are few students on level 1 courses. Courses below level 2 are not promoted well. In 2001/02, the AVCE failed to recruit enough students and did not run. Short courses for the licensed trade and food hygiene courses are offered to meet the needs of local industry. Links with industry are inadequate. However, good link programmes with schools provide pupils with the opportunity to gain experience of working in a catering environment.

### ***Achievement and standards***

84. Pass rates are high for NVQ level 3 kitchen and larder, and food and drink supervisory management, and for the two-year NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service courses. Pass rates on the one-year courses are low. Most retention rates are below the national average. The pass rate on the short courses for the National Licensee's Certificate is low. Nearly all students are successful in achieving a basic hygiene certificate. There is good progression from level 2 to level 3 courses. Most students gain employment in the hospitality and catering industry.

85. The development of students' practical skills is poor. Most students have not developed the technical skills for the level of the qualification they are aiming to achieve. The majority of students

on level 2 food preparation and cooking courses have poor knife skills. Most students do not have sound theoretical knowledge. Teachers do not pay sufficient attention to matters of safety or presentation. For example, they do not challenge students who are wearing jewellery in practical lessons or inappropriate footwear for working in kitchens. In practical lessons, many students are over-reliant on the teacher for direction and do not plan and organise their own work effectively. Most students working in the restaurant gain good social skills, but many have not acquired the basic techniques for food and drink service. Research and study skills are not developed. Full-time students' key skills are inadequate and achievement is low. Attendance at key skills lessons is poor. There is no provision of key skills teaching for part-time students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ serving food and drink - restaurant (1 year)	2	No. of starts	32	23	20
		% retention	78	96	75
		% pass rate	72	81	67
NVQ serving food and drink - restaurant (2 year)	2	No. of starts	*	7	10
		% retention	*	57	60
		% pass rate	*	100	100
NVQ food preparation and cooking (1 year)	2	No. of starts	32	32	20
		% retention	81	84	60
		% pass rate	68	73	73
NVQ food preparation and cooking (2 year)	2	No. of starts	*	10	12
		% retention	*	60	58
		% pass rate	*	60	86
NVQ food preparation and cooking (kitchen and larder)	3	No. of starts	15	4	11
		% retention	73	100	64
		% pass rate	90	100	86
NVQ supervisory management (food and drink service)	3	No. of starts	13	4	11
		% retention	77	100	73
		% pass rate	88	25	88
British Institute of Innkeeping National Licensee's certificate	3	No. of starts	16	21	53
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	35	66

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

\*course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

86. Much teaching is unsatisfactory both for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Teachers often do not provide students with sufficient knowledge, or develop their understanding and vocational skills to the appropriate level. Teachers do not take sufficient account of the different individual learning requirements of students. Practical lessons in kitchens and restaurants are frequently repetitive and, as a consequence, students' knowledge and skills are not adequately extended. Teachers do not

always correct poor working methods and techniques. They do not effectively link the teaching of theory to practical examples. Students' learning is not systematically monitored. Menus and service styles in the restaurant have not been adapted sufficiently to reflect changes in the hospitality industry. Many dishes on menus do not require the level of skill in preparation that students need to develop. Communication and number skills are not developed in lessons. Insufficient use is made of ICT in teaching and learning.

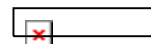
87. Students appreciate the support that teachers and learning support assistants provide. In restaurant lessons, there is good support from learning support assistants for students with additional support needs. Literacy and numeracy support sessions are planned at the same time as vocational lessons and students often miss the start of practical classes. Tutors do not follow college guidance on tutorials. Tutorial records and students' files are not maintained well. Students do not have individual learning plans with clear targets and dates for completion. Students' progress towards their qualifications is monitored weekly and updated in their NVQ logbooks, but the procedures are not sufficiently thorough. The assessment of students' practical skills and portfolios and internal verification procedures lacks rigour. Insufficient constructive feedback is given to students to help them improve their performance. Visits to exhibitions and industry help to add interest to students' programmes. Students do not take part in any college enrichment activities.

88. Staff have appropriate qualifications for the courses that they teach. Not all have recent industrial experience. Kitchens are adequate, but most equipment is old. There are no computers for students' use on hospitality courses. Students are not encouraged to use the computers in the learning centre and there is no specialist software. The range of books is adequate. Some handouts are poorly presented. As at the last inspection, student changing room facilities do not have washing facilities and are inadequate.

