



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Richmond upon Thames College

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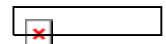
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**Basic information about the college**

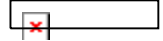


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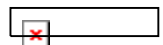
Name of college:	Richmond upon Thames College
Type of college:	Tertiary College
Principal:	Eric Kirby
Address of college:	Egerton Road Twickenham TW2 7SJ
Telephone number:	020 8607 8418
Fax number:	020 8891 5998
Chair of governors:	Bill Treble

Unique reference number: 130454  
Name of reporting inspector: Anne Keelan Towner HMI  
Dates of inspection: 3-7 February 2003

## Part A: Summary

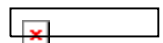


### Information about the college



The college was established as a tertiary institution in 1977 to provide courses for students aged 16 to 18 in the borough of Richmond. Currently, 47% of the college's students are from Richmond with the remainder coming from other London boroughs and beyond. There are 3,700 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 400 full-time equivalent adult students. The college offers a broad range of courses at level 3, mainly General Certificate of Education Advance-level (GCE A-level) subjects. Over 80% of students are engaged in level 3 work and many progress to higher education (HE). The college is one of the largest tertiary colleges in the country. The college's declared mission is 'to provide high quality education and training programmes to all students who enrol in the college and to encourage individuals and groups from within the community to use the college as a resource for their lifelong learning.'

### How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the provision to be outstanding in modern foreign languages, sport, leisure and tourism, and English. Provision was good in mathematics, humanities, social science, business studies and science, satisfactory in information and communications technology (ICT), engineering, art and design, performing arts and media, health and social care and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It was unsatisfactory in construction.

### **Key strengths**

- very high pass rates on level 3 courses
  
- safe and secure environment
  
- broad range of provision

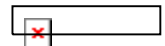
- good strategic leadership
- high progression rate to HE
- effective support for students.

***What should be improved***

- students' timekeeping to prevent disruption of lessons
- retention and pass rates of students aged over 19
- students' achievement in key skills
- unsuitable teaching and social accommodation
- poor target setting in some areas.

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

**Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas**



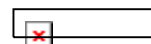
*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are high. Practical work is well

	organised and an integral part of courses. Students' progress is monitored effectively. The level of resourcing is low. Some accommodation is poor.
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> There is much good or better teaching and students learn effectively. Staff make every effort to help their students succeed. Courses and teaching are well organised. Assessment and internal verification are carried out well. There is very little use of ICT in lessons.
Business studies	<b>Good.</b> There is much very good and sparkling teaching. The standard of students' work in lessons is high. Students' work is rigorously assessed and there is very good curriculum management. There is, however, some unimaginative teaching which fails to meet the needs of all students and students have insufficient opportunities for real business experience.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The range of courses is wide and provides good progression for both full-time and part-time students. Students make good use of practical ICT facilities to produce good work. Pass rates are high on most advanced full-time courses, but are low on some part-time ICT courses. Overall, retention rates are high. Some students do not attend regularly or are late for lessons. Much of the teaching makes insufficient demands on students.
Sport, leisure and tourism	<b>Outstanding.</b> Management of this successful area of learning is outstanding. Teams of very good teachers and well-qualified staff, who are a mix of experienced and recently appointed staff, provide exciting and challenging lessons for their students. The curriculum is innovative and provides both internal and external progression for students whose academic and practical achievements are excellent. Some students are occasionally late for lessons. Some accommodation in the sports area needs attention.
Health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a very well-qualified staff team providing good tutorial support. Courses are organised flexibly to enable students to work towards GCE subjects. Agenda 21 courses meet the interests and further the personal development of adult students. Retention rates on some courses are low. There are difficulties in securing accurate performance data about students on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses. Attendance is poor on many courses.
Engineering	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Most pass rates are above the national average, but the corresponding retention rate is often low. In the areas of electronics and computer-aided design and drafting (CADD), staff are exceptionally well qualified and some resources are excellent. There is insufficient use of formative assessment and learning targets. Little provision is made at level 1 and for part-time students.
Construction	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Practical craft training resources are inadequate. Leadership and management of construction are poor. Learners on NVQ programmes make slow progress. Many students progress to technician courses. There are some gaps in the provision.
Performing arts and media	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high pass rates on GCE A-level and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses. A significant number of students, however, fail to achieve their potential. Lessons in performing arts are good, but a significant number of other lessons, especially in media, are dull. During lessons, teachers do not check students' learning adequately or challenge their thinking. Music technology is well resourced, but many classrooms are drab. Quality assurance procedures are ineffective.
Visual arts	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high pass and retention rates on many

	courses. Students benefit from effective tutorial support and a varied programme of enrichment activities. Some students do not attend regularly. Lessons are disrupted by the late arrival of students. Students are not set demanding targets. There is much unsuitable accommodation.
Psychology and sociology	<b>Good.</b> There are high retention and pass rates on psychology and sociology courses. Some students' underachievement in psychology is now being addressed. Teachers are well qualified and teaching is good. Leadership and management of the area are effective.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> Teaching overall is very effective at meeting the needs of students at all levels of attainment across a large range of courses. Students learn well, and make good or very good progress in lessons. Teachers assess students' work thoroughly. Leadership and management are good.
English	<b>Outstanding.</b> The programme area is extremely well managed and recruitment, retention and pass rates in all courses have improved over the past three years. There is much good teaching on all courses and staff ensure the inclusiveness of provision. Relationships between staff and students are good. Lessons are disrupted by some students' lack of punctuality. Some schemes of work are insufficiently detailed. The new system whereby staff watch one another teach is working effectively.
Modern foreign languages	<b>Outstanding.</b> There are many strengths across the provision. Teaching is very good. Students use the language being learnt well in lessons. Resources are outstanding. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are meticulous. Student support is highly effective.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is much good teaching for students with disabilities or learning difficulties. Students benefit from very good support from tutors, learning support assistants and volunteers. There is insufficient diagnostic assessment and target setting in individual learning plans to enable students' progress and achievement to be monitored effectively. There are few opportunities for students with learning difficulties to progress on to entry level or level 1 courses across the college.

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



Leadership and management are good. The senior management team provides a clear strategic focus for the college, based firmly on the principles of tertiary education. In response to the changing nature of the student body, and the development of its vocational provision, the college has redefined its mission and placed a stronger emphasis on the distinctive features of its curriculum. The senior staff roles have been re-established in order to reflect the changes. The college has three components; a sixth form centre, a skills centre, and a continuing and HE centre. The staff, governing body and external partners have all been consulted and involved in the planning and development of a coherent strategic plan. The quality assurance systems have proved effective in some parts of the college, but in others, they have yet to have a significant impact.

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

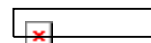


The college is aware of the need to widen participation and ensure provision meets the needs of a diversity of students. It offers effective opportunities for students to make good progress in some of the practical areas. For example, in the catering department a young student attended provision on a school link course. He then moved through entry level and levels 1 and 2 before undertaking a level 3 course in food preparation and he is now a successful caterer. The college has much potential to provide a rich variety of progression opportunities.

Similar opportunities for participation and progression are offered to students on the adult provision, where some of the franchised work is undertaken with disadvantaged groups. On a well-attended community-based course, adult students gained practical skills in health care and some progressed to college-based provision.

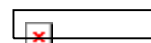
Over 40% of the student cohort are from minority ethnic communities. Students travel from across London and beyond to attend the college and to compete for places on the popular courses. Many do well at level 3 and go on to HE.

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



The excellent support students receive is a strength of the college. The students, and the parents of those aged 16 to 18, are highly appreciative of the support the college provides for its learners. Through opportunities such as individual and small group work, students are able to discuss personal, social and academic issues. Tutors offer excellent informal and formal guidance and support. There are well-developed support systems for students who need additional help, such as those with as dyslexia or visual impairment. The systems for monitoring students' punctuality are not as effective as those for dealing with students' absence.

### **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***

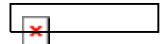
- wide choice of GCE A2/AS provision
  
- good tutorial support
  
- diverse cultural mix

- expertise of teaching staff
- availability of financial support.

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

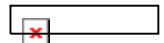
- poor teaching accommodation
- other students' timekeeping
- timetabling to avoid sudden cancellation of classes
- faster service at food outlets to reduce long queues.

**Other information**



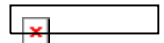
The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The 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 local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, 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**



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**Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors**



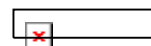


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	64	28	8
19+ and WBL*	74	23	3
Learning 16-18	60	33	7
19+ and WBL*	69	25	6

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

\*work-based learning

### Achievement and standards



1. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Most are on GCE A-level courses. Students achieve high pass rates on most courses. At levels 2 and 3, pass rates are significantly above the national average and place the college in the top 25% of colleges of the same type. Over the past three years pass and retention rates on level 3 courses have been consistently high and rising and these place the college in the top quartile when compared with similar colleges nationally. Results are particularly good on the GCE A-level programme, with entries in the hundreds; pass rates have averaged 94% over the past three years. Pass rates for the small proportion of students who study at level 1 are not as high, and were particularly low in 2000. Retention rates at all levels have been at or above national averages for the last three years.

2. Student progression to HE is very good, with over 900 students progressing to HE institutions in 2002.

3. However, the pass rates on post-19 and part-time provision continue to be low, with particularly poor results on franchised work. In the main provider, pass rates in 2002 were 37%. The college has taken steps to address the poor achievements by changing the nature of the provision it funds with that provider, and there are early signs of improvement. On modern apprenticeship programmes, outcomes vary, but there have been good results in information technology (IT), with 86% of those retained completing the framework. In NVQ 2 training in IT installation, retention and pass rates were 92% in 2001.

4. The standard of students' work is high. Most students are articulate and demonstrate a good understanding of their subject. In English, students apply critical and evaluative skills effectively in textual analysis. They produce excellent coursework, involving extensive writing and investigation. In modern foreign languages, students speak the foreign language quite naturally to ask questions of the teacher and when they work well together in pairs and small groups. In dance, students show flair, imagination and good technical control. Students on humanities courses debate topical issues with confidence and enthusiasm. They can apply their knowledge and skills to analysis of current affairs. History, geography and archaeology students demonstrate effective primary research skills. In chemistry, students develop good practical skills. ICT students produce good coursework. Students on the foundation childcare course show good understanding of the role of games in child development. Adult students are confident in their contributions, particularly in lessons on herbal medicine and holistic massage. In some areas, however, students perform less well. Students make slow progress in the key skills of communications and application of number at levels 1 and 2. In visual and performing arts, many students are insufficiently reflective. Some find it difficult to work well on their own and others do not work effectively in groups. Students make slow progress in

construction crafts, often taking too long to obtain their qualifications.

5. The college's data for key skills overall contain anomalies, and cannot be used to identify performance trends. Data for 2000/01 are more reliable. Pass rates overall for key skills are low, ranging from 33% for communication at level 2 to 45% for application of number at level 1. Pass rates on vocational courses vary widely, ranging from 0% for application of number on the GNVQ health and social care intermediate programme, to 65% for communication on the GNVQ leisure and tourism foundation programme. Many students who receive additional learning support do not achieve their key skills qualifications. In 2000/01, the college made it possible for entry level 3 students to work towards external qualifications in adult literacy and numeracy. Students undertake the assessments for these when their tutors judge they are ready. Many students have been successful in achieving an award.

### **16 to 18 year olds**

6. Pass rates are consistently high on GCE A2 courses. In 2002, 95% of students passed their GCE A2 examinations. All students in business studies, dance, design and technology, economics, economics and business, geography, performance studies and religious studies courses were successful. In a further nine subjects, pass rates were higher than 97%. Pass rates on GCE A-level courses have risen over the past three years, from 90% in 2000. For example, on GCE A-level courses, pass rates have averaged 94% over the past three years. In 2002, however, the proportion of students who achieved grade A was below the national average. The pass rates on GCE AS courses are satisfactory, and in 2002 the overall pass rate was 85%.

7. The overall pass rates in Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and national diploma courses are high, at 93%, and above the national average. In health and social care and in science, all students passed the AVCE. On the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses at foundation level, the overall pass rate rose from 91.5% to 97%, but the retention rate declined. On GNVQ courses at intermediate level, the overall pass rate declined from 80% in 2001 to 75% in 2002. Pass rates for GNVQ media and communications at intermediate level were particularly low. In 2002, all students on the first diploma courses in sport and performing arts were successful.

8. In 2002, there were approximately 700 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) entries and most of these were in English and mathematics. In English, pass rates have risen over the last three years and in 2002 they were satisfactory, with just over half the students gaining high grades. In 2002, less than 30% of students who sat GCSE mathematics achieved grade C or above.

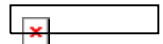
9. Each full-time GCE A-level student is set a minimum target grade, calculated on the basis of their GCSE grades, at the beginning of their course. Analysis of the GCE AS results in 2002 shows that students on most courses are achieving the grades predicted for them. In some subjects, for example, media, art and design, computing, and English language, students' results are well below their target grades. Only in critical thinking and accounting did students achieve significantly above their expected grades. Analysis of the students' performance on GCE A2 courses in 2002 indicates that students are broadly achieving at the level expected. However, there is considerable variation in students' performance across subject areas. In English language, drama and theatre, psychology, media and art and design, many students are not progressing as well as their GCSE grades suggest. In mathematics, business, accounting and finance, religious studies and French and philosophy, students are achieving higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. Overall, the proportion of students achieving grades A to B in 2002 was 38%, in line with the national average.

10. A high proportion of students progress from level 3 courses to HE. In 2002, approximately 80% of 16 to 18 year-old leavers progressed to HE institutions. Over half of these students went on to arts-related degree courses. A destination survey in 2001 suggests that, of those students who progressed directly to employment, the majority went into service industries, commerce or administration.

## **Adult learners**

11. About 22% of the college's full-time equivalent students are adults. Most take part-time courses in IT or in 'Agenda 21', which involves a range of personal development programmes, such as those on counselling and holistic therapies. Retention rates on courses at levels 2 and 3 are very high. Although many adults are successful in achieving IT qualifications, the overall pass rates for adult students are low, particularly on construction NVQ courses and franchised IT provision. The overall pass rate for franchised courses for TBG Learning West London for 2001/02, involving over 600 students, was 37%. The college has taken action to raise this low pass rate by changing the nature of the franchised provision. Through partnerships with local National Health Service (NHS) trusts and a local childminding group, approximately 80 adult learners are enrolled on courses leading to an NVQ in care and early years. Retention and pass rates on these courses are extremely variable. The performance of work-based learners varies considerably. The pass rates for work-based learners on IT programmes have risen in the past two years and are high. Of the modern apprentices on IT programmes, 86% have met all the requirements of their apprenticeship framework. In 2001, retention and pass rates for work-based learners on NVQ level 2 programmes in IT installation averaged 92%.

## **Quality of education and training**



12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 250 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 67% and unsatisfactory in 7% of the sessions observed. In the best lessons, staff used their professional knowledge and expertise to inspire the students and challenge them to use their skills to the full. Students enjoyed learning and were eager to put in the extra effort, to work hard and to make progress.

13. Some rooms were unsuitable for the activities taking place in them. For example, one computing lesson took place in a poorly decorated and unsuitably furnished room that was far too small for the group of students being taught. In some instances the resources available for teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Computers are rarely used as a learning aid other than in designated computing lessons.

14. All students on vocational programmes at levels 1 and 2 study the key skills of communication and application of number. Some students also receive additional basic skills support within key skills lessons. Students usually study key skills at the same level as that of their main programme. Students with a GCSE in English or mathematics at grade D resit the GCSE as well as undertaking key skills at level 2. Thirteen students are receiving additional basic skills tuition in the college's learning skills workshop. These students have either referred themselves or been referred by a member of staff.

15. Most students who attend key skills lessons produce work of an appropriate standard. The work of some students is particularly good. For example, work in application of number is always well presented and students' files are well organised. Some business, leisure and tourism and visual arts students also produce work of a high standard, which is clearly relevant to the achievement of their primary learning goal. These students make good use of ICT in their work. The oral work of students on entry level 3 programmes is also good. Some key skills students, however, make slow progress. Absence from lessons is a persistent problem. In the lessons observed, the attendance rate was only 63%. Some students have little in their files to demonstrate their progress. Some students do not receive any teaching of key skills until late in their course.

16. In most key skills lessons, all students undertake the same activity, but students whose basic skills are weak have the help of an additional support teacher. Lessons meet the requirements of most students. Learning support teachers ensure that students understand the group task, remind students of previous learning and explain the skills needed for completion of the current assignment.

Students are given little opportunity in lessons to develop the skills of working effectively on their own. Some more able students are not sufficiently challenged by the learning activities. In some lessons, where there is no learning support teacher, the needs of all students are not met. Rooms are not appropriately organised for some activities. For example, the arrangement of furniture in some rooms makes it difficult for students to engage in group work or activities for which they need space. Few rooms contain computers and the students have little access to IT equipment. When group numbers are small, and students receive a high level of personal support, the relationship between tutor and student is good. Teachers give clear explanations, and students grasp them quickly. Students value the help their teachers give them. Some good, vocationally relevant materials have been developed for some areas of the curriculum. These include communication assignments for business studies and leisure and tourism, application of number assignments for ICT and numeracy tasks for hospitality and catering. In other areas of learning, such as construction and media studies, key skills are not taught through vocational context. Some students said they did not find the key skills lessons relevant to their interests and felt they were repeating work they had done at school.

17. The college is aware of some, but not all, of the weaknesses in this area. A member of staff has been appointed to implement a basic skills action plan across the college. A key skills strategy group has been set up, which includes senior members of staff, and this has produced a key skills policy document for teachers. Consultancy advice on this area of learning has been obtained from an outside agency.

18. Tutors and support staff are well qualified and suitably experienced and provide very good pastoral and learning support for students. There are effective weekly group tutorials and formal and informal individual tutorials take place on a regular basis. Tutors know their students well and plan effective support for them. Students speak positively of the support they receive. There is an innovative and effective 'partnership scheme' where students on courses at level 2 and 3 volunteer to work in class with students with learning difficulties. There were approximately 40 volunteers participating in the scheme at the time of inspection. Through the scheme, students with learning difficulties are encouraged to take part in the general life of the college, and they have contact with other students. Clear information on the courses available for students with learning difficulties is available. Staff liaise with external agencies. Link courses are provided for feeder schools and these serve as a clear and effective progression route to courses at the college.

19. Many students, and particularly those on English, computing and ICT, sports, leisure and tourism, psychology, sociology and science courses, arrive late for their lessons. By doing so, they disrupt the learning of those who have taken the trouble to be on time. The average attendance level in lessons was 79%, compared with 82% during the last inspection by the Further Education Funding Council in 1998.

20. Most teaching staff are well qualified in their subjects. Many have a wide range of teaching and industrial experience and bring a well-developed sense of purpose and enthusiasm to their teaching and work with students.

21. However, in some curriculum areas such as arts, media and performance, only 50% of staff have teaching qualifications and many have no specialist subject qualification.

22. The proportion of staff in the college with a teaching qualification is 76%. Between them, science technical staff have a good range of industrial experience. An experienced team of IT technicians maintains the college's IT resources effectively.

23. Staff development and training are well planned. The college regards staff training as a high priority and this is related to curriculum development. Management focuses on ensuring that teaching staff enhance their vocational and professional skills, can update their industrial experience, and receive training in IT and on Curriculum 2000. Staff activities, however, are not prioritised in terms of their relevance to the needs of students across all areas of the curriculum.

24. Managers place importance on ensuring that staff can go out on work placements. Through

participating in placements, teaching staff are expected to improve their professional and teaching skills and learning materials for their students. Curriculum area managers monitor the effectiveness of sending staff on placements.

25. Newly qualified teachers have a comprehensive induction programme in the form of a mentoring scheme which provides them with good support, especially during their first year of teaching.

26. Managers are fully aware that the suitability and quality of accommodation have a direct bearing on the students' attitudes and the well being and motivation of both staff and students. The poor quality and very limited capacity of much of the college's accommodation represent a significant barrier to the college's successful strategic development. Many teaching rooms present a bleak and dull learning environment, and many lack any subject identity.

27. Since the last inspection in 1998, there have been few major improvements to the college's buildings. An extensive condition code survey of the accommodation was carried out in 2002 and findings from this show that there is a significant maintenance backlog, partly the result of under investment in previous years.

28. Many teaching rooms are unsatisfactory, and most lack a subject identity. Although many rooms contain television and video equipment, furnishings are not comfortable. Many rooms lack good learning resources, are not well ordered or kept clean and tidy.

29. Some rooms are too small for the groups timetabled to use them. In the cramped conditions of some of the poor teaching rooms and studios, it is difficult for teachers to provide students with stimulating and exciting learning activities such as group activities requiring space, properly organised discussion and debate, and role play exercises.

30. Much of the accommodation, including the upper floors of the learning resource centre and many teaching rooms across the college, is not easily accessible to students with restricted mobility.

31. The learning resource centre is well stocked with up-to-date and relevant books, videos, CD-ROMs and other learning materials. It is on a single site, with a library of 56,000 books, 200 journals, 30,000 slides, electronic resources, 46 computers giving access to the Internet, and 180 study spaces. The video library is one of the largest in any educational establishment in the United Kingdom and includes 30,000 videos recorded since 1989. The learning resource centre is highly valued by the students and offers them an excellent learning facility. The centre is heavily used and is sometimes overcrowded. At busy times, noise levels are high. At other times, however, students are able to find quiet areas for private study.

32. Good use is made throughout the college of the intranet-based information warehouse. The college has invested heavily in industrial-standard IT equipment, and spends a high proportion of its capital funding on hardware and software. Managers have not yet carried out any systematic evaluation of the impact of this investment in IT resources on teaching and learning. Many priority bids for IT resources have not been funded. In many lessons, there is little use of IT as a learning aid. For example, there is little use of the IT room on mathematics courses.

33. The college has established clear systems for assessing and recording students' progress. Most assessment is thorough and effective and carried out regularly. Students have regular meetings with their personal tutors, receive formal reviews of their progress throughout the year, and also have individual interviews with tutors. The tutorial process is effective and thorough.

34. Assessment is carried out more rigorously in some curriculum areas than in others. For example, assessment is not always sufficiently thorough on humanities, visual arts and engineering courses. In English, there are good records of assessment, but there is insufficient use of formative assessment to help students rectify the weaknesses identified through homework and other learning activities. The results students obtain in the initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills are not taken into account sufficiently by staff when teaching key skills. There is insufficient initial diagnostic assessment of students to enable clear learning targets to be set for them. There is not

enough NVQ assessment in the workplace.

35. The monitoring of written work in some areas is weak and insufficient use is made of target setting.

36. Work is marked according to the assessment objectives, and these are explained clearly and carefully to the students. In mathematics, homework is regularly set and marked. Students report that homework is normally returned by the next lesson and queries are effectively dealt with. Additionally, the progress of students is monitored regularly against targets and at departmental meetings at which staff identify those students who are under-achieving or under-performing.

37. Overall, much assessment and monitoring of students work is good and there is a significant amount of thoughtful and constructive marking of work in many subject areas. Assessment is fair, thorough and carried out on a regular basis. Most teachers give students clear and helpful feedback on their work, indicating how they may improve it.

38. However, not all work in the curriculum areas is marked with consistent thoroughness. Written work of students on some courses, such as psychology and sociology, is not always corrected and assessed with sufficient care. A common assessment policy has not been implemented across the college with the aim of ensuring that all students' work is marked with the same degree of thoroughness.

39. Effective internal verification systems are in place for vocational programmes and key skills.

40. The college makes adequate provision for students with learning difficulties and for those with disabilities, offering extra support, for example, for dyslexic students, and moving teaching locations to ensure they are accessible to those with mobility difficulties.

41. Absence enquiry letters are automatically generated when a student has eight hours or more of unexplained absence in a two-week period. However, the present reporting system does not address effectively the high incidence of student absence and many students' lateness for lessons across all curriculum areas. The failure of students to return promptly after mid-lesson breaks is a small, but significant problem which is not addressed in any action plans.

42. The college offers a very extensive range of courses at level 3 (GCE AS/A level) and has increased the range of vocational GCE A-level and intermediate courses since the last inspection. Many students cite this good range of courses as a reason for coming to the college. The college offers courses leading to NVQs or vocational awards in catering, childcare, construction, sport, recreation and leisure in response to identified local demand from the community and from employers. The college has established effective partnership working with the local NHS trust to train assessors and jointly provide NVQ training for health care workers. Entry and foundation level courses represent a very small proportion of the provision. In 2002, out of the 2,583 students enrolling on first-year courses, 1,147 joined GCE A-level courses, 500 joined vocational GCE A-level or national diploma courses, 91 joined NVQ 3 or other level 3 programmes, 622 entered level 2 courses and 211 started level 1 courses. Over the last four years, around 54% of enrolments have been for GCE A-level courses, 23% for vocational A-level or national diploma courses, 15% for intermediate courses and 5% for foundation level courses.

43. In a number of curriculum areas, the inclusivity of provision is demonstrated by the number of courses at entry level. In engineering and arts and humanities, however, there is little provision for students with low attainment. There are no NVQ courses in business studies. There is good provision, which includes work experience, for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at entry level and level 1, but there are few vocational options and progression opportunities for them. Many students across the college progress from entry and foundation, to intermediate and advanced level courses. Students are well supported for progression to further education (FE), employment, training or HE.

44. There is an extensive range of enrichment activities including sports, performance, student

union, youth project, clubs and societies. Sports activities run throughout the day. The college has more than 10 sports teams throughout the year, which are successful regionally and nationally. There is also an extensive range of music, drama and dance activities, and a wide range of curriculum and learning support workshops, which are well attended. Students value these activities very highly. The majority of students engage in some of these, but in some curriculum areas, such as English, few students take part in recreational activities. In business, there are no work placements and no partnerships with business to strengthen the curriculum. In many subject areas, students undertake a wide range of visits to broaden their experience. For example, students of modern foreign languages go on visits abroad, sometimes partly financed by the college.

45. The college guarantees a place for students from the partner schools. High proportions of Year 11 students transfer from the partner schools to the college. For example, 89% of the Year 11 cohort at Grey Court School have applied to the college this year, as have 83% from Orleans school, and 76% from Waldergrave school. Most students joining level 3 programmes have high prior attainment. For example, around 30% have A or A\* grades in seven or more GCSE subjects. Around one-third of the students come from the London borough of Richmond, two-thirds from nine other boroughs to the south and west of London, or from Surrey.

46. More than 800 students go on to universities and HE institutions to study for degrees or Higher National Diplomas (HND). About 20 students gain places at Oxford or Cambridge each year.

47. The college provides students with a good and comprehensive range of guidance and support services. There are excellent links with the partner schools to ensure pupils are well informed about their post-16 choices, backed by effective admissions and enrolment procedures. Good induction programmes enable new students to settle into the college community easily. Tutors provide effective academic and personal support, and set targets for their students. Students make good progress and value the very wide range of cultural and social activities. Careers education and guidance are provided for all students to help them to progress to further courses, employment, training or HE. In many areas, such as English, sciences and modern foreign languages, learning plans are detailed and target setting is good. In some areas, however, including engineering and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, some learning plans are not devised well and target setting is less satisfactory. Second-year GCE A-level students were not given challenging tasks in their group tutorials. Some students said they found these group tutorials boring, but they valued their one-to-one review tutorials very highly.

48. Year 10 and Year 11 pupils from the partner schools attend taster sessions at college to gain some experience of the college curriculum. All applicants for courses aged 16 to 18 are interviewed with their parents and are guaranteed a place subject to their meeting stated entry requirements. The college provides good pre-entry guidance at open evenings at schools, open days, and at applicants' interviews. There is a good prospectus, backed by detailed course leaflets to help students make the right choice of course. The enrolment process is efficient.

49. A substantial range of additional learning support is provided in class to help individual students, especially at entry and foundation levels. Students greatly value this support. Skill workshops are timetabled for communications and numeracy and students are required to attend these. Students can also refer themselves to these workshops. In many subject areas, the teachers provide additional support and revision workshops at lunchtime or in the early evening.

50. The college keeps good records of support students receive and of their attendance at the workshops. There are some detailed case studies of the beneficial results of individual learning support for students with particular learning difficulties, such as hearing impairment, visual impairment or dyslexia. The college has also provided evidence of how these support arrangements contribute to raising retention and pass rates across the college as a whole. For example, retention and pass rates for students receiving additional learning support on level 1 and level 2 programmes are higher than those for students who do not. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from an innovative, effective partnership scheme, whereby students from mainstream courses at levels 2 and 3 work alongside students with learning difficulties to help them during their lessons. There are also good link programmes with the schools to help these students make the transition from school to college easily.

51. There is a well-planned programme of tutorials. During these, students develop study skills and receive pastoral guidance and careers advice. Senior tutors oversee this programme for all groups of students. Tutorials are timetabled for two hours each week. Tutors are given detailed guidance on how to conduct both group and individual tutorials.

52. All students value very highly the one-to-one review sessions with their tutors. Some of the group tutorial topics were boring and undemanding for second-year students and tutors spent too much time giving out notices. Each student has a personal tutor responsible for reviewing or monitoring his or her progress. Through individual progress reviews, students gain a clear view of their performance and whether they are meeting their target grades and the requirements of their action plans.

53. In science, students are set clear target minimum grades and their progress towards reaching these is monitored carefully. Students on modern foreign languages courses have their learning needs carefully identified and ways of meeting these are set out in excellent individual learning plans. These plans are constantly updated in the light of highly detailed assessment of students' work and careful monitoring of students' progress. In English, good use is made of the college intranet to monitor and record student programmes and performance. Learning plans are not effective. For example, students on engineering courses and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not set clear targets and their individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed.

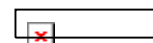
54. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 regularly receive reports on their child's progress and these cover progress reviews. They value this information highly, and also the opportunity to meet personal tutors and subject teachers at parents' evenings. Tutor groups are comprised mainly of students taking a similar course or range of subjects and are led by a tutor who usually teaches at least one of their subjects. There is a well-established procedure for monitoring attendance.

55. Parents value the fact that they are informed of any attendance failures on the part of their son or daughter and are thus included in helping to rectify these. Some students' lack of punctuality is a serious problem, not only in the morning when many students have difficulty with long journeys, but also after breaks.

56. There is a comprehensive programme of careers education and guidance. Personal tutors work in co-operation with the guidance and support staff, and the Connexions service in college, to provide students with firm guidance and support on progression. There is a well-organised and well-stocked career office. Students progressing to FE courses, to an apprenticeship or to employment are given well-timed and informed advice. Applicants to HE and to Oxford and Cambridge value the thorough support and guidance they receive. Second-year students on level 3 courses were well informed about their offers of places at universities.

57. The student services manager oversees a team of counselling, welfare, youth project, admissions, advice and support staff, which provides a comprehensive range of services. The youth workers manage a youth project in college at break times on befriending and leisure activities, and they also assist the student union which is active in holding elections to posts and in supporting a range of clubs, societies, fund raising and social events. Financial support is available for students through the access fund. Students value the range of welfare support available, which is often crucial to their survival at college. The Connexions service makes a substantial contribution to the range of careers advice and personal advice and mentoring available to students.

## Leadership and management



58. Leadership and management are good. The senior management team provides a clear strategic focus for the college. The recent reorganisation into three areas of curriculum provision has been well implemented and reflects the direction the college is moving in.



59. Since the last inspection, the college has expanded its vocational provision and its provision below level 3. It has significantly increased its enrolments across all provision. Students travel considerable distances to attend the college, which offers a particularly high number of courses at level 3. Provision at levels 2 and 1 and at entry level is less extensive and in some areas is not sufficient to meet the needs of all students.