### ***Leadership and management***

89. The management of the hospitality and catering provision is ineffective. Most of the weaknesses identified at the last two inspections have not been rectified. Management responsibilities are unclear. Managers and teachers do not pay sufficient attention to improving teaching and learning. There is no clear direction for the section and there are no plans to resolve declining enrolments. The self-assessment report does not provide a realistic assessment of the quality of the provision. Where weaknesses have been identified, actions to bring about improvement and target dates for completion have not been specified. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. Targets to improve retention and pass rates are not set.

### **Leisure and tourism**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on many courses
- effective and stimulating practical activities for public service students
- good standard of work of level 2 students

- effective use of the learning resource centre
- relevant and stimulating enrichment activities for public services students
- well-planned work experience for public services courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on most full-time courses
- inadequate development of students' learning skills on advanced courses
- insufficient opportunity to practice vocational skills in leisure and tourism
- inadequate provision for part-time study
- insufficient resources for leisure and tourism.

### ***Scope of provision***

90. Leisure and tourism and public services courses are available at levels 2 and 3. Full-time courses lead to: GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism; first and national diplomas in public services; and AVCEs in travel and tourism and leisure and recreation. Students on courses in travel and tourism, in leisure and recreation and for the national diploma in public services can take a range of additional qualifications. The range includes qualifications for retail travel, YMCA assistant instructor, and first aid and community sports leader. First diploma students in public services can re-sit GCSEs in mathematics and English. Leisure and tourism students are offered additional GCSE or GCE AS/A-level qualifications in humanities and science, but few take up these offers. The range of part-time courses is narrow and restricts opportunities for study for those who are in employment. Part-time provision is limited to the certificate in retail travel operations, which is primarily designed to complement the programmes of full-time students. All students work towards qualifications in key skills.

### ***Achievement and standards***

91. Most pass rates are high. In 2000/01, 68% of students on GNVQ advanced in leisure and tourism passed with high grades. Some pass rates in 2000/01 have declined; the rate for the national diploma in public services fell sharply. The pass rates for the certificate in retail travel and the NVQ in travel services at level 2 in 2000/01 were outstanding. The retention rate for the NVQ travel services was also outstanding, but the retention rate in 2000/01 for the certificate in retail travel declined significantly compared with the previous year. Most retention rates in 2000/01 declined to below national averages. For students due to complete in 2001/02, the downward trend was continuing at the time of the inspection.

92. The standard of work of students on the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism and the first diploma in public services courses is good. They make good progress and show commitment to their work in lessons. Students make effective use of the range of learning materials, particularly from the resource centre. Students use a range of good sources of evidence for their written work, including books and in particular the Internet. Some final-year advanced students do not sufficiently develop their independent learning skills and do not prepare adequately for employment or HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First diploma in public services	2	No. of starts	*	10	10
		% retention	*	70	60
		% pass rate	*	100	83
GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	23	20	17
		% retention	91	95	76
		% pass rate	100	89	85
Certificate in retail travel operations	2	No. of starts	*	14	19
		% retention	*	93	74
		% pass rate	*	67	100
NVQ in travel services	2	No. of starts	*	*	10
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	100
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	19	14	18
		% retention	79	57	78
		% pass rate	100	100	71
GNVQ advanced in leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	33	21	33
		% retention	76	81	67
		% pass rate	100	81	86

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

\*course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

93. The range of good practical activities on the public service courses stimulates students' interest. In one public service lesson, the teacher used a range of resources, including a video of a recent international disaster to enable student to analyse the efficiency of emergency services. The students then went on to play an effective part in a practical activity to prepare them for a full-scale

disaster exercise. Public services students take part in well-planned work experience. In leisure and tourism, the lack of practical activities and work experience hinders the development of vocational knowledge and skill, which is a source of dissatisfaction to students. Some lessons at advanced level do not motivate students who rely too much on information given by the teacher. Students in a travel class spent time making notes on how to handle cash transactions when guidance from the awarding body indicates this should be a practical activity. Teaching techniques for second-year advanced students do not encourage them to develop skills of research and analysis. Some revision classes are dull and rely on the teachers recycling previous notes. Teachers do not monitor students' progress sufficiently.