60. Curriculum management is particularly good in those areas of the curriculum where teaching, learning and attainment are good or better. In some areas, such as modern foreign languages and English, curriculum management is very good. In many other areas of the curriculum, however, there are management weaknesses. In some areas, staff changes and staff absence are not managed well and adversely affect the continuity of students' learning. Some staff do not make sufficient use of available individualised student records (ISR).

61. The quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive, and cover most of the college's work, including the work-based learning programmes and the franchised courses. Feedback from students and parents and comments from examination boards are responded to and, in the most effective areas of the curriculum, they are taken into account when planning improvements to provision.

62. The college has clearly defined improvement targets. General improvement targets are set for the college as a whole, and then translated into more specific targets for required curriculum areas. However, these targets are expressed more as predictions rather than year-on-year improvements. Some of the quality assurance procedures are not implemented effectively. Some staff have not had their teaching observed for several years.

63. The college has recently developed an 'advanced practitioner' scheme, whereby two staff in each faculty focus on identifying and developing good practice in teaching and learning.

64. The grading of teaching in the college is in line with the national average overall. However, there are wide variations in the quality of teaching across the college, with some teaching that is excellent and some that is unsatisfactory. Self-assessment forms a central part of the quality assurance processes, and in some areas of the curriculum is rigorous and realistic. However, it is not effective in every area. In some areas, little action is taken on issues identified by staff teams, such as the poor quality of resources.

65. The college has a long-established staff appraisal and review system, which applies to all staff. During their appraisal, staff are encouraged to discuss observation reports on their teaching. At appraisal, the training needs of staff are identified and are taken into account when drawing up the staff training programme for the college. This programme is extensive and it focuses, in particular, on the updating of the knowledge and expertise of staff, and teacher training. During the college 'updating week' in July some staff go back into industry. There is a mentoring programme for new staff, who also receive an induction to the college. Part-time staff sometimes find it difficult to attend the induction.

66. The college's response to the recent equalities legislation is good. The college has substantially met the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act, 2000 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act, 2001. The equal opportunities policy has been amended and the college has developed a race equality action plan, which is being implemented. There has been training for staff on issues related to both race and disability and action has been taken to ensure students with disabilities are able to benefit fully from the college's services. Managers are aware, however, that the inaccessibility of some accommodation to students with restricted mobility remains an issue.

67. The college has routinely monitored the student cohort in terms of race, gender and disability for some years. The data show that the numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased steadily over the last four years. Of all students, 40% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are slightly more female students than male students aged 16 to 18, and the majority of students aged over 19 are male.

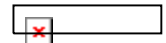
68. Achievement data and students' destinations are analysed in relation to students' gender and

racial origin. The college has responded to the findings. For example, it has advertised for mentors to support students from a specific minority group who are performing less well than students from other groups. In work-based learning, there have been marketing initiatives to attract more female students into occupations where they are under-represented. Faculty heads are required to produce annual reports on progress in promoting equal opportunities in their areas. The college has recently taken a more systematic approach to the analysis of staff backgrounds. In the past four years, more staff have been recruited who are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Currently, 8% of staff at the college are of minority ethnic origin. The proportion of persons from minority ethnic groups in the population of Richmond is smaller, at 6%. The college does not have statistics available on staff who are registered as disabled, but it now monitors applications for posts for the purpose of gathering such information.

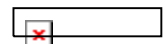
69. The college is in financial category A and has made operating surpluses in each of the last five years. It more than achieved its funding unit targets between 1999 and 2002, with unit growth of 17%. Its franchised provision represented 11% of its unit activity in 2001/02 and the college plans to reduce this proportion to 8% in 2002/03. The college has a value for money strategy, which has saved the college £164,000 annually, and improved some of the key services such as catering and payroll.

70. Governors are kept informed of the college's performance, alerted to areas of concern, and they debate them. They are aware, for example, that there has been poor performance in the construction programme area. They receive regular briefings from heads of faculty and have 'away days' to debate significant issues, such as the 'federated' college. They do not receive sufficient information, however, about the franchised provision. Some governors are directly linked to specific curriculum areas. Governors take a keen interest in the views of students and a governor sits on the student liaison committee. The governors are fully informed about the recent equal opportunities legislation and have approved the college action plans in relation to the Race Relations Act, 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Science



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

#### **Strengths**

- good retention rates
  
- high pass rates
  
- well-organised practical work

- effective monitoring of students' progress
  
- wide range of courses
  
- high progression rate to HE.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient use of IT in teaching and learning
  
- poor accommodation in some areas.

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

71. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and attend full time. GCE AS and A level courses are offered in biology, chemistry, environmental science, geology and physics. There are vocational programmes in science at levels 2 and 3 and also a GCSE single subject course. The only course for adults is an evening one-year GCE A-level biology course. The access to science course did not run this year. There are about 900 enrolments on science programmes.

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

72. The average attendance in all classes observed was 84%. Lack of punctuality on the part of students, both at the start of the day and after breaks, had a disruptive effect on the majority of the lessons observed. Most teachers challenged this lateness and followed the established college procedures in reporting it. All teachers considered that the inappropriate timing of lesson breaks is a contributory factor to students' poor timekeeping.

73. Retention rates are well above the national level on all the courses except the AVCE course. Pass rates on the GCE A-level courses in 2002 rose and are now well above the national average for general FE and tertiary colleges. For example, in chemistry, the pass rate of 98% is well above the national average. In physics, the pass rate rose from 76% in 2001 to 95% in 2002. The pass rate on the GNVQ advanced course was consistently well above the national average. That course has now been replaced by the AVCE programme, on which the pass rate was 100% in 2002. The proportion of GCE A level science students achieving A to B grades is higher than the national average. For example, in 2002, 44% of physics and geology students achieved grades A to B, compared with the national average of 30%. Current pass rates on all the GCE AS courses, although lower than in 2001, are above the national average. Many students on GCE AS and A-level courses do not achieve the grades expected of them on the basis of their GCSE scores on entry.

74. Many students progress to HE. A high proportion of students aged 16 to 18 from level 3 courses go on to university. Students are well motivated, work productively and take part in learning activities with enthusiasm. Students demonstrate subject knowledge and understanding in lessons and their

work is good. Most GCE AS and A-level students make good use of IT in their written work. Their project work is of a high standard and the students develop a wide range of skills in their practical assignments through research, good planning, critical thinking and sound evaluation.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in science, 2000 to 2002***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	15	23	46
		% retention	67	100	80
		% pass rate	10	57	51
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	*	193	231
		% retention	*	90	90
		% pass rate	*	89	73
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	107	128
		% retention	*	92	89
		% pass rate	*	83	76
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	*	98	115
		% retention	*	93	94
		% pass rate	*	86	74
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	90	102	120
		% retention	72	78	98
		% pass rate	100	88	91
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	96	120	59
		% retention	80	81	97
		% pass rate	94	87	98
GCE A-level geology	3	No. of starts	10	31	15
		% retention	80	87	100
		% pass rate	100	81	93
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	86	92	60
		% retention	72	74	98
		% pass rate	93	76	95
GNVQ advanced/AVCE science	3	No. of starts	21	14	20
		% retention	71	79	60
		% pass rate	87	91	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

75. The majority of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, but only 56% was good or better. Most lessons are well structured and cover the course content at an appropriate pace. Students are well motivated, work productively and take part in learning activities with enthusiasm. Students demonstrate subject knowledge and understanding in lessons and their work is good. In the best

lessons, teachers succeeded in capturing and holding the students' interest. The students then participated in the lesson tasks with enthusiasm and learnt effectively. In a significant number of lessons, however, the teacher did not provide a range of activities to enable students to experience different methods of learning. In some lessons, teachers failed to check students' understanding sufficiently. In all lessons, there were good relationships between students and teachers.

76. Practical activities are well organised and are taught well. Students carry out practical experiments with care and enthusiasm and confirmed that they enjoy this aspect of their studies. Teachers relate theory to practice clearly and effectively. For example, in a GCE AS biology lesson on the respiratory features of the human lung, the students tested their own individual lung capacity by breathing as much air as they could into a spirometer and measuring the resultant volume. They then discussed the terms commonly used to describe lung capacity and concluded by applying that knowledge to answer an examination question requiring them to determine appropriate quantitative values. In most practical lessons in chemistry, however, insufficient attention is paid to health and safety issues. While all students put on laboratory coats, the wearing of safety spectacles is sometimes optional. In some instances, students removed safety spectacles before the completion of the experiment on the grounds that they are badly scratched and difficult to see through.

77. In physics, frequent and effective use is made of demonstrations. In one GCE A-level lesson, the teacher illustrated the diffraction and interference properties of waves at various frequencies effectively by asking students to take it in turn to demonstrate the characteristics of wave patterns in a ripple tank. This activity was followed by similar demonstrations using light from a laser and sound from tuning forks. In a GCE AS lesson, students were able to apply the outcome of their practical experiment on latent heat capacities to real-life situations such as the physical processes occurring in sweating, the incidence of hurricanes and the cooling of nuclear reactors.

78. There is insufficient use of IT in teaching and learning. No modern computers had been purchased for use by science students for a number of years until last term, when two networked computers in science were installed in the science workshop.

79. Homework is set regularly. Students' work is usually marked rigorously and promptly and teachers provide constructive comments where appropriate. Teachers monitor students' progress effectively and ensure that students know what is expected of them. The daily workshop 'surgeries' are popular and help both weaker students and those wishing to gain additional understanding of the topics.

80. Teachers are well qualified for the subjects they teach. There is adequate technician support but some students do not receive the support they need in practical activities. Resources for chemistry and physics much of the equipment are ageing and in need of replacement. All science students are provided with a free CD-ROM containing much of the essential material including past examination questions for the science area. This effective use of resources is much appreciated by students. The library resources for science are good and include a comprehensive range of textbooks. Those relevant to the science courses are well used although a few volumes are outdated.

81. All the science teaching takes place in a three-storey laboratory block. All the teaching rooms and corridors contain attractive posters or wall charts. A programme of refurbishment was undertaken a few years ago to provide very good accommodation for biology and satisfactory facilities for chemistry. Some of the accommodation is poor, however, and does not provide a stimulating learning environment. For example, all the geology and environmental science teaching takes place in a former electronics workshop that is in poor condition. The physics laboratories are spacious, but contain outdated benching and are still waiting to be refurbished.

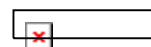
### ***Leadership and management***

82. The science areas are based in a large faculty that includes mathematics, computing, engineering and construction. The science area lacks overall strategic planning and insufficient attention is given to what resources are needed to run existing programmes. Curriculum management has been subject to a number of recent changes, but is effective. There was an acting

head of biology during last term, but the responsibilities of this post are now covered by a job-share arrangement. The head of chemistry has only been in post for this term. Communications between managers and teachers are good. Course teams meet regularly and work well together, but there is insufficient sharing of good practice and learning resources between some subject teams. Staff turnover is high and last term a number of biology teachers had an excessive workload in order to provide cover for colleagues on maternity leave or long-term illness.

83. Self-assessment is well established and identifies points for action. Action plans drawn up following self-assessment, however, do not include year-on-year targets for continuous improvement and do not specify clear criteria for judging the quality of teaching. When observing lessons, the college's own internal assessors gave more high grades for teaching than the inspectors did.

## Mathematics



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

### **Strengths**

- consistently high pass rates for GCE A-level mathematics
  
- much confident and energetic presentation of mathematics concepts and techniques
  
- successful engagement of students' interest through good questioning and appropriate exercises
  
- effective standardisation of coursework assessment through cross marking
  
- well-managed and effectively organised provision.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates for GCSE mathematics
  
- some poorly explained background theory
  
- very little use of ICT.

### **Scope of provision**

84. The college offers a wide range of provision in mathematics. The majority of students are enrolled on full-time GCSE and GCE A-level courses. Currently, there are nearly 300 students taking GCE AS in either pure mathematics and statistics or pure mathematics and mechanics and almost 200 studying GCE A2 mathematics and statistics or mathematics and mechanics. A double GCE A-level in mathematics and further mathematics is taken by a small number of students. A new course in GCE AS use of mathematics has started this year. Over 500 students, most of whom are aged 16 to 18, are on GCSE mathematics courses. GCSE mathematics courses are also provided for a small number of modern apprentices, some construction craft students, and some students on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Mathematics units in engineering and business courses are also provided.

### **Achievement and standards**

85. There are high retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses. Consistently excellent pass rates averaging 94%, well above the national average, have been maintained on GCE A-level mathematics courses over the last three years. Retention rates for GCE A-level mathematics are also above the national average. There has been a recent drop in the large number of students taking full GCE A-level mathematics.

86. Many students on GCE AS mathematics courses do not complete the three required modules in one year. For the past two years, most GCE AS mathematics students have deferred sitting the third module of their course until the following academic year. In 2000/01, the pass rate in GCE AS mathematics was high, at 71%. The table below does not show the pass rate for 2001/02 as most students are not taking the examination for their third module until the end of 2002/03.

87. The overall retention rate on GCSE mathematics courses is above the national average. The proportion of students, however, who achieve grade C or above is low, and in 2001/02 it fell to 29%.

88. In the last two years, a large number of students have been encouraged to participate in the UK Senior Maths Challenge. About half of these gained certificates and a small number take part in the Mathematics Olympiad.

89. Most students are attentive in class and work at a level suitable for their courses. Average attendance in the observed classes was high at 89%.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in mathematics, 2000 to 2002**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Foundation of advanced mathematics	X	No. of starts	41	82	80
		% retention	80	70	66
		% pass rate	88	81	77
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	381	453	473
		% retention	81	82	77
		% pass rate	36	37	29
GCE A-level/A2 mathematics (2 year) **	3	No. of starts	228	303	175
		% retention	80	75	97
		% pass rate	92	92	97
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	***	329	339

		% retention	***	89	*
		% pass rate	***	71	*

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* due to deferral of final exam to 2002/03 for most students reliable data is unavailable

\*\* shows GCE A-level mathematics in 1999/2000 and 2000/01 but GCE A2 mathematics in 2001/02

\*\*\* course did not run

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

90. Many lessons were taught by confident and energetic staff, who communicated their enthusiasm for the subject to the students. Discussion, questioning and carefully chosen exercises helped students to develop mathematical concepts and skills. In these lessons, the students were industrious and participated fully in learning activities. In some lessons, however, the teacher did not explain theory well, and the students made slow progress.

91. Most teaching was good or better. In one lesson, the students revised and reviewed some mathematical ideas and methods through a quiz. The enthusiasm of presentation and the spur of competition between pairs of students to solve the problems resulted in an exercise the students enjoyed greatly and through which they made clear progress. In another lesson about salary and pay calculations, the interest of the students was fully engaged. Students drew on their own experience of pay rates while doing part-time work and compared these rates with those of professional footballers.

92. In some lessons, theory was poorly explained and the students then spent a great deal of time trying to puzzle out what it was they were supposed to do and understand. In other lessons, students were set problems. Some finished these quickly and then were given nothing worthwhile to do while the teacher went round helping other students in the group.

93. In one well-planned lesson, computer software was used effectively to investigate the graphical representation of Ferris wheel motion. This lesson was held in the single classroom equipped with computers. Good software for use with statistics and graphical work has recently been installed. In many lessons, there was little use of ICT. ICT resources for the large number of mathematics classes are inadequate. Most students have their own graphical calculators, but there are some available on permanent loan to students unable to provide their own.

94. Most mathematics lessons are timetabled in a suite of pleasant mathematics rooms. There is a staff room on the same floor. Some rooms have attractive wall posters, while others are rather bare. One room is open and staffed for 17 hours a week as a mathematics workshop.

95. Mathematics staff have suitable qualifications in mathematics or in a subject with mathematical content. Most staff have degrees and two have doctorates in mathematics.

96. Staff have co-operated effectively to produce excellent sets of student worksheets relevant to the current syllabuses. Students' work is monitored effectively. Coursework for GCSE mathematics is subject to careful internal verification. The assessment of GCE AS mathematics coursework is standardised through the cross-marking of samples. Coursework exercises are an integral part of mathematics programmes. These are marked appropriately and teachers give students good feedback on how they may improve their performance. All work is marked and returned to students promptly.

97. Many students do not complete their GCSE and GCE AS mathematics courses within one year. Staff consider that the demands of the syllabuses are such that many students need more time. Students benefit from the careful arrangements made to help them progress satisfactorily at their own pace.



98. In order to help them achieve a high grade in GCSE mathematics, students can extend their course over a second year in order to retake a module and raise their grade, and also take the third module. About 10% of students do not complete the courses in one year.

99. Students entered for GCE AS mathematics are normally on a two-year GCE A-level course. They receive most of their GCE AS mathematics teaching by the July of their first year, but defer taking the third GCE AS module until their second year. In this way, they are better able to cope with the wide content of the modules.

100. Students are well supported by the mathematics staff, who help students outside normal class time. Most students like the tutorial arrangements. A mathematics workshop is available to them every day for at least three hours.

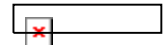
### ***Leadership and management***

101. The curriculum area is well managed and the programmes of study are effectively organised so that staff are clear about their aims and responsibilities. Staff work well as a team.

102. GCSE and GCE AS mathematics students are assisted in achieving their potential by the special arrangements made to enable them to take the final parts of their modular courses in a second year, if necessary. The well-organised programmes of study have clear course plans. Managers communicate effectively with staff.

103. Staff have successfully shared the work of planning and producing good worksheets for the current courses. The good teamwork is instrumental in supporting the very large numbers of GCSE and GCE A-level students.

### **Business studies**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates and pass rates on most courses
  
- high standards of students work in lessons
  
- much good teaching
  
- rigorous assessment of students work
  
- very good curriculum management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- no subject identity for classrooms
  
- no real business experience for students
  
- some unimaginative teaching.

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

104. The department offers a wide range of GCE A-level courses, including GCE AS/A-level business, GCE AS/A-level economics, and GCE AS/A-level accountancy. The department has been particularly successful in recruiting large numbers of students to GCE AS/A-level economics courses. There is a wide range of vocational courses from entry level to level 3. Students have good progression routes from intermediate level through to advanced level and on to HE. There are, however, no NVQ courses for full-time students. There is a good provision of professional courses particularly in the areas of accountancy and marketing.

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

105. Overall, the standards of work observed in lessons and student written work are high. Students display a good understanding of terminology and key concepts, for example, monetary policy, declining balance depreciation and product positioning. They show a good ability to apply these concepts to case studies and business situations. Students demonstrated logical thinking, analysis and evaluation. For example, in one lesson, students were able to explain how the life of a company's product could be extended, through firms entering global markets. Most demonstrated well developed research skills and used a good combination of primary and secondary research.

106. Many students make good progress in extending their skills, knowledge and understanding. In some lessons, however, teachers do not give the students enough scope to develop their skills of analysis and evaluation. Most students are well motivated, and apply themselves well to the tasks they have been set. However, some are over dependent on what the teacher tells them and show some unwillingness to work on their own and be self-reliant.

107. Most students organise their files effectively and their work is well presented. Some students, however, have poor skills of note making.

108. Retention rates for all GCE AS/A-level subjects are around or above the national average. Retention and pass rates over a three-year period are above the national average. The proportion of students who obtain high grades in GCE AS/A-level accounting and GCE A-level economics is well above the national average. This proportion, however, is well below the national average in respect of GCE AS/A-level business and GCE AS economics.

109. The retention rate on the GNVQ advanced business course is above the national average. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate course is slightly below the national average, and well below it on the foundation level course. The pass rate at all three levels is above the national average. Numbers are high on the advanced and intermediate level courses, but not on the foundation level course.

110. The value added to students' achievements is calculated by comparing the final results students obtain with their GCSE scores on entry. Students on GCE A2 business courses have high value added scores and obtain better results than those predicted for them. Students on GCE AS business, economics and business, and economics courses have value added scores below the expected level.

111. In 2002, retention rates rose in all subject areas. Pass rates rose for all GCE A-level subjects, but declined for all GCE AS subjects.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in business studies, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GNVQ business studies intermediate	2	No. of starts	76	72	61
		% retention	78	74	79
		% pass rate	98	87	79
NVQ in accounting	2	No. of starts	18	12	*
		% retention	78	75	*
		% pass rate	36	67	*
GCE AS accounting	3	No. of starts	*	89	105
		% retention	*	81	88
		% pass rate	*	83	78
GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	82	91	83
		% retention	84	81	73
		% pass rate	73	85	78
Certificate in marketing	3	No. of starts	13	12	*
		% retention	100	75	*
		% pass rate	36	67	*
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	174	177	90
		% retention	86	72	99
		% pass rate	86	81	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

112. Nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory. There is a significant amount of good and very good teaching and some that makes real demands of the students and is sparkling. Schemes of work are good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Lessons are planned well and have clear objectives. Teachers ensure the syllabus is covered adequately and they question the students skilfully to check their understanding. The pace of lessons is appropriate and purposeful. Whilst there is good use of case studies, the range of teaching strategies is generally too narrow. In some lessons, the teacher presented and explained ideas and concepts clearly, and kept all students fully alert and attentive through skilful and probing questioning which required extended answers. The teacher challenged students' responses in order to provoke lively debate and discussion. In one effective economics lesson, the teacher encouraged a good debate on the social costs associated with smoking and whether the intention was to recover some of these costs through high taxation on cigarettes. On GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses, good strategies were used to encourage students to identify gaps in the market and to apply marketing matrixes effectively to the product

they were researching for their assignment. In one accountancy lesson, students were visibly motivated by the teacher's enthusiasm and very thorough coverage of profit and loss accounting. Many teachers made good use of case studies. In several lessons, however, teachers used a narrow range of teaching methods. In some lessons, the overhead projector was used inappropriately and unimaginatively to spoon-feed students with information. Thus students merely copied directly from overhead transparencies instead of making notes of their own. In some lessons, the teaching was unimaginative and failed to meet students' individual needs.

113. Staff are well qualified. They participate in staff-development activities to enhance their effectiveness. There is, however, no programme of industrial placements for staff to enable them to update their knowledge of current business practices. There is a good range of vocational resources, but these are not used effectively in teaching and learning. Good use is made of the Internet and Mintel for secondary research. There is a small, but effective workshop for students. Staff and students have good access to ICT, but there are no computers in the classrooms. Insufficient use is made of industry as a learning resource.

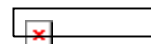
114. Assessment is carried out well. Work is marked regularly and accurately. There are clear marking schemes, model answers and feedback sheets that reflect the assessment criteria of the examination boards. Internal verification and moderation procedures are good. Students receive regular reviews of their progress across the subjects they study. Records of these reviews, however, are insufficiently individualised.

115. In the spirit of Curriculum 2000, a significant number of students combine GCE A levels with AVCE courses. In some instances, classes on intermediate level and AVCE courses are large, and it is difficult for the teacher to ensure that the needs of individual students are met fully and check the understanding of everyone in the group.

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

116. The department is soundly managed. Staff meet regularly to discuss students' progress. Quality assurance is carried out well. Each member of staff is fully aware of the course targets and action to improve the provision. The self-assessment reports, however, are not thorough enough and do not identify all the department's strengths and weaknesses. Action plans to address weaknesses, however, are robust.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on level 3 full-time courses
  
- high retention rates on level 3 full-time courses
  
- high progression rates across a wide range of courses

- good coursework.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on some part-time vocational courses
- poor attendance and lack of punctuality on some courses
- much dull and unchallenging teaching on full-time courses.

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

117. There is a wide range of provision for full-time students. Each year about 20 students study for the GNVQ at foundation level, about 40 for the GNVQ at intermediate level and over 50 for the advanced AVCE in ICT. Students on the advanced course study for either the single award or double award. Those who work towards the single award are from a wide range of other areas of the college, including both advanced level and vocational courses. In addition, Java programming and web design courses are offered to full-time students as curriculum enrichment. The GCE AS and GCE A2 courses in ICT or computing are popular, with over 400 students on one or other of these.

118. Through day, evening, and Learndirect provision, over 900 adult students study for a range of level 1 and 2 qualifications, including City and Guilds modules, the European computer driving licence (ECDL), the Oxford and Cambridge and RSA examinations (OCR) computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) suite of courses at different levels, or an IT network management qualification at level 4. Over 20 work-based learners each year study for the certificate for IT practitioners and the NVQ in IT installing and supporting systems at level 3, in order to meet the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework.

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

119. Most pass rates on advanced level courses for full-time students are high. The pass rate on the AVCE course is particularly high, at 95%. The pass rates on GNVQ ICT courses at foundation and intermediate levels are high and over 80% of students progress to further courses or employment. Following changes in the marking of coursework, the pass rate on the GCE AS computing course fell from 89% in 2001 to only 62% in 2002. Following discussions with the awarding body, teachers have now taken action that aims to restore the pass rates to their previous high level. Value added data shows that GCE AS computing students are under-performing. There are about 400 students on full-time ICT courses from foundation to advanced level

120. The pass rates on some vocational courses that are taught within different curriculum areas of the college are variable, with the rates on both CLAIT and City and Guilds level 2 diploma courses consistently below the national average, but those on more specialist courses, such as the certificate for IT practitioners, are at or above the national average. The pass rates for adults on some of these courses are consistently high.

121. The retention rate on most courses is at or above the national average, but was below it on GNVQ ICT courses at foundation and intermediate levels in 2002. In the current year, following

improvements in advice and guidance, the retention rate on GNVQ courses at both levels is high, at about 90%.

122. Students on most courses show a good knowledge of the software they use and make good use of time. Many are able to make links between theory and practical work and produce coursework of high standard.

123. About 30 full-time advanced level students from business and other courses take work towards the single award AVCE in ICT and many advanced ICT students enhance their main programme with specialist courses such as programming in Java.

124. Attendance during the inspection was low at 76% and many students were late for lessons.

125. Over 80% of the advanced level students progress to HE and a significant proportion of these study for computing and business degree subjects. About 10% seek employment when leaving the college.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2000 to 2002***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	15	15	17
		% retention	80	87	59
		% pass rate	100	100	100
OCR CLAIT	1	No. of starts	994	286	357
		% retention	97	97	99
		% pass rate	58	40	60
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	32	42	34
		% retention	75	83	74
		% pass rate	92	77	84
City and Guilds 7261 diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	92	136	177
		% retention	90	71	80
		% pass rate	57	48	49
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	*	84	99
		% retention	*	89	91
		% pass rate	*	89	62
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	*	115	119
		% retention	*	78	87
		% pass rate	*	84	82
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	164	67	52
		% retention	62	70	98
		% pass rate	92	91	92
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	*	63	55
		% retention	*	73	98
		% pass rate	*	93	89

Advanced GNVQ/AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	46	40	52
		% retention	87	90	83
		% pass rate	70	92	95

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

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

126. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In about 50% of lessons it was good or better, but in 12% of lessons it was less than satisfactory. Teaching on adult, part-time courses within the college is good. Teachers have adequate schemes of work and prepare their lessons well and use overhead projector and whiteboard facilities well, although little use is made of ICT in theory lessons. In one lesson, the teacher made good use of software to take control of the students' computer screens and demonstrate the use of new software. The students were highly motivated and were able to use the software straight away.

127. In some lessons, teachers gave students few opportunities to make decisions for themselves, did not make exercises clear and failed to take sufficient account of the range of students' abilities. They did not check students' understanding enough. Some teachers question the students highly effectively to keep them constantly alert. They ask searching and challenging questions which require extended answers and then call upon individuals to answer them. Other teachers, however, do not frame and ask questions so well.

128. In practical computing lessons, the students learn effectively and make good use of facilities to research subjects, create and manipulate images and carry out coursework carefully. In theory lessons, they make satisfactory progress. In some lessons, there is good group work, with students sharing ideas.

129. Most students take care with their work and produce creative images. All homework is marked carefully, but some teachers give students better feedback on how they can improve their work than others. A number of students do not attend regularly or are late for lessons, thereby disrupting the learning of others. They are seldom asked to explain their lack of punctuality. In lessons, some students chat rather than work.

130. The college runs successful work-based learning programmes. Learners work towards achieving their occupational NVQs by studying for the certificate for IT practitioners. The teachers meet regularly with employers to ensure their needs and those of the work-based learners are met.

131. Teachers are well qualified and suitably experienced and over 90% have degrees or their equivalent, and also teaching certificates. About one third have recent industrial experience and are trained assessors or internal verifiers. They regularly participate in staff development activities related to the curriculum.

132. Students have good access to computer facilities and continue their own learning though effective use of library and learning centre facilities where helpful staff are able to give them effective guidance. Some computer equipment is ageing, but still adequate. However, some of the classrooms are drab. They have no overhead projector screens and whiteboards have to be inappropriately used as screens.

133. On entry to the college, the additional learning needs of students are identified carefully. An individual learning plan is drawn up for each student. Additional learning support is provided for those who need it. These plans are reviewed twice a year to check the students are benefiting from the support they receive. Students appreciate the help they receive from teachers outside lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

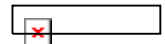
134. Leadership and management are effective within curriculum areas. ICT courses are run in more than three curriculum areas, at several local libraries and at other centres, but there is insufficient overall co-ordination of this provision. The college has an IT steering and review committee. There is effective internal verification of assessment. One curriculum area recognised that its students were not achieving their ICT qualifications and took appropriate remedial action for the benefit of the students.

135. In each area, there are newly appointed advanced practitioners whose role is to mentor teachers and facilitate the sharing of good practice.

136. The managers are aware that there is a gender imbalance on computing courses and are marketing courses to girls in local schools. Many of the rooms where ICT courses are held are not easily accessible to students in wheelchairs.

137. Teachers regularly meet to review courses and discuss students' problems. They make an important contribution to the annual self-assessment report. Although the self-assessment report is detailed, it contained interpretations of data with which inspectors could not agree.

### **Sport, leisure and tourism**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- outstanding management and leadership
- excellent achievements of students
- very good teaching
- innovative curriculum
- good internal and external progression routes
- high level of personal performance in sport
- good tutorial support for students



- very good partnership with key local employers.

### **Weaknesses**

- students lack punctuality.