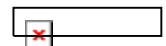
94. Students appreciate the good support they receive from staff at the resource centre as well as the useful range of learning materials. The centre has a wide range of CD-ROMs and journals that relate well to courses in leisure and tourism and in public services. Communication between the curriculum area and the resource centre is good. In public services, lecturers make good use of local amenities for outdoor activities including mountain walking and orienteering. No specialist facilities or equipment are available to support learning in leisure and tourism. A travel shop, which provided practical experience for students, has closed and specialist travel software has been lost. All staff have good experience within the leisure, tourism and public sectors. Most staff hold a good range of qualifications, including teaching and assessor awards. Some staff, however, have not engaged in professional development for the last five years.

95. Enrichment activities for public services students are stimulating and effective. During induction, the students take part in a variety of outdoor activities to help team building. They attend a series of short courses. Some are provided by the military and include taking entry and fitness tests. Second-year students go on a two-week expedition in Scotland that provides opportunities for accreditation for the outdoor activities award.

### ***Leadership and management***

96. Course teams work well together and communicate effectively. The team leader supports her staff well. Teachers appreciate the help and value the experience she brings to the role. Quality assurance processes are not fully established and self-assessment lacks rigour. Judgements on strengths are based on insufficient evidence and some are inaccurate. For example, the retention rate on one course was judged to be high when, in fact, the rates were low. Few lesson observations take place, and those that do provide insufficient evidence to establish judgements on the standard of teaching and learning. Responses from students to surveys are very low for some courses. Feedback on surveys is not effectively reported back to students or acted upon by staff.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- wide range of courses and good progression opportunities
  
- high standards of practical work

- good teaching, training and learning on complementary therapy courses
- good student attainment on complementary therapy and beauty therapy courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor application of theoretical knowledge in practical hairdressing classes
- low retention rates on some courses in beauty therapy and hairdressing
- insufficient practical salon accommodation
- insufficient work experience opportunities.

### ***Scope of provision***

97. The college provides courses leading to NVQs in hairdressing and beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. The range of complementary therapy courses includes holistic therapy, body massage, reflexology, aromatherapy and Indian head massage. At the time of the inspection, there were over 60 full-time and part-time hairdressing students, of whom a third were aged 16 to 18 and 12 were work-based trainees. There were over 130 beauty and complementary therapy students, of whom about 30 were aged 16 to 18. Evening class provision is available across a broad range of courses.

### ***Achievement and standards***

98. Students reach a high standard of commercial competence. They are professional in their approach to clients and have good social and communication skills and high standards of personal presentation. Standards of portfolio work are good. Through appropriate enrichment activities, students gain a good awareness of the diverse employment opportunities available to them. Work-based trainees are not achieving the modern apprenticeship framework because of their failure to pass the key skills units. However, many are successful in achieving the vocational qualification.

99. Student retention and pass rates vary significantly. Pass rates for level 2 beauty and complementary therapy courses are high and exceed national averages. All students taking the qualification achieved a pass in reflexology and body massage in the 2001 examinations. The retention rate is low on hairdressing courses. However, most students who complete the course gain a qualification. Attendance, at an average of 70% for classes observed during the inspection, was satisfactory.

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



Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ hairdressing (2 years)	2	No. of starts	56	56	37
		% retention	45	45	54
		% pass rate	79	100	71
NVQ beauty therapy (2 years)	2	No. of starts	58	35	41
		% retention	66	69	66
		% pass rate	93	95	100
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	*	8	13
		% retention	*	75	46
		% pass rate	*	100	40
Body massage diploma	3	No. of starts	12	18	10
		% retention	92	89	80
		% pass rate	100	94	100
NVQ hairdressing	3	No. of starts	*	9	9
		% retention	*	56	56
		% pass rate	*	25	100
Reflexology diploma	3	No. of starts	18	24	14
		% retention	89	92	93
		% pass rate	100	95	100

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

\*course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**

100. Teaching is satisfactory. Students on complementary therapy courses benefit from higher standards of teaching than those taking hairdressing or beauty therapy courses. Teachers of hairdressing are not skilled at demonstrating the applications of theory within practical lessons. Their students are more successful at developing occupational skills, but often lack sufficient understanding of the scientific aspects of the subjects. Teachers plan practical lessons well to meet the course specifications and the range of ability and prior attainment of their students.

101. Students agree learning targets for the year and progress is monitored through an effective tutorial system. The key skill of communication is well integrated in the assessment of students' work. However, IT key skills are not developed in a way which motivates students. The assessment of the learning support needs of students does not always lead to the provision of effective support.

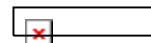
102. The competent teaching staff have extensive industrial experience and expertise. Students benefit from the emphasis that their teachers give to developing occupationally specific skills and relating the subject area to the work context. Salon accommodation is insufficient for the numbers of students. Consequently, students have insufficient access to assessment opportunities.

### **Leadership and management**

103. Leadership and management is satisfactory. The new team leader is making good progress in introducing college quality assurance procedures at course level. Compliance with tutorial policy is

effective at course level. However, self-assessment for the area is not thorough. The self-assessment report did not identify weaknesses in attendance monitoring, or teaching and learning.

## Health and community care



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on several courses
- high retention rates on many courses
- good teaching and learning in counselling skills and revision lessons.

### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress on full-time NVQ programmes
- insufficient challenge in a significant number of lessons
- a lack of clarity over management roles and responsibilities.

### **Scope of provision**

104. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time time courses in health and community care from foundation to advanced level. Full-time courses include: the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma and NVQ in early years and education at levels 2 and 3; and GNVQ health and social care at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. Some part-time courses are provided on employers' premises. These include NVQ care at levels 2 and 3, caring for children and young people at level 3 and promoting independence at level 3. A part-time NVQ level 4 in care includes attendance at college. There are basic and intermediate part-time courses in counselling skills and a very small amount of work-based learning for young people. Most students aged 16 to 18 are on full-time courses and most adult students are on part-time courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

105. Pass rates for the last three years to 2001 have been above the national average for courses in health and social care GNVQ foundation and intermediate, and full-time NVQ level 3 in early years care and education. Pass rates for short courses in basic counselling have been high. On the full-time courses in health and social care students achieve a significant number of high grades. In 2000/01, the number passing and achieving a higher grade in GNVQ advanced health and social care was 61%. Most retention rates are high, especially on childcare and education courses. During 2001/02, all courses have had high retention rates except for the GNVQ intermediate in health and social. There is slow progress on full-time NVQ programmes.

106. Students' assignment work is satisfactory to good. Where standards are high, students show good analytical and evaluative skills. Advanced level health and social care students develop knowledge and understanding effectively, particularly in psychology. Students on counselling skills courses make many relevant and interesting contributions in lessons and have good levels of understanding. Students' work on display in classrooms is well presented. The work of childcare students reflects many activities that can be shared with children, but does not make any links to theory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	11	*	13
		% retention	82	*	92
		% pass rate	89	*	75
Certificate in basic counselling	1	No. of starts	*	40	88
		% retention	*	98	94
		% pass rate	*	92	83
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	16	13	21
		% retention	94	85	90
		% pass rate	87	91	17
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	24	16	17
		% retention	83	88	88
		% pass rate	90	93	87
NVQ early years care and education	2	No. of starts	10	17	14
		% retention	60	82	71
		% pass rate	80	86	67
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	19	18	13
		% retention	74	67	85
		% pass rate	79	92	60
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	11	11	13
		% retention	73	91	85
		% pass rate	88	90	90
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	34	17	36
		% retention	74	71	64
		% pass rate	96	67	78

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

*\*course did not run*

### **Quality of education and training**

107. Standards of teaching and learning are uneven both for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Most revision lessons are effective and interesting. They are well planned and use a range of appropriate teaching and learning methods, which enables students to improve and extend their knowledge and understanding. Students show good levels of recall and learn useful additional information quickly. In other effective lessons, teachers focus on the learning outcomes and check regularly that students understand the work. Teachers in counselling use students' contributions very well to improve discussion, broaden learning and develop new skills. Teachers in a significant number of lessons do not make sufficient demands on students and progress is slow. In one lesson, students were helped to solve problems at intermediate level, but the work was not taken further to allow students to resolve issues for themselves. In another lesson, students who were ready to start a task had to wait for a few others who were reluctant to do the work. Occasionally teachers spend too much time with some students and those still waiting for help make slow progress.

108. Classrooms are satisfactory and all teaching equipment is in good working order. There are adequate learning materials and specialist equipment. Insufficient teaching staff at the beginning of the 2001/02 session resulted in full-time NVQ students not having work placements or assessments for three months. At the time of the inspection, students were behind target for completion of their qualification. There is no access for users of wheelchairs to any rooms allocated to this area of learning.