### **Scope of provision**

138. The college offers a wide range of sports and leisure programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3. These include GCE AS, A2, national diploma, first diploma and foundation courses. There are excellent internal and external progression routes. Full-time students can also follow additional courses for resort representatives and work towards a community sports leadership award and other qualifications. In 2003, the students on courses are both male and female, are from diverse cultural backgrounds, and a third live more than an hour from the college. In the three years to 2002, the number of students on courses grew by 49%. In 2002, there were 420 students on sports, leisure and tourism courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

139. Students' achievements are outstanding. In 2002, retention and pass rates on almost all courses were above the national average. The retention rate on the GNVQ leisure and tourism course at level 1 was below the national average. Some rates were outstanding. For example, the retention and pass rates on the first diploma course in sports science were 94% and 100%, respectively. The retention and pass rates on the GCE A2 sports and recreation courses were both 98%. Pass rates on the GCE A2 sports and recreation courses were both 98%. Pass rates on the GCE AS sports and recreation, the double VCE in both leisure and recreation and travel and tourism, and the GNVQ leisure and tourism intermediate courses were all above 92%. Students' practical performance is also very good. A basketball player has played for British colleges and many students from a variety of sports perform at regional and county level.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in sport, leisure and tourism, 2000 to 2002**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GNVQ leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	18	14	31
		% retention	78	50	61
		% pass rate	86	86	95
GNVQ leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	59	83	82
		% retention	74	79	79
		% pass rate	93	80	83
GCE A-level sport and recreation	3	No. of starts	26	*	*
		% retention	92	*	*
		% pass rate	89	*	*
VCE leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	34	56	*
		% retention	68	79	*

		% pass rate	83	91	*
VCE leisure and recreation double award	3	No. of starts	*	*	35
		% retention	*	*	65
		% pass rate	*	*	92
VCE travel and tourism double award	3	No. of starts	*	*	21
		% retention	*	*	81
		% pass rate	*	*	94
Sports science national diploma	3	No. of starts	16	13	14
		% retention	81	85	86
		% pass rate	85	100	100
GCE A-level physical education	3	No. of starts	34	44	*
		% retention	79	97	*
		% pass rate	88	85	*
GCE A2 sports games and recreation	3	No. of starts	*	*	53
		% retention	*	*	98
		% pass rate	*	*	98

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* data not available due to the change in the Curriculum 2000 subject provision

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

140. Almost all teaching is very good and some is excellent. Lessons are well managed. Introductory sessions link learning from one lesson to the next. New concepts are introduced well, often through presentation and debate, but students also learn about them through individual research. For example, a group of leisure students, asked to compare personal experiences in work, later developed personal job profiles and a group of tourism students shared personal experiences before embarking on an exploration of the ten key rules of customer service. In lessons, teachers demonstrate excellent communication and demonstration skills. They manage discussion skilfully and ensure that all students have mastered complex skills and fully understand concepts before introducing new work. Practical activities are carried out well. One lesson on skill classification was particularly effective. One student was asked to leave the room. A second learned a series of movements. When the first student returned, the second student went through the routine learned. The first student was then asked to repeat the routine from memory. It took five attempts before the routine was successfully repeated. The group learned that in coaching it is often necessary to repeat a demonstration before a change in behaviour can be achieved. In another group, cultural diversity was cleverly promoted when students from different cultural backgrounds located their country of origin within an international geographical context. Students clearly learnt a great deal from this imaginative exercise.

141. Teaching staff working across the area are well qualified and have had relevant and valuable experience. Of 31 teachers and trainers, 78% have degrees or their equivalent, 70% are qualified teachers and another 16% are currently training to teach. Most are qualified coaches and staff providing work-based courses have D32, D33 and D34 qualifications.

142. Most classrooms are light and airy and are well furnished. Furniture layout is creative and provides for easy movement around the room. The Gateway resource centre provides students with a valuable working facility.

143. In sport a large, well-equipped sports hall provides space for indoor sports. In addition good

sports pitches are available. The fitness centre is well equipped, but is not big enough for the number of students who want to use it. The performance laboratory contains excellent equipment, but is cluttered.

144. Assessment practices are good. All lesson plans are well planned and include attainment and assessment targets. Marked work is returned with an assessment sheet on which teachers praise good work and offer advice on ways in which students can improve. Students find this sheet helpful. All students undergo key skills assessment and are allocated to an appropriate group. The needs of students for help with basic skills are not assessed systematically.

145. Assessment practices are internally verified. Staff check one another's marking. The lead verifier ensures that assessment is carried out with consistency. External verifiers comment positively about the assessment process. Some students complain about deadline clashes for assignments across all their GCE A-level work.

146. Students' progress is monitored. Tutors meet with tutees each term to review their work and agree improvement targets. These targets are specific, but performance data are not used consistently when drawing them up. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 receive reports regularly on their child's progress.

147. The innovative gateway programme provides a programme for students who wish to follow a career in sport, leisure or tourism, but are not yet ready for the academic rigour of advanced level study. In 2002, eight students of nine enrolled secured employment with the sponsoring partner.

148. The academy scheme is also successful. It includes training in soccer for male and female students, rugby for male students, basketball for male and female students and a mixed gender volleyball programme which provides a platform for potential sports professionals. The basketball team were English schools and British colleges champions in 2002 and one player represented both the English and the British colleges in the under-18 team. The academy also provides players for regional and county teams. Local employers and sporting organisation including Thomas Cook; Harlequins Rugby Club; Wasps Rugby Club and Chelsea Ladies Soccer Club support the initiative and are central to its success. They provide work experience and employment opportunities for students.

149. Around 30% of students undertake some form of work experience and approximately 40% of students take part in at least one residential event. Students on all courses across the college have access to sport through the college's entitlement programme.

150. Student support is very good. Prospective students are made fully aware at interview of the rigour of their programme and what is expected of them. Tutors give their tutees good personal and academic support and have high expectations of them. Students' attendance and punctuality are monitored systematically. Students are robustly challenged to explain absence or lateness and their parents are informed of this. Students who miss work deadlines are referred and must resubmit work. Tutorials are planned carefully and activities are structured. Students receive guidance on careers and HE in group tutorials. They receive one-to-one reviews of their progress with their tutor. Following these reviews, they draw up action plans for improving their performance and the implementation of these is monitored. Personal matters are dealt with in confidence.

151. Students on sports programmes who are also taking other GCE A-level subjects, complain about work overload when assignments are set. The diagnosis of students' needs for additional learning support is not carried out systematically.

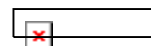
### ***Leadership and management***

152. Management and leadership in the programme area are outstanding. Dedicated and energetic leaders provide consistent and supportive leadership to a team of hard working and enthusiastic teachers. Staff are appointed through competitive interview and receive a thorough induction to the college and the programme area. Regular meetings of staff enable future plans to be discussed and

agreed. Significant action has resulted from these meetings, such as the setting up of the academy and gateway schemes and a strategy for raising students' retention and pass rates. This strategy required teachers to monitor students' attendance more rigorously, improve target-setting for students, improve pre-course guidance, tighten entry criteria, make better use of the findings from teacher observations, work in teams more effectively, apply policies consistently, and modify the curriculum to ensure it meets students' needs. Staff appraisal is carried out consistently across the programme areas. During appraisals, an action plan is drawn up for meeting work-related targets and the appraisee's individual needs. Progress in implementing this action plan is monitored at in-year review meetings. Observation of lessons is carried out systematically and the findings from this are a key element in the appraisal process.

153. All staff contribute to self-assessment through course review and programme area review meetings. Programme managers collate findings and prepare development plans. Implementation of these plans is monitored by senior management. Examples of recent initiatives are specialist visits to schools to promote recruitment of more female students and the development of shared, centrally held teaching resources in the tourism team. Students' views are collated three times a year. Action is taken on these. For example, research facilities in the sports area have been improved and work experience on the gateway course is provided on two days a week rather than in a block period.

### Health and social care



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on full time courses in health and social care and childcare
  
- very well-qualified staff
  
- high progression rate
  
- good tutorial and personal support for students.

#### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rate on AVCE in health and social care course
  
- poor attendance

- poor management of NVQ in care and early years courses.

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

154. The college offers full-time courses for 173 students at levels 1 to 3 in both health and social care and early years. Most of these students are under 19. There are 25 students undertaking GCSE in child development. There are 47 students on NVQ level 3 in care, 17 on level 2 in care and 19 on NVQ level 3 in early years courses through partnership arrangements with local NHS trusts, The Richmond Child Minding Group and NVQ playwork levels 2 and 3. There are seven students on a level 3 childminding course. The college also offers a range of short courses such as those in emergency paediatric first aid. The college offers long courses such as the diploma in holistic massage with 29 students, and the certificate in counselling course at levels 2 and 3 with 15 students. Through school link programmes, the college offers a childcare course for 15 Year 11 pupils and GCSE health and social care.

155. Under the Agenda 21 programme, 188 part time students are studying for a range of qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 including those on herbal medicine (12), spiritual healing (15), personal development (57), group leadership skills (30), life coaching (20), exploring holistic therapies (9), counselling skills (14).

156. There is a good range of courses for full-time students that supports internal progression. There are a number of flexible options to access GCSE and GCE AS. There are few options for additional vocational qualifications other than paediatric first aid as students complete work placements. There are partnerships with a local NHS Trust, a local childminding group offering NVQs and a playwork group offering NVQs that meet both local and national priorities. Agenda 21 is very popular with the large number of adult participants who use the units to enhance personal development, acquire counselling skills or gain qualifications in herbal medicine for use in professional settings such as a GP who sees relevance to her practice.

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

157. There are high pass rates on many courses including the foundation and AVCE in health and social care, diploma in nursery nursing and NVQ in early years courses. Most retention rates on other courses were satisfactory except on the AVCE in health and social care and NVQ in early years and care courses, although there are some problems in verifying the NVQ data. Attendance during inspection week was low, at 71%, and below the college target. It is particularly low for the first lessons of the day. The college has a number of strategies, including attendance logs, to tackle attendance issues. Through Agenda 21, a wide range of courses is offered. These courses are extremely popular with adult students who take units with the aim of furthering their personal development, acquiring counselling skills, or gaining qualifications in herbal medicine. Attendance at these is high, at 84.5%.

158. Standards achieved in students' portfolios and assignments are satisfactory. NVQ portfolios are well organised and students are competent in cross-referencing evidence. Students on practical part-time courses can link new theory and knowledge to practice with confidence. Students studying holistic massage swiftly moved into practical application of new skills by demonstrating arm and hand massage on each other. Students on counselling courses and the herbal medicine course were confidently using practical and theoretical skills identifying appropriate techniques such as listening skills and herbal remedies for respiratory problems.

159. There are particularly good progression routes for students and they strengthen their eligibility to follow these by achieving additional GCSE and GCE AS qualifications.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care 2000 to 2002***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	12	13	15
		% retention	67	85	73
		% pass rate	75	82	100
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	18	13	30
		% retention	67	85	90
		% pass rate	92	73	74
Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE)	2	No. of starts	10	9	15
		% retention	90	78	73
		% pass rate	100	86	91
GNVQ advanced/AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	15	15	17
		% retention	73	60	59
		% pass rate	55	100	100
Diploma in nursery/nursing NNEB/CACHE	3	No. of starts	30	22	8
		% retention	67	77	75
		% pass rate	89	100	100
NVQ in early years	3	No. of starts	26	8	26
		% retention	88	38	19
		% pass rate	52	100	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

160. Much teaching is satisfactory and some is good. Lessons are well planned. Teachers identify and meet the needs of individual students. For example, they provide support for those who need help with English, or who have disabilities, such as hearing impairment. In one group, a student unable to write was provided with a hand-held computer and learning handouts were scanned. Lessons involving practical activities were particularly effective. In a lesson on child development on a childcare course at level 1, students played games, which they then analysed, and they demonstrated particularly good analytical skills for students at this level. In some lessons, teachers failed to teach key skills through vocational content and missed opportunities to promote equal opportunities. There is evidence of good internal and external progression. The teaching of theory on NVQ courses is sound. Agenda 21 students make particularly good progress both academically and in terms of their personal development.

161. Staff are particularly well qualified and most have teaching qualifications. They are able to update their occupational knowledge and skills through the update week when they go out on vocational experience. There is a lack of qualified NVQ assessors in care at West Middlesex Hospital. One classroom contained an excellent display of students' work. Other classrooms had commercial posters on the walls. In general, rooms are adequate but many have a tired look, are in need of refurbishment and are not brightened up with good display materials. Practical rooms are satisfactory. There was good provision at the franchise provision where there were particularly good multi-cultural resources, including many books and a male ethnic doll. All students undertake work experience in a range of placements which are carefully monitored. In the best lessons, the teachers draw effectively on students' work experience.

162. Assessment is carried out regularly and is taken into account in target-setting and action-planning for students. The students' written work is satisfactory and teachers correct punctuation and

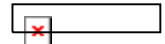
grammar. The internal verification process is sound and reports from external verifiers are satisfactory. Students said they had confidence in the assessment process and received good feedback giving them clear guidelines on how to improve their work.

163. There is good support for full-time and part-time students. All students value the tutorial system and find help is easily accessible. Teachers are very well aware of the needs of individual students and do their best to meet them in lessons.

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

164. Health and social care and childcare courses are well organised. There is close liaison between the college and the franchise partners. Some of the performance data relating to NVQ courses, however, is unreliable. Staff work together enthusiastically as a team, and are fully aware of targets for students' attendance, pass and retention rates. They are fully involved in the self-assessment process. There is an effective induction and mentoring system for new staff.

### **Engineering**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- many high pass rates
  
- good specialist resources
  
- high progression rates to HE
  
- high standard of students' practical skills.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- narrow range of provision
  
- inadequate progress reviews
  
- insufficient use of learning targets and plans

- little use of formative assessment
  
- low retention rates on many courses.

**Scope of provision**

165. The college provides a narrow range of provision for its 200 full-time and part-time engineering students. At level 3, full-time students can choose between a national diploma or AVCE course in engineering and part-time students can undertake a national certificate course. At level 2, full-time students take the GNVQ intermediate course in engineering and part-time students follow a City and Guilds CAD course. There are no level 1 programmes for full-time or part-time students. There are 22 students enrolled on a full-time, off-the-job training course run for local employers

**Achievement and standards**

166. The standard of students' practical work is high. Level 2 students demonstrate competence in using specialist equipment and completing of skill development assignments. Level 3 students carry out complex project work involving research and evaluation skills. For example, the project work of one student on the second year of a national diploma course involved the design and build of a room occupancy monitor. The student has effectively researched the various options for detectors and processing circuits, has selected an appropriate design to meet the specification and is building the prototype. Students make good use of the specialist electronics design software available.

167. Pass rates on most courses are higher than the national average. On level 1 programmes, pass rates are particularly high but retention rates are often low. For example, in 2002, the pass rate on the GNVQ foundation programme was 100%, but the retention rate was only 54%.

168. Many students progress to HE. In 2002, all 18 students completing the national diploma programme progressed to an engineering-related course at a university.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2000 to 2002**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation engineering	1	No. of starts	13	13	13
		% retention	92	62	54
		% pass rate	67	88	100
City and Guilds 2010 basic engineering	1	No. of starts	13	13	12
		% retention	92	62	58
		% pass rate	83	88	86
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	34	25	34
		% retention	74	72	97
		% pass rate	60	89	64
National diploma engineering	3	No. of starts	50	35	36
		% retention	60	51	64



		% pass rate	71	71	82
National certificate engineering	3	No. of starts	20	*	12
		% retention	35	*	75
		% pass rate	71	*	80

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

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

169. Practical teaching is good. Students work enthusiastically through well-planned assignments which develop their practical skills and strengthen their understanding of engineering theory. For example, in a lesson on a national diploma course, students were investigating phase shift in capacitive and inductive circuits. They operated the specialist test equipment with confidence and produced results well in line with the theoretical values.

170. The teaching in the majority of theory lessons was at least satisfactory, but little was good. In the weaker sessions, students lose interest and concentration as the teachers talk for too long without involving them sufficiently in purposeful activity. In one lesson, students were simply copying from the board and the teacher made few checks on their understanding. In the more effective theory lessons, students are able to apply their learning by carrying out relevant and well-planned activities. For example, in one good mathematics theory lesson, students developed their trigonometry skills and knowledge through solving problems related to the movement of a robot arm. Students' motivation was increased by this practical activity. They found the task relevant to their vocational course and that it strengthened their understanding of mathematical concepts.

171. Students are seldom set individual learning targets. In practical work, in particular, some students are not made to work at a demanding pace. Reviews of students' progress are not carried out well during tutorials. Tutors do not review students' progress towards meeting targets or the objectives of an individual learning plan. Reports on students from subject tutors are few, and when they are made, they are bland and lack specific detail about students' progress. Action recorded on the progress reviews sheets seldom includes details of work students have to complete with clear deadlines.

172. Most assignment briefs are well written. Assessment schedules are planned to ensure a reasonable workload for the students. Good records of assessment are maintained. Assessment is carried out in accordance with awarding body requirements. There is, however, insufficient use of formative assessment. After marking homework and class work, teachers review the students' performance in the next lesson and give them helpful feedback on how they can improve it. There is inadequate follow-up action, however, to check that weaknesses are rectified.