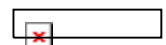
109. At induction, all full-time students complete a questionnaire on preferred learning styles. However, the outcomes from these are often not used by teachers to plan and teach lessons. Arrangements for setting individual learning targets for students are unclear. Students are unaware of their progress with key skills. No records of progress are completed. Assessment and internal verification across all courses are satisfactory, but on NVQ courses there is over-emphasis on written questions to provide evidence. There is a clear progression route for health and social care students from foundation to advanced level, but in childcare there is no foundation or intermediate course.

110. All full-time students receive regular tutorials, which are effective in providing students with support in assignment work and informing them of their progress. Students on full-time NVQ programmes are particularly appreciative of the individual support they received from tutors early in the year when they did not have a work placement or an assessor. Learning support needs are identified and additional support made available, but students do not receive additional learning support in the workplace.

### **Leadership and management**

111. Staff have worked well to support students and each other through a difficult period of low staffing levels. However, responsibilities within the team are unclear and duties are not effectively shared. Individual teachers are not allocated leadership responsibility for specific courses. Support, in the context of staff development activities, is good, but there is no formal mentoring system to support new and inexperienced staff. Self-assessment is carried out for all courses, but judgements are insufficiently evaluative. Action plans are not systematically reviewed and monitored.

### **English and humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
- effective teaching and learning
- good level of knowledge and understanding of students
- regular and thorough assessment of students' work and progress on most courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates
- a narrow range of courses
- inadequate guidance and support for part-time students
- inadequate monitoring of aspects of the provision.

### ***Scope of provision***

112. The range of provision in English and humanities is narrow. It includes GCE AS and A-level courses in English, psychology, and law and at GCE AS in communication studies. Psychology and English are available as GCSE courses and, together with history, as options on the access to HE course. Approximately 330 students were enrolled on these courses in 2001/02, of which the majority were adults. Declining recruitment in 2001 led to the removal of sociology and history from the GCE AS/A-level provision. Students who had applied for these subjects were offered alternative subjects, often unsuited to their interests. Many of these students subsequently withdrew from their alternative subject. The college offers no guarantee to provide a GCE A-level course in succession to a GCE AS course. At the time of the inspection, GCE A-level law was available only as an evening class and with an insufficient allocation of teaching time. There are few enrichment activities for full-time humanities students.

### **Achievement and standards**

113. The standard of students' work is good or better. Students are motivated and interested in their work. Their knowledge and understanding are good. Most level 3 students' written work indicates independent thinking and the ability to explain and evaluate course materials in a well-ordered argument. Coursework in English is of a high standard. Most students work well together. Their oral and written communication skills are mainly well developed. Adult students studying GCSE English express their ideas with confidence and fluency.

114. Pass rates are mostly good. On one-year GCE A-level courses, pass rates are consistently above national averages. Most two-year GCE A-level courses also remain above the national average, although the GCE A-level psychology pass rate declined sharply in 2000/01. At GCE AS in 2001, high pass rates were recorded in law at 91% and English literature at 100%. Most access students are successful in gaining their qualification and subsequently entering HE. GCSE pass rates in English language have declined significantly since 1998/99, while those for psychology have remained high. Most retention rates have stayed low; most two-year GCE A-level courses are below 50%. Only 60% of GCE AS, and 61% of access students completed their courses in 2001. In contrast, retention rates on all one-year English courses have been at or above national averages. More students have succeeded in gaining qualifications in English than in humanities subjects.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GCSE English language (1 year)	2	No. of starts	89	100	55
		% retention	81	73	65
		% pass rate	78	54	47
GCE A-level English language and literature (1 year)	3	No. of starts	20	23	23
		% retention	80	83	83
		% pass rate	69	100	79
GCE A-level psychology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	28	26	12
		% retention	61	50	33
		% pass rate	71	62	75
GCE A-level psychology (2 year)	3	No. of starts	17	16	10
		% retention	18	31	40
		% pass rate	100	100	50
GCE A-level law (1 year)	3	No. of starts	15	29	5
		% retention	73	62	20
		% pass rate	64	67	100
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	16	20	31
		% retention	56	75	61
		% pass rate	100	87	84

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

### **Quality of education and training**

115. Teaching for students aged 16 to 18 and adults is good or better and enables them to learn well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a range of effective teaching methods.

Learning materials are stimulating. Teachers encourage students to concentrate and be responsive in lessons, particularly when considering complex issues. In a law lesson, students watched a televised reconstruction of a court case involving co-joined twins. This programme enabled the students to discuss the relationship between law and morality with a sound understanding of the conflicting arguments. Adult students appreciate the benefits of good discussion and group work; they recognise that it helps them to develop their learning skills. Teachers help students to learn by giving them the confidence and opportunities to think for themselves and by providing good summaries of students' own ideas. Suitably detailed guidance and practice help prepare students well for their examinations. However, teachers make insufficient use of computers that would assist students to study independently. Key skills work is not incorporated into the courses.

116. All the staff are qualified teachers and suitably experienced. While some classrooms are spacious and well furnished, one is too small for the size of the group using it. Other classrooms, which lack windows and rely upon skylights, are sometimes hot and stuffy. The absence of suitable screens for overhead projectors reduces the clarity of what is being projected. Some television and video equipment is unreliable. The book stock is adequate, but the English collection is dated. Links between library staff and teachers are good. Students have good access to computers. However, there are insufficient computers in teachers' workrooms.

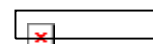
117. Assessment of students' work is well organised. Teachers set regular assignments, which are assessed fairly and returned promptly. Students attending GCE AS/A-level law classes in the evening benefit from writing weekly assignments. Access students receive imaginative and well-devised assignments. For example, as part of an evaluation of the uses of oral history, students compiled a tape based upon older people's educational experiences. Most written feedback to students is good. The monitoring of students' progress on GCSE and access to HE courses is thorough and valued by students. Some students have received no individual tutorials in the academic year 2001/02. The system for monitoring students' attendance is not effective. GCE AS/A-level tutors do not implement the college's tutorial policy thoroughly.

118. Support and guidance is unsatisfactory for many part-time students. Pre-entry guidance for GCSE and GCE AS and A-level students who apply for evening classes is not effective. Course leaflets are neither consistent nor comprehensive in their advice and guidance. A potential applicant does not receive pre-course guidance. There is no initial assessment of the individual learning needs of part-time evening students. The specialist support and guidance workers provide effective assistance for part-time students who attend during the day, but not for those who attend in the evening.

### ***Leadership and management***

119. Individual courses are well managed. The self-assessment report provides a realistic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. There is no overall co-ordination of the staff who teach on GCSE and GCE AS/A-level courses. There are few common policies or standardised practices to cover guidance and assessment. The quality of teaching is effectively monitored. There is insufficient monitoring of many other aspects of the provision including: the quality of course leaflets; the suitability of schemes of work; and the effectiveness of action planning by course teams and students. Good practice is rarely identified and shared.

### **Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- very good teaching
- high retention rates
- good progression routes within the area of learning
- good provision
- a well-managed area of learning.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient use of ICT
- some poor resources
- insufficiently detailed target setting.

### ***Scope of provision***

120. Over the three years to 2001/02, the college has significantly widened the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Courses are provided on the main college site and at various locations in the centre of Hereford, and in Ross and Leominster as well as in care homes and day centres throughout Herefordshire. The impressive range of programmes meets a wide variety of needs including courses on independent living skills for those with moderate to severe learning difficulty, with disability, acquired brain injury or mental health problems. The college works closely with national and local agencies to offer, and, in some cases, design individual learning programmes for adult students. Courses offered accredit students from pre-entry to level 1. The liaison with secondary and special schools is good. Link programmes provide effective progression between the schools and the college for students with learning and/or behavioural difficulties as well as for disaffected students. A 17-week Learning Gateway programme was being developed at the time of the inspection for disaffected students in conjunction with advisers from the local careers partnership and the college's training division.

### ***Achievement and standards***

121. The achievements of students in foundation studies are good and, in most cases, higher than the national average. Student progression is good. A wide range of accreditation routes, some



external and some devised by the college, allows students to move effectively from one level to another in small incremental stages. This arrangement gives students the flexibility to pursue individual learning plans, but also to gain accreditation. Retention rates are high. Three quarters of programmes have 100% retention rates. Attendance is also high. During the inspection, attendance was 87% in the lessons observed. The standard of students' work is good, particularly in practical lessons. Students compile portfolios of a high standard. They make good use of photographs to record their learning activities.