173. There are good specialist resources in the technology centre. A spacious and well-appointed CAD centre with 20 high specification PCs running AutoCAD 2002 has been established. The facility is well used, particularly by full-time students. Similarly the new electronics laboratory is furnished to a high standard and it is equipped with a wide range of digital and analogue electronic circuits and associated test equipment. In addition, the room has an expanding range of computer-based simulation and design products and these are especially helpful to students in their project work. Other improvements include a refurbished forge area in the mechanical workshop and a recent purchase of a new computer numerically controlled (CNC) lathe. Some other specialist resources in the machine workshop and welding workshop are dated.

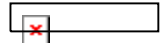
### **Leadership and management**

174. Day-to-day management of the provision is good. There is good monitoring of attendance and effective action to address absenteeism. Timetabling is effective and staff are kept informed of key issues and developments through regular meetings. Course review meetings are held termly.

Students' progress is discussed at these, but specific action points to address issues are seldom recorded. Annual course reviews contain an overall evaluation of students' performance for the year, but do not always compare retention and pass rates with the national average, or identify three-year trends.

175. The department has established good links with local universities and ensures learning programmes are suitably designed to meet the needs of those students wishing to progress to university.

## **Construction**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass and progression rates on technician courses
  
- good practical work by learners
  
- effective school links programme.

### ***Weaknesses***

- slow progress by learners on NVQ programmes
  
- inadequate practical training resources
  
- gaps in the range of provision
  
- unsatisfactory management of construction provision.

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

176. The college provides a range of construction programmes, including craft courses at entry to level 3 in brickwork, wood occupations, painting and decorating and plumbing, and a course leading

to the AVCE double award in construction and the built environment. Students attend full-time, part-time and evening only. There is no provision at level 1 in brickwork and wood occupations, or at level 3 in plumbing, or evening only provision in brickwork or painting and decorating. At the time of inspection, there were 268 learners, of whom 10 were on the college's own work-based learning programmes managed by the business development unit. Half the learners are aged 16 to 18 and half are part time. Most of the learners are on plumbing or wood occupations courses.

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

177. The retention rate on the AVCE double award in construction and the built environment is lower than on the GNVQ advanced in construction and the built environment, which it replaced, but is still satisfactory. Although the pass rate on this course has also dropped, it is still well above the national average. In the last three years, 90% of students on these courses have progressed to university.

178. The data on pass rates for craft programmes are unreliable. Retention rates on most craft courses have dropped over the last three years. The retention rate on level 1 programmes in decorative occupations and trowel occupations and level 3 programmes in wood occupations is now low. On the plumbing course, however, the retention rate has remained high and is above the national average. Pass rates on craft courses, however, have been low. Recently, however, they have risen on level 2 programmes in plumbing and level 1 programmes in decorative occupations.

179. Some learners produce good practical work. In particular, painting and decorating learners go about their practical activities in a very professional manner. They are well organised, have a good awareness of health and safety issues, keep their work areas and tools and equipment scrupulously clean and tidy and produce work to a high standard.

180. A number of learners on NVQ level 2 programmes in wood occupations and painting and decorating did not complete their programme before the expiry date of the qualification. These learners now have to provide work-based evidence of their competences and have their prior work, where possible, accredited towards the revised NVQs. There are at least three further learners working towards their NVQ level 3 in wood occupations, which will soon expire. They have made little progress in completing their portfolio.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
NVQ decorative occupations	1	No. of starts	25	20	21
		% retention	68	70	57
		% pass rate	24	0	50
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	15	12	9
		% retention	87	75	44
		% pass rate	23	11	0
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	51	71	95
		% retention	73	77	74
		% pass rate	5	15	83
NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing)	2	No. of starts	56	44	70
		% retention	96	89	83
		% pass rate	26	8	100
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	55	34	31
		% retention	93	85	87

		% pass rate	8	21	88
GNVQ advanced construction and the built environment	3	No. of starts	17	9	15
		% retention	76	78	67
		% pass rate	92	100	80
NVQ wood occupations	3	No. of starts	8	12	8
		% retention	88	100	63
		% pass rate	14	58	0

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

181. Practical lessons in painting and decorating are well planned and taught effectively by enthusiastic staff. Learners know what they are doing and what their next piece of practical work will be. Practical work starts very promptly at the start of the session with learners working on a range of timed practical activities. The tutor demonstrates techniques and takes care to ensure that learners understand what they have to do.

182. There is some poor teaching. In one lesson, learners were given tools and equipment to carry out a task. Before the tutor had completed the demonstration, learners had already started the task. The instructions were not clear and the learners were given inadequate tools for the task which were not the same as those used by the tutor.

183. Staff have appropriate vocational qualifications and are suitably experienced. Some staff who have been at the college for a number of years have not updated their industrial experience. Classes have been combined in carpentry and joinery and cancelled in carpentry and joinery and plumbing as a result of staff shortages.

184. Most classrooms are satisfactory. The practical training workshop for painting and decorating are good and provides a realistic training environment. The other workshops provide a poor training environment. In these, it is difficult for learners to carry out realistic/large scale training exercises or develop the ability to work at a height. Some training areas are dispersed throughout the workshop block. For example, lead welding is carried out in the adjacent engineering workshop and radiator work takes place in a room and it is difficult for tutors to supervise their learners adequately. The benches in the carpentry and joinery workshop are too close together.

185. There are sufficient tools and equipment in all areas except plumbing. There are not enough plumbing tools for the numbers of students on courses. Much of the plumbing equipment needs replacing by items of industry standard. There are, for example, not enough pipe vices. Some learners were allowed to carry out the unsafe working practice of using ordinary vices for work with pipes.

186. Craft learners use study packs that have been bought in. The packs have not been designed specifically for those with lower levels of literacy and comprehension skills and some learners find them difficult to use. They have not been updated to match the changed requirements of the qualifications and they are not always relevant to the practical training. There is a small resource centre for the exclusive use of construction craft learners, which is equipped with a number of computers that give access to the Internet. It does not contain reference books or standard texts for research purposes and learners complained that there are insufficient books in the library.

187. All full-time learners have two one-hour tutorial sessions every week. In the first session, the tutor follows the contents of a tutor pack used throughout the college and covers general aspects such as membership of the student union and its role. Some aspects are of interest to the learners, but many were not and they said they would prefer to use the time to get on with their occupational

studies. In the second session, in addition to dealing with pastoral matters, action plans are produced which have targets and progress towards reaching them is reviewed. The targets may then be modified in subsequent tutorials. Reviews of learners' progress take place at least twice a term, and more frequently if the tutorial group is small. The effectiveness of these tutorials varies considerably. For example, tutorials for painting and decorating learners are carried out well. During their weekly tutorials, these learners meet with their tutor, agree targets for themselves, and clarify what further tasks they have to carry out. They find these tutorials and their progress reviews useful. In other craft areas, however, learners are not always sure what their next practical tasks will be. Students on some courses are not set targets for their work in key skills and do not know how much progress they have made in key skills. Similarly, some learners on AVCE courses do not know the extent of their progress in some subjects. Each learner has a sheet in their file on which progress to date in completing practical tasks, end tests and assignments is recorded.

188. In each craft area, there is a series of practical tasks for learners, with associated assessment criteria. The task will be either signed off as having been completed competently to industry standards within a set time or the learner will have to be reassessed in parts of it. Tutors ensure that learners fully understand why a particular assessment decision has been reached both orally and in writing, and most give clear guidance to the learners on how they can improve their performance.

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

189. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Staff in the department communicate with one another regularly and effectively.

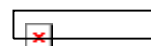
190. The inadequacy of practical training resources was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection and this has still to be rectified. There are staff shortages in carpentry and joinery and plumbing. The college has been trying to recruit new staff. One new tutor straight from industry took up post during the week of the inspection and another two are due to start in the near future. Classes are being cancelled because of staff shortages. Some classes have had to be combined and the resulting group sizes are too large for teachers to give students the individual attention and guidance some need.

191. Much of the data on learners' performance on NVQ programmes for the last four years is unreliable. For example, data show that there is no known outcome for more than 15% of learners or that more than 15% of learners continue the programme. No specific action has been taken to address the issue of learners' slow progress, or ensure the data are accurate. Key skills are taught by specialist tutors from different departments. Key skills tutors do not attend the course team meetings. Key skills are not taught as an integral part of occupational training, learners' portfolios do not contain evidence of learners' acquisition of key skills through the occupation training. Learners are frustrated by having to repeat work in order to provide evidence for their key skills portfolios.

192. There are no arrangements for assessors to assess NVQ candidates in their workplace, or standardise assessment decisions.

193. Study packs have not been modified to take account of the specifications of the new qualifications towards which learners are working, the ability and aptitude of some learners and the need to co-ordinate theory and practical training. Many students are not punctual for, or fail to attend, lessons. During the inspection, 20% of lessons were disrupted by the late arrival of learners and 25% of learners were absent from lessons. Insufficient action has been taken to address learners' absenteeism and lack of punctuality.

### **Performing arts and media**



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

**Strengths**

- very good teaching of performing arts
  
- high pass rates on GCE AS and A2 courses
  
- good communication skills of students
  
- excellent music technology resources.

**Weaknesses**

- failure of many students to achieve their potential
  
- much dull teaching and especially in media/film studies
  
- insufficient checks on students' learning in many lessons
  
- much drab accommodation
  
- ineffective quality assurance.

**Scope of provision**

194. The college offers a wide range of GCE AS and A-level courses in media, film, performing arts, theatre studies, dance, drama, music and music technology. Other provision at level 3 includes national diploma courses in media, dance, drama, and music technology. A first diploma in performance and a GNVQ intermediate course in media are offered. There are approximately 817 students on performance and media courses and most students are aged 16 to 18.

**Achievement and standards**

195. Pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses are high and consistently above the national average. In 2002, all students achieved a pass in GCE A2 dance, design technology and performance studies and in GCE AS dance. The pass rates were also 100% on the first diploma in performing arts and on the national diploma in drama and media production courses. However, only 57% of students on the GNVQ intermediate media production course achieved a pass. Many students achieve lower grades than those expected of them, in the light of their GCSE scores on entry. The proportion of students who gain high grades is significantly below the national average. The proportion of students on GCE A-level courses in drama, performance and media who achieved high grades is also below the national average. Over 97% of students on GCE A-level music and technology courses achieved high grades.

196. Many students develop good oral communication skills and are able to express themselves cogently and confidently. In practical performance lessons, dance, drama and music students work purposefully and collaboratively, sharing ideas and persuasively challenging each other's views and opinions. In these lessons, students demonstrate good skills of analysis and self-evaluation. However, in many lessons on media and film studies courses, students are not given sufficient opportunity to extend their thinking through discussion with one another. Students on the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma course in performance who enter college with little experience of movement and dance, are quickly introduced to the rigours of performance discipline and make good progress. Students become absorbed in relevant and enjoyable activities and through these, they develop and enhance their skills of concentration. In one stimulating lesson, students ably demonstrated Stanislavski's 'communion' and, to their surprise and delight, learnt how to communicate effectively without the use of visual or verbal signals.

197. The college offers a wide range of enrichment activities which students value. An informative leaflet encourages students from local schools to participate in the college's extensive programme of performance events and visits.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in performing arts and media, 2000 to 2002***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE A-level performance studies	1	No. of starts	36	40	40
		% retention	81	74	98
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level dance, GCE A2 dance in 2002	3	No. of starts	16	15	19
		% retention	62	71	100
		% pass rate	88	90	100
GCE A-level drama, GCE A2 drama and theatre studies in 2002	3	No. of starts	26	15	46
		% retention	69	60	93
		% pass rate	88	67	98
GCE AS drama	3	No. of starts	***	61	60
		% retention	***	92	88
		% pass rate	***	98	92
BTEC national diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	33	33	***
		% retention	70	61	***
		% pass rate	74	85	***
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	***	117	141
		% retention	***	94	92
		% pass rate	***	85	94

GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	79	99	86
		% retention	74	83	99
		% pass rate	98	94	96

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\*\*\* course did not run

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

198. Teaching is satisfactory. The better lessons are planned thoroughly. In these, students carry out well-devised assignments and are encouraged to think for themselves. In performing arts lessons, students have the confidence to direct their work both on their own and as a member of a team. In one lesson, groups of students rehearsed an excerpt of a performance under the direction of student directors. They demonstrated refined listening skills and provided convincing arguments in support of their individual interpretation. Dance students demonstrate good self-discipline and imaginative approaches to their improvisations. In one lesson, a large group of students had fun exploring issues associated with stereotyping. They skilfully demonstrated their stereotypical images through a range of apposite body movements. All students responded well to the teacher's direction, demonstrating good listening and interpretative skills.

199. Teachers set the students an excellent example by observing professional standards in terms of their timekeeping and behaviour. Many students, however, arrive late for their lessons. In the better lessons, students experience a range of activities which engage their interest. Some teaching, especially in some media and film studies lessons, is dull. In these lessons, students are usually required to do little other than listen to their teachers for a great deal of the time. In a number of lessons, the teacher did not give individual students tasks which matched their aptitude and ability. All students were made to undertake the same tasks. These were too easy for some, but others found them too difficult and they struggled and made little progress.

200. In a significant number of lessons, teachers do not check that students understand what is being taught. They ask questions, but these are answered only by a few students. Teachers rarely check the notes that students make during class or design activities that quickly test their understanding.

201. Teachers and students made good use of sophisticated music technology. Some groups, however, are too large for the music technology rooms. There is a sizeable dance and theatre space, which is an excellent venue for students' performances and cross-curricular assignments. Classrooms used by media and film studies are dull, have no subject identity, and contain little stimulating display material. The furniture in these rooms is not easily portable and is arranged in rows, thereby making it difficult for students to engage in spontaneous discussion. There is an excellent video library which students appreciate, although facilities for viewing are not always easily available.

202. Most work is well marked and, in many cases, feedback to students is informative and detailed and leaves them in no doubt about what they should do to improve their work. Students value the opportunity to talk to their tutors about their work, and appreciate the feedback they receive.

203. Staff are suitably experienced and well respected. They give freely of their time and students appreciate the friendly and caring atmosphere. Some staff are professional practitioners in their own field and they draw on their experience to make learning relevant and interesting. The number of staff who are teacher trained is low.

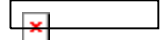
### **Leadership and management**

204. Policies are not developed and implemented systematically. There are few clear and specific targets for the improvement of provision. Managers have not analysed data sufficiently in order to



identify areas for improvement or those that have significant strengths. The college's self-assessment report did not pay adequate attention to the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning.

## Visual arts



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass and retention rates on most courses
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- good enrichment activities
- high progression rate to appropriate HE.

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective quality assurance
- some poor attendance and lack of punctuality
- many underachieving students
- much poor accommodation.

### **Scope of provision**

205. The college offers a wide range of courses in the visual arts. Currently, there are 403 students on GCE AS/A2 and foundation courses, and 179 on GNVQ and first diploma courses. GCE provision includes GCE AS/A2 courses in graphics, fine art, history of art, critical and contextual studies,

architecture, and photography. There are Edexcel national diploma courses in three-dimension design, textiles/fashion, graphics, and fine art, and Edexcel national diploma course in foundation studies and a GNVQ art and design course at intermediate level. Part-time courses are run in the evening in City and Guilds photography and life drawing. The majority of students are full time, aged 16 to 18

206. An enrichment programme enables students to take part in study visits to Paris and Venice and galleries and museums in the UK.

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

207. Overall, pass and retention rates are high. The pass rate on the GCE AS art studies and fine arts courses is above the national average. The proportion of students on these courses who achieve high grades is well above the national average. Students participate with enthusiasm in lessons on these courses and make substantial progress.

208. The retention and pass rates on the GCE A2 art course are in line with the national average. Many students on this course, however, do not achieve the high grades expected of them, in the light of their GCSE scores on entry. Staff have not taken any specific action to investigate and address significant underachievement on the part of many students.

209. In lessons, some students, particularly those on critical studies architecture and Edexcel diploma foundation courses, are fully involved in their learning tasks and make good progress. In discussions, students reveal perceptive insights and good subject knowledge. All students are confident in talking about their work and can explain what they have to do. They have good personal skills.

210. Most students on these courses develop the ability to work effectively on their own, although some are heavily dependent on their teachers for guidance and direction.

211. Some students affect the continuity of their own learning adversely through lack of punctuality for, and frequent absence from, lessons. Some teachers deal appropriately with students who arrive late and demand explanations for lack of punctuality, but others do not. Learning in some lessons was continually disrupted by latecomers, as the teacher had to stop and explain to them what had already happened in the session.

212. Many students progress to HE and many, particularly those who wish to study fine art and fashion, obtain places at prestigious universities that were their first choice. Increasingly, students who obtain the recently introduced GCE A level in critical studies in architecture, gain a place on degree courses in architecture.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in visual arts, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	15	23	18
		% retention	73	96	89
		% pass rate	100	77	75
GCE A-level art studies	3	No. of starts	194	206	280
		% retention	77	77	92
		% pass rate	77	85	94
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	78	96	66
		% retention	73	73	67
		% pass rate	73	93	95

GCE AS art studies	3	No. of starts	*	349	281
		% retention	*	88	83
		% pass rate	*	82	88
Diploma foundation art and design	3	No. of starts	39	27	34
		% retention	90	85	94
		% pass rate	94	96	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

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

213. Teaching is satisfactory or better. In one theory lesson on a GCE A2 fine art course, excellent use was made of primary and secondary source material and students were encouraged to relate this to their own practical work. Teachers encourage students to draw on their own prior knowledge and research to produce project work of an individual nature. Lesson plans or schemes of work, however, do not always make reference to the use of students' prior learning. In lessons, teachers and students seldom make use of visual aids, such as videos, slides or PowerPoint presentations.

214. There is effective team teaching on national diploma and foundation courses for large groups and to meet the needs of individual students. In one lesson for 74 students, a large still life display was used as source material by the 4 teachers in order to set individual students drawing exercises. Many staff are on proportional contracts, combining teaching with professional practice and make frequent and valuable reference to this in lessons.

215. Most of the teaching engages the students' attention, but some teaching is uninspiring and does not challenge students to use their skills to the full. Where the teaching was less successful, learning objectives were too general and students' progress was not reviewed. Some lessons generated little creative sparkle or excitement.

216. Lessons are well managed, but often take place in poor accommodation. For example, the 21 students on the GNVQ intermediate course have to work in a small room where there is no storage for work, or space to hang coats and bags. The GCE AS/A-level art history and critical studies courses take place in accommodation where projection facilities are inadequate and a jumble of stacked furniture leaves no room for wall displays. The accommodation is unattractive as a learning environment and aesthetically unsuitable for the teaching and learning of the visual arts. Refurbishment of this accommodation is proposed. Staff have done little in the meantime, however, to tidy and brighten up the rooms and clear out the old furniture.

217. Students consider themselves to be well supported by their teachers. Some value tutorial arrangements more than others, but all wish more one-to-one tutorials with their subject teacher, rather than with their general tutor. The centrally produced lesson plans for tutors do not always match the needs of art and design students.

218. The career development of workbooks of second-year national diploma students cover application to HE and employment. In one lesson, students were brainstorming to identify their own strengths and weaknesses prior to writing their personal statements on application forms and discussed what they feared most about interviews. In the next, they were going to have mock interviews and review their portfolios.

219. Most teachers provide detailed assessment and feedback on how they can improve their work. Students are invited to add their comments to the tutorial sheet, but there is some hesitancy on their part to do this. Data on the value added to students' achievements are not taken into account when setting students targets.

220. Students felt they had received clear pre-entry guidance and that courses matched their expectations. They value the extensive choice of GCE A-level subjects and many studying art and design are also taking GCE A-level science, mathematics or philosophy. One student was able to cross reference his art work on Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* to his coursework in philosophy.

### **Leadership and management**

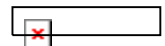
221. Quality assurance is implemented ineffectively. Little action is taken on self-assessment findings, other than those relating to staffing and accommodation. Action plans are cursory and their implementation is not monitored. There is no target setting at management or course level. Managers have not discussed students' negative value added scores with staff, and identified ways of improving students' performance. On the sheets used for recording reviews of students' progress, staff do not usually complete the box relating to the value added to students' achievements.

222. Staff value the staff development programme. Few staff training activities focus on teaching and learning.

223. There is good communication between staff teams at course level and course management is effective. Staff are fully involved in curriculum development. They make little use of ISR data, which they believe to be inaccurate. Minutes of staff meetings record discussions about students and courses, but rarely mention action plans and wider management issues.

224. Management gives full support to the curriculum enrichment programme. Enrichment activities are a strength of this curriculum area. For example, the college ensured that students with physical disabilities could go on a visit to Paris by paying their taxi fares. Staff work hard to secure support for the visits to the continent and include the parents of students aged 16 to 18 in the planning of these. At a recent parents' evening about a forthcoming visit to Venice, a member of staff gave a lecture on Italian art, illustrated with slides. This acted as a stimulus for the parents to take part in their own organised visit to the National Gallery.

### **Psychology and sociology**



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on advanced level courses
  
- good teaching
  
- rigorous assessment
  
- careful monitoring of students' progress

- good support and guidance for students
- effective leadership and management.

**Weaknesses**

- underachievement in psychology
- insufficient use of ICT in teaching and learning
- some dull and uninspiring classroom accommodation.

**Scope of provision**

225. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in psychology and sociology. GCSE sociology is also offered. Advanced level courses are available on a full-time and part-time basis with day and evening provision. Currently, there are 1,008 enrolments on GCE AS and A2 courses in psychology and sociology, 488 in psychology and 504 in sociology. There are 13 students following a GCSE course in sociology. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and are studying full time. There are 45 adult students on part-time evening courses.

**Achievement and standards**

226. Pass rates on GCE AS and A2 courses have been consistently at or above the national averages. The pass rate is particularly high in sociology where students achieve significantly higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their achievement in the GCSE. Retention rates on advanced level courses are excellent. Curriculum 2000 syllabuses have been implemented successfully. In psychology, the pass rate on the GCE AS course was 76% and on the GCE A2 course it was 91%. In sociology, the pass rate was 93% on the GCE AS course and 99% on the GCE A2 course. Attendance is satisfactory.

227. Students achieved high standards in lessons. Standards of work in students' files, and students' marked work, were also high. Students are well motivated and, in lessons, most are fully and enthusiastically involved in learning activities. The most able students have good knowledge of theory and bring an appropriate psychological or sociological perspective to the analysis of data and source material.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in psychology and sociology, 2000 to 2002**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE social studies	2	No. of starts	30	12	25
		% retention	53	67	60

		% pass rate	56	88	53
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	186	184	149
		% retention	81	76	97
		% pass rate	90	95	99
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	213	262
		% retention	*	92	91
		% pass rate	*	89	76
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	243	276
		% retention	*	84	89
		% pass rate	*	93	93
GCSE psychology	3	No. of starts	18	21	30
		% retention	67	62	60
		% pass rate	58	38	67
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	119	130	145
		% retention	75	71	97
		% pass rate	91	78	91

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

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

228. In total, 17 lessons in psychology and sociology were observed during the inspection, plus one tutorial. Teaching was good or better in 70% of these lessons. Teachers are well qualified and have regularly updated their subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and teachers make them interesting for the students. Students are given subject course books and excellent handouts. Schemes of work are detailed and specify how the students will be assessed and what resources are needed. Teachers question the students skilfully to check their understanding, further their learning and help them explore concepts. In some lessons, however, teachers do not ensure that all students are paying close attention and are fully involved in learning tasks which challenge them to use their skills to the full. The needs of individual students are met through additional support and one-to-one sessions with subject teachers and tutors. The social sciences workshop is well resourced and used regularly by students.

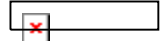
229. The majority of students are making good progress and are developing the higher level thinking skills of analysis and evaluation. Students can critically interrogate source material, draw conclusions and support their judgement with evidence from text. In a sociology lesson, students enthusiastically and articulately discussed research which showed that boys were paid more than girls for chores carried out in the home. This led to an interesting discussion raised by one of the students on the significance of cultural differences in research of this kind. Students can use technical language appropriately. Psychology students competently analysed Freud's *Theory of Dreams* making reference to the id, ego and superego and other complex Freudian concepts. Adult students make good progress and clearly enjoy their lessons.

230. Teachers make good use of a wide range of source material. Lessons are enlivened by the use of stimulating video extracts showing key areas of research. There is, however, insufficient use of IT as a teaching and learning aid. Overhead projectors are used regularly to impart information, but not as a means of recording class discussion or developing arguments as the lessons progress. Assessment and monitoring are rigorous and regular. Students are given good feedback on how they may improve their work. Students are set realistic and challenging targets. Students speak highly of their courses and the support they receive at college.

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

231. Leadership and management are effective. Staff work closely together and share good practice. Meetings focus on curricular issues and the raising of attainment. There are rigorous systems of quality assurance for monitoring teaching and learning. The department has identified its strengths and areas for development through critical self-assessment. Action is being taken to address the underachievement of some students on psychology courses.

### **Humanities**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass and retention rates on most courses
  
- much good teaching
  
- very good feedback from teachers on students' written work
  
- good monitoring of students' progress
  
- good curriculum management.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- some poor attendance and lack of punctuality
  
- insufficient use of ICT by students in lessons
  
- lack of challenge for some students.

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

232. The humanities department offers a very broad range of courses at GCE AS/A2 level. Several subjects are offered, including archaeology and philosophy, and there are five history courses at GCE AS and A2 levels. In addition, GCE courses in geography, law and classical civilisation are provided by other faculties and were inspected. Total current enrolment on GCE AS/A2 humanities courses is 1,117 students. This total represents a decline of one third on the number of students enrolled in 1998/99, but humanities is still a major area of recruitment.

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

233. Students' retention and pass rates on humanities courses are higher than the national average and have remained high since the last inspection. In some subjects, such as history, classical civilisation and critical thinking, and the pass rates and the proportion of students who gain the top grades of A and B are above the national average. Many students join courses with above average GCSE grades and they make good progress. On some GCE AS courses, such as archaeology, philosophy and critical thinking, students gain higher grades than those they are set as targets. In 2002, students on the GCE A2 religious studies course made outstanding progress from their attainment level on entry and the extent of their progress was the greatest on any course in the college. Many students on the GCE AS courses in geography and law, however, do not obtain the grades predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE scores.

234. In GCE AS history, the retention and pass rates in 2001/02 were 92%. Nearly two-thirds of students achieved high grades of A and B, maintaining a significant upward trend. Re-marking by the examining board in 2002 has led to some grades being raised. Most students on the GCE AS history course had above average GCSE scores and made satisfactory progress.

235. On GCE AS philosophy courses, students' performance has improved significantly over the last three years. Between 1999 and 2002, the retention rate has risen from 54% to 82% and the pass rate from 40% to 86%. All students have obtained high grades.

236. In 2002, the pass rate for GCE AS critical thinking was 96% and 62% of students obtained high grades. Most students performed much better than expected.

237. In 2002, the pass rate for GCE A2 politics was 98%. Of the 41 students entered for the examination, 12 obtained an A grade. This total is more than twice the number of those who obtained an A grade in 2001, and it is well above the national average. In 2002, the pass rate for GCE A2 politics was 95% and of the 56 students entered for the examination, 20 obtained high grades.

238. Although pass rates in GCE AS and A-level geography and law were above the national averages in 2002, some students performed less well than the college had expected. In 2002, the pass rate in GCE AS geography was 81%, compared with 99% in 2001. Many students on the GCE AS geography course did not make the progress expected of them in the light of their GCSE scores on entry. The college had set the target for the proportion of GCE AS geography students with high grades at 46%. In the event, however, only 39% of students received high grades. Some 19% of those entered for the examination were ungraded and staff said they had been taking the wrong course. The pass rate for GCE A2 geography, however, was excellent at 100%. The proportion of students who achieved higher grades was 63%, having risen from 52% in the previous year. There were some outstanding achievements by individual students.

239. Standards of students' work were at least satisfactory and often good. Most students developed good research skills through coursework assignments, analysed complex concepts well, dealt with difficult ideas, and expressed their own views clearly, fluently and in a lively way. Those taking critical thinking, religious studies and philosophy discussed abstract ideas very effectively. Students taking GCE AS politics debated House of Lords reform with vigour. GCE AS archaeology students, in groups, used flipcharts well to brainstorm innovative ideas on how to market the attractions of a churchyard archaeology to the public.

240. Most students produce written work of a high standard and they develop good personal and



study skills. Many use word processing well to present their projects and marshal information effectively from a wide variety of sources, including videos and web sites. They evaluate concepts particularly well. For example, GCE A2 philosophy students contrasted elements that occur in the real world with those in the mind. Geography students evaluated strengths and weaknesses of river management strategies in the Mississippi basin.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 2000 to 2002***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS history	3	No. of starts	*	180	206
		% retention	*	93	91
		% pass rate	*	97	91
GCE A-level/A2 history	3	No. of starts	165	165	148
		% retention	82	76	99
		% pass rate	87	92	97
GCE A-level/A2 philosophy	3	No. of starts	52	53	45
		% retention	67	68	91
		% pass rate	74	90	98
GCE AS critical thinking	3	No. of starts	*	48	58
		% retention	*	90	89
		% pass rate	*	86	96
GCE AS geography	3	No. of starts	*	81	101
		% retention	*	88	90
		% pass rate	*	99	81
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	*	123	148
		% retention	*	88	90
		% pass rate	*	87	73

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

241. Of the 19 humanities lessons seen, over three quarters were good or better. Staff are exceptionally well qualified and have excellent specialised knowledge, and are able to sustain good relationships with students. In lessons, staff use a variety of appropriate teaching methods, and in most instances they give the students demanding activities. Lesson plans are structured carefully with the aim of ensuring that lessons meet the needs of students of widely differing abilities. Students find many lessons stimulating. Teachers use an extensive video library well. Although the college has a good stock of computers, IT equipment is not always readily available in classrooms and many teachers do not make enough use of ICT in lessons. Several rooms do not contain appropriate subject resources.

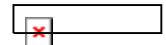
242. Teachers assess students' written work thoroughly and regularly, and provide students with lengthy written feedback on how they may improve their work. Teachers of some subjects, however, do not set their students specific improvement targets. Examining board requirements are met well. Marking is closely linked to published marking schemes. In an outstanding GCE A2 archaeology lesson, the students were carrying out demanding projects and were given excellent one-to-one workshop support by the teacher, a professional archaeologist. His well-constructed local case

studies, including interpretation of site diagrams, were outstanding. Philosophy tutors have published an effective national journal. The quality of written learning materials and topical handouts in all subjects is excellent. In many lessons, the pace was brisk and purposeful and lively group discussions and debates held the interest and attention of all the students. In some lessons on history and law courses, however, some students were not being challenged to work to the best of their ability. They were reticent in class and did not ask or answer questions of their own initiative. The teacher did not try to find out how much progress these students were making, or check their understanding.

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

243. The separate humanities subjects are well managed. The humanities department's quality improvement process includes informal observations of lessons. Through the lesson observation scheme and the mentoring scheme for new staff, teachers are now able to share good practice. The monitoring of students' attendance and progress through regular reviews is highly effective and retention rates have risen. Staffing is now more stable. Available resources are used well. Students benefit from well-planned field trips and visits. Pass rates have risen and the proportion of students who achieve high grades have increased. GCE A-level course teams meet regularly to deal with operational matters and identify students who are underachieving. There is good informal communication between staff who share a workroom and they form a very cohesive team.

## **English**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching
  
- excellent management
  
- excellent GCE A-level English language and literature and English literature results
  
- excellent retention rates on all courses
  
- inclusive curriculum
  
- excellent moderation of coursework

- o high progression rates to English courses in HE.