### ***Quality of education and training***

122. Most teaching ranges from good to outstanding for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Schemes of work are suitably detailed and clearly written. Lessons are carefully planned. In most lessons, teachers take account of the different learning needs of each student. The lessons' objectives link closely with the requirements of the accreditation procedures. Most students have a clear understanding of the purpose of the lesson. The most effective lessons challenge students. Practical activities are built into a programme that has been negotiated with the students. In one lesson, entry level students in a fabrication workshop learned about health and safety, used a variety of tools, power tools and spot-welding equipment and made good progress towards the completion of a small metal lantern. Students are not set sufficiently detailed and demanding learning targets. Use of ICT to improve students' understanding and knowledge is insufficiently developed. The methods used to record evidence for portfolios of evidence are not always suitable for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

123. There is a well-developed programme of work experience for students on full-time programmes. A work experience officer is a member of the teaching team. Placements are carefully selected to suit the abilities and aspirations of the students. Sheltered placements are used for students with severe learning difficulties. More able students have placements on employers' premises.

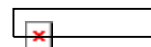
124. Teaching and support staff are enthusiastic and dedicated. Both teams are well trained, and between them staff have a range of specialisms appropriate for the differing needs of their students. ICT resources on the main site are good. A wide range of software and technology is available to support students learning needs and/or disabilities. Poorly resourced classrooms and lack of specialist rooms mean that adult students are provided with facilities that are designed for younger students. In these rooms, there are insufficient resources for the teaching to be sufficiently challenging and the learning tasks adult students are given are not appropriate. In one otherwise good catering lesson, students with profound disabilities were unable to be fully involved in all stages of cooking because no low-level stoves were available.

125. A large team of learning support assistants provides good support for discrete programmes throughout college. Support is well planned and integrated into the teaching and learning. As well as giving support, learning support assistants provide good assistance to students for their personal needs. Support needs are identified and long-term targets are set at initial assessments. These are reviewed termly. Short-term learning targets are not effectively negotiated with adult students, or with advocates working with and for those students who have difficulty communicating. These short-term targets are not always realistic, achievable or effective in shaping and assisting the day-to-day development of the students learning.

### ***Leadership and management***

126. Provision is well organised. Leadership and management of the teaching and support teams are good. There is good support and professional development opportunities for teaching teams who work across an extensive geographical area with a wide variety of students. Many of the staff in the teams are from a range of agencies. There are good arrangements for quality assurance activities in a rapidly developing area of the college. There is a coherent schedule for meetings and time is set aside each week for them. Meetings are followed by training sessions where the specialisms developed by one tutor, such as IT skills, are explained and shared amongst all staff in the teams. The appraisal system clearly identifies staff development needs. The team has participated in national training for the recently introduced curriculum for basic skills.

## Basic skills



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

### **Strengths**

- high retention rates
- good achievement by individual students
- effective support
- effective implementation of the basic skills curriculum
- range of provision responsive to students needs.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor resources on the main site
- insufficiently thorough quality assurance arrangements.

### **Scope of provision**

127. The basic skills provision includes courses and timetabled lessons for literacy, numeracy and ESOL, and the Learning Gateway. Additional basic skills support is available to all students on college courses. New Deal clients are integrated into courses across the college, where appropriate. The college also has a contract with Employment Services to carry out individual assessments. Provision is provided on the main site and in a range of community venues in Hereford and across Herefordshire. The college has recently expanded its provision into localities where there are areas of deprivation in taking opportunities to provide learning to those who have traditionally been under-represented in education and training. This is a significant development; Herefordshire has one of the most geographically dispersed rural populations in the United Kingdom and such opportunities to learn have previously been curtailed due to significant difficulties with travel. For example, the Herefordshire Adult Literacy Project programme, co-ordinated by the

college, visits students' homes to provide individual learning sessions in basic skills using volunteer tutors.

### ***Achievement and standards***

128. Most retention rates are very high. Many are over 90% and above the national averages. The rural community-based Herefordshire Adult Literacy Project day programme in English, in 2000/01, had a retention rate of 91%, which rose to 100% in 2001/02. In Leominster, the basic skills workshop programme for the college certificate had a retention rate of 97% in 2001/02. Most pass rates are high on externally and internally accredited courses and above the national averages. As with retention rates, most pass rates are 90% and over. Many students are enrolled on college accredited courses. A significant minority is enrolled on nationally accredited programmes including Word and Numberpower. Most students make good progress and build on previous attainment. They are well motivated and work effectively and with enthusiasm in lessons. Increasing competence in basic skills has improved the confidence of many students. In the Learning Gateway programme, younger learners, who initially have little self-confidence, develop increasing competence in communication skills by taking personal responsibility for particular aspects of projects.

### ***Quality of education and training***

129. Teaching in basic skills lessons takes effective account of the different learning needs of the wide range of students and learners, both those aged 16 to 18 and adults. The range includes New Deal clients, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and general basic skills students. In the most effective lessons, teachers develop students' newly acquired basic skills well and in a variety of contexts. Parents on the family literacy programme revealed their progress in basic skills by creating childrens' games for a village fete, based on their improved reading skills. In the farriers' programme at the Holme Lacey site, basic skills are being developed in the context of the learners' vocational programme. For example, basic mathematics skills are integrated with the teaching and learning of blacksmithing metal working skills at the forge to show students how important the effective use of number is to vocational competence. The implementation of the recently introduced basic skills curriculum has been effective. Teachers have a good understanding of the curriculum and have put it into operation without delay. There is careful planning to ensure that teaching and learning in basic skills meets the requirements of the curriculum. Students' individual learning plans make clear reference to the curriculum. There is good use of individual learning requirements established at initial assessment to provide the learning objectives for group teaching. The use of ICT in the basic skills curriculum is insufficient.

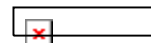
130. Teaching staff are experienced and appropriately qualified for the courses and programmes for which they are responsible. Students in the basic skills workshop at the college do not have access to the Internet or to specialised basic skills software. Paper-based resources are insufficient to support the full range of basic skills students. Some basic skills learning materials and textbooks are poor. Users of wheelchairs do not have easy access to the basic skills workshop. All students have individual learning plans that are based on initial assessment of individual learning needs. Most of these plans are reviewed termly and targets are reset based on student achievement. Students have access to a range of accreditation that includes: Word and Numberpower; awarding body achievement awards; and college certificates based on the national standards for literacy and numeracy. The extensive use of effective additional support in the classroom contributes significantly to learning and achievement.

### ***Leadership and management***

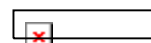
131. All staff are regularly appraised and the results are used effectively in drawing up plans for professional development activities. Staff have appropriate development opportunities. A key development initiative has involved training for the introduction of the national basic skills curriculum. The formal quality assurance system for the area is not sufficiently rigorous. A high percentage of basic skills students take college certificates, but the validation and monitoring of the certificate are underdeveloped. The monitoring of the quality of basic skills provision is not co-ordinated across all sites and there are no programme reviews. The college has produced an

essential skills statement incorporating basic skills, key skills and learning support. Learndirect is not included in the planning of primary basic skills.

## Part D: College data



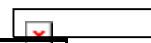
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	25	37
2	48	26
3	24	27
4/5	1	2
Other	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

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	963	2,340	33
Agriculture	70	102	2
Construction	76	141	2
Engineering	380	242	6
Business	296	1,361	16
Hotel and catering	319	142	4
Health and community care	296	449	7
Art and design	15	235	2
Humanities	773	1,736	24
Basic education	53	399	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,241</b>	<b>7,147</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2002.

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000
		<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	619	419	370	660
	Retention rate (%)	84	76	80	87	85	81
	National average (%)	82	80	80	80	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	70	68	71	79	74	78
	National average (%)	59	62	66	61	63	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	666	842	794	834	929	923
	Retention rate (%)	83	78	77	79	73	78
	National average (%)	77	76	77	80	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	72	71	64	72	75	74
	National average (%)	63	67	68	66	65	68
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	465	572	448	876	1,079	1,173
	Retention rate (%)	78	76	80	82	77	76
	National average (%)	78	77	77	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	69	73	68	74	74	82
	National average (%)	70	72	73	63	65	69
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	6	12	15	167	147	116
	Retention rate (%)	83	83	80	87	84	82
	National average (%)	84	83	81	85	84	81
	Pass rate (%)	60	78	20	61	67	58
	National average (%)	64	65	69	58	61	60

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

*Sources of information:*

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

2. College rates for 1997/98 - 1998/99: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/00: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for 1999/00: provided by the college in spring 2002.

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	49	38	13	71
Level 2 (intermediate)	51	38	11	55
Level 1 (foundation)	63	30	7	30
Other sessions	66	34	0	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>171</b>

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