**Weaknesses**

- o lack of punctuality on students' part.

**Scope of provision**

244. A wide range of English courses is offered and provision is inclusive. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in English language, English literature, and English language and literature. Approximately 800 students are currently taking these courses, which include a joint GCE AS/A-level English language and literature evening course for adults. Most students on these courses are aged 16 to 18. A GCSE English course, for students who have already attained grade D or who have achieved certification in the key skill of communication at level 2, recruits some 240 students who are placed on 12 sets. Approximately 20 English literature students are studying for the Advanced Extension Award (AEA) in English.

**Achievement and standards**

245. Retention rates on all courses are excellent and for the past three years have been above the national average. In 2002, pass rates on all three GCE AS/A-level English courses were outstanding. For GCE A-level English language and literature, English literature and English language, they were 99%, 97% and 91%, respectively. Of the 800 students who took these examinations, 64% obtained A or B grades.

246. The proportion of students who obtained grade C or above in GCSE English has risen by 50% over the last three years and is now in line with the national average. In 2002, 246 students were entered for GCSE English.

247. Students on the three GCE AS/A-level courses produce excellent coursework. Moderators' reports confirm teachers' marking and commend the internal moderation processes which are skilfully led by the programme manager and the course co-ordinators. In 2002, no marks were altered by the external moderators.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in English, 2000 to 2002**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	188	182	246
		% retention	77	80	82
		% pass rate	35	44	53
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	211	207	195
		% retention	86	81	98
		% pass rate	90	84	99
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	137	117	105
		% retention	80	79	97
		% pass rate	97	95	100

GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	22	67	80
		% retention	86	94	94
		% pass rate	79	86	96
GCE AS English language and literature	3	No. of starts	*	255	254
		% retention	*	90	88
		% pass rate	*	95	91
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	*	155	126
		% retention	*	96	94
		% pass rate	*	91	96
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	62	57	40
		% retention	82	88	98
		% pass rate	92	71	97

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

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

248. Much teaching is very good and some is outstanding. In a few lessons, teaching was sound but lacked excitement and flair. Teachers are well qualified. They also know their students well and give them much encouragement and support.

249. Most language teachers give the students well-designed handouts that help them understand function, audience and the way, for example, that infants acquire language. Many of these exercises generate keen debate and develop students' confidence and powers of independent judgement. In one first-year lesson, students had to remove the gender bias from certain current terminologies and quickly realised some of the difficulties in trying to neutralise some terms and gain public acceptability for them.

250. In most literature lessons, teachers help students to develop good skills of literary criticism. Students engage in the close reading of a text in order to identify its linguistic features, psychological insights, predominant themes and what makes it 'work'. In the few less successful lessons, textual study became a dogged and mechanical process in which the students merely spotted textual features and the teacher failed to help them bring the text to life. In contrast, in some lessons, students gave highly expressive readings of poetry and drama and these helped them to gain imaginative understanding of the texts. In one lesson, first-year students had viewed a recording of Branagh's *Much Ado about Nothing* and had been asked to identify where the production had been edited. Having learnt that certain licence had been taken with the text, they were given the task, in groups, of writing a 'missing scene' for the play and presenting it to the rest of the class. The writing had to be in blank verse, employing at least two of the language devices identified in earlier lessons and paying close attention to the idiolect that Shakespeare had given to the characters. The subsequent readings, in blank verse, were fluent and expressive. In another lesson, in which the students were studying *Dr Faustus*, the power and beauty in several extracts were fully revealed and felt both through the precision of the critical analysis and in the presentation of the play as a dramatic event. Students studying Heaney's poem *Strange Fruit* were drawn into it by listening to the poet reading his poem, examining a photograph of the woman's decayed head to which the poem refers and by hearing the song of the same title sung by Billie Holliday.

251. On all courses, teachers encouraged students to develop their reading skills and frequently asked them to read aloud. In some lessons, students were fluent enough to be coaxed into reading more expressively. On all courses, but particularly those at level 3, students learnt to identify and apply a range of necessary specialist terminology to aid their linguistic and literary analysis. Many

students improve their powers of communication and ability to interpret texts. For example, during a lively class discussion about Friel's *Translations*, a student exclaimed enthusiastically that she had just seen the point of the title and proceeded to articulate her realisation of how language can be mistranslated as a means of exerting power. In some instances, however, students' use of imprecise colloquialisms went unchecked. For example, students described Stanley's bullying behaviour in *A Streetcar named Desire* as 'stuff' and second-year students were allowed to get away with excessive use of the colloquialism 'like'.

252. In most lessons on GCSE courses, students are usually taught well. They learn effectively and become more confident through carrying out bite-sized tasks that help them clarify their language skills. Before reading an article on the Lockerbie air disaster, students watched a brief clip from a video about the M1 air crash in which survivors retold their ordeal. Teachers nearly always explain new or difficult vocabulary to the students. Few students, however, carry dictionaries and some do not even bring pens and paper to lessons. The GCSE course is not entirely suitable for some students whose first language is not English mainly because the cultural nuances and idiomatic usage in the articles and stories are not yet familiar to them.

253. The vast amount of coursework at level 3 is organised and moderated outstandingly well. Staff give generously of their time in helping students prepare their coursework. Homework is set regularly and marked conscientiously using a common assessment scheme. Good and productive use is made of the time after the GCE AS examinations in the summer, and during this period students are taught regularly and kept busy with learning activities.

254. All schemes of work focus clearly on the specifications of the examination syllabus. Teachers, however, not only prepare students well for their examinations but also ensure that their learning extends beyond the boundaries of the examination syllabus. The best teaching at GCE A level and for the AEA is excellent preparation for further study at degree level and a high percentage of level 3 students choose to read English in HE. Students' interest in English studies is extended through a wide range of curriculum enrichment activities, including visits to theatres and Sovereign study courses.

255. In some lessons, teachers pose questions of varying difficulty and direct these skilfully towards those students they think are capable of answering them. Similarly, they give students working in groups appropriate tasks, some of which are more difficult than others. In many lessons, however, the teacher simply directs questions at the whole group, does not check that all students understand them and fails to prompt responses from those students who say nothing. Some lessons, particularly the first lesson of the day, are disrupted by the late arrival of students.

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

256. The management and co-ordination of this large curriculum area are excellent at all levels. The principal manager maintains close contact with the faculty manager and with the course co-ordinators, all of whom work well together. In the past three years, recruitment to all courses has increased and retention and pass rates have risen.

257. The self-assessment process is effective and well established. Quality assurance of courses is carried out well.

258. The major task of timetabling 28 staff across 58 classes is very effectively managed. Each course is taught by two teachers thus enabling the students to experience different teaching styles and the staff to teach to their strengths. There are effective procedures providing cover for absent staff with the aim of ensuring that students' learning is not adversely affected.

259. The five senior English staff interview all prospective level 3 English students with the aim of ensuring that they choose a syllabus that suits them. During their induction, students are told about the content and structure of their courses and they practise some essential skills, such as making notes and gathering and presenting evidence. Few students need to change their course.

260. There is an effective structure of formal meetings at all levels. Minutes of these meetings record much discussion on issues relating to teaching and learning.

261. Good use is made of the intranet and of management information systems data to monitor performance daily. The centrally collated performance data and findings from teachers' records are taken into account in the formal reviews of students' progress.

262. The major task of marking and moderating the vast amount of level 3 coursework is managed outstandingly well. No marks were changed following external monitoring in 2002 and external verifiers' reports were unfailingly complimentary.

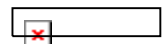
263. Staff work well together in teams and maintain effective and informal communications with one another. Staff rooms and resources rooms are pleasant and well equipped. Staff receive efficient secretarial support.

264. There is a well-established process of lesson observation by line managers. Their grades overall for teaching, learning and assessment are similar to those given by the inspectors. A system has been introduced whereby staff watch one another teach and are mentored by 'advanced practitioners', and this is beginning to operate effectively. The training needs of staff are met, especially those relating to the specifications of Curriculum 2000 and standardisation of assessment.

265. Staff maintain excellent communications with the examination boards and with parents of students aged 16 to 18. Some second-year students on GCE courses had to have teachers who were different from those who taught them in their first year and prepared them for the GCE AS examination. Whenever this was the case, staff liaised with the parents of the students concerned and to reassure them that the continuity of their child's learning would be sustained.

266. Schemes of work are satisfactory and are divided into six-week units. They are, however, insufficiently detailed and mainly comprise lists of topics. They are compiled by senior staff rather than the classroom teachers themselves. The schemes of work do not specify clearly the assessment methods to be used and how these relate to the syllabus specifications.

### **Modern foreign languages**



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

#### **Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates
  
- high proportion of A grades
  
- very good teaching
  
- excellent resources

- exemplary monitoring of students' progress
  
- excellent assessment practice
  
- very good student support
  
- very good teamwork.

### ***Weaknesses***

- no key weaknesses.

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

267. The college offers a good range of courses at GCE AS and A level. Some 200 students are currently enrolled on French, German, Spanish and Italian courses. The most able also work towards AEA. Many students progress to HE. GCSE courses in Italian and Spanish are offered and there are about 12 students on each. About 50 students on travel and tourism courses take Spanish as an option. There are about 50 students on evening courses in Spanish or Italian. Students come from many London boroughs. An increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers are studying languages. Curriculum enrichment activities include visits to theatres, galleries and participation in various events at universities. In the last two years, study trips to Madrid, Rome, Munich and Paris have taken place.

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

268. Retention rates across all courses are high. Pass rates are above the national average. Higher grade pass rates on the three GCE A-level courses have remained consistently high in recent years and are substantially higher than the national average. Students on the GCE A-level French course achieved higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. The pass rate in GCE AS Italian and the proportion of students who obtained grade C or above in GCSE Italian, were above the national average. Italian was one of the few GCE AS subjects where students achieved grades higher than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. Overall pass rates in GCE AS German and Spanish are well above the national average, but in 2002 the pass rate in GCE AS French fell to just above the national average. In the last two years, the proportion of students on the GCSE Spanish courses who obtain grade C or above has fallen below the national average.

269. Students are immersed in the foreign language. Many have developed exceptionally good listening skills and speak the language they are learning willingly and confidently. They benefit from the valuable help they are given by six foreign language assistants. Students' written work in assignments on GCE A2 French courses is of a very high standard, in terms of both content and use of language.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in modern foreign languages, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCE A-level French (2 year)	3	No. of starts	51	50	45
		% retention	76	70	89
		% pass rate	92	94	98
GCE A-level German (2 year)	3	No. of starts	18	32	23
		% retention	100	75	100
		% pass rate	87	96	96
GCE A-level Spanish (2 year)	3	No. of starts	18	21	31
		% retention	83	67	94
		% pass rate	87	100	90
GCE AS French	3	No. of starts	*	103	76
		% retention	*	86	80
		% pass rate	*	92	79
GCE AS German	3	No. of starts	*	32	34
		% retention	*	97	91
		% pass rate	*	90	94
GCE AS Spanish	3	No. of starts	*	47	31
		% retention	*	91	90
		% pass rate	*	91	86

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

270. Teachers work extremely hard to help their students succeed. They plan and organise their lessons with precision. No lesson was unsatisfactory. Nearly all were good and many were very good or outstanding. Learning materials follow a logical order and teachers help students to progress through them systematically, build on their previous learning and establish a sound basis for acquiring new knowledge and furthering their skills. Their lesson plans show they have very detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their students. They also monitor progress the students make, particularly when they work in pairs, and are able to give them specific help within and outside lessons. Homework is set regularly and returned promptly. Work is carefully and conscientiously marked and teachers give students numerous pointers on how to improve it. Many lessons proceed at a lively pace and much ground is covered. Students clearly value their teachers and enjoy their lessons in a relaxed, but highly productive atmosphere. Students are absorbed in their work and have good powers of concentration. An attractive feature of the very best lessons is the blend of fun and humour and relentless hard work. In one excellent Italian lesson, students responded well to the verve and enthusiasm of the teacher. They coped well with a veritable deluge of Italian whilst successfully compiling a survey of their own and other people's television viewing habits. In an outstanding French lesson, students took part with enthusiasm in a lively debate trying to differentiate between crime and minor transgressions. The teacher made timely interventions to sustain the discussion and make sure everyone had a chance to contribute to it. Everybody thoroughly enjoyed practising their French by joining in the debate.

271. The department has excellent resources, such as a very well-equipped workshop and two language laboratories. There are six foreign language assistants. They are all thoughtfully deployed.



Little use, however, is made of computerised learning packages, satellite television and the Internet.

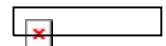
272. The college is very supportive towards those entrants with a poor educational background who seek admission to courses. A growing number of refugees and asylum seekers have done far better than their teachers thought they would. Several such students have secured places at prestigious universities.

273. Monitoring of students' progress is rigorous. Assessment practices are excellent. Students' learning needs are identified clearly and action is taken to meet them. Individual students of all abilities are given support. Help is available to them from their tutors and in the well-resourced modern foreign languages workshop. The language assistants provide extra help with oral skills if students need this. The most able are fully challenged by undertaking extra, more complex work and preparing for AEA examinations. Help is also available outside lesson time and is particularly effective for non-standard entrants to courses, such as refugees and asylum seekers. Records of reviews of students' progress are maintained, but those that are handwritten are usually detailed and informative whereas those produced by computer are often bland and superficial.

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

274. The department is well organised and well run. There is very good teamwork and all staff work together to improve provision. Their main aims are to ensure the well being and academic advancement of the students. There is a good programme of staff development to help them achieve these aims. By implementing the system whereby staff watch one another's lessons, managers aim to improve provision further. Equality of opportunity is promoted. Most of the foreign language assistants are male and they were appointed because most of the teaching staff and students are female. In the rare cases where pass rates and students' performance fall below target, instant corrective action is taken. When individual students have received inexplicably low examination grades, the college has asked the relevant examining board to reconsider these and, in most instances, they have been raised.

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



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching on most courses
  
- very good support for students
  
- effective liaison with external agencies including feeder schools.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient diagnostic assessment

- o inadequate individual learning plans
- o insufficient vocational options or progression routes for students with learning difficulties.

### **Scope of provision**

275. Provision in this curriculum area includes four main courses designed for students with learning difficulties. The FE award is a full-time course for students aged 16 to 18 with moderate learning difficulties. The foundation training entry course is for students with learning difficulties or young people who have underachieved at school. These two courses last one year and between them, they currently have 19 students. The pre-vocational entry course is a full-time course for school leavers with severe learning difficulties and currently has 24 students. This course is up to three years long and students have the option to stay on as a part-time student for a fourth year. The independent living course is for adults aged between 23 and 50 who can follow it either on a full-time or part-time basis. There are currently eight students on this course. Other students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties study on a range of courses across the college. They often receive one-to-one support in response to their identified need.

### **Achievement and standards**

276. Retention rates on most courses are high and students usually achieve the external award they are aiming for. For example, of the 13 students on the FE award course last year, 12 stayed till the end of the course and all were successful. Students are encouraged to study towards a wide range of external awards. Internal verification and moderation on accredited programmes are consistently thorough. Attendance rates in classes during the inspection were high, at 94%. This included an attendance rate of over 90% for some students with emotional or behavioural difficulties who needed significant encouragement and support to get to classes on time. Tutors help students to develop their personal and learning skills and many students make good progress doing so. Arrangements for students to complete work experience are effective on all courses. Students are well prepared for work experience placements by tutors in college.

277. Students do not sample enough learning in vocational areas. This year, 11 students progressed from the foundation training entry course to entry level 3 and level 1 courses in the college. The range of courses students can choose from at entry level and level 1 in the college, however, is narrow. A successful new course in catering has been set up.

278. Students receive insufficient diagnostic assessment of their skills before they start their course. Students are set good targets for behaviour and personal development. The targets they are set for their performance as students are vague and their lack of precision makes it difficult for staff to measure students' progress towards achieving them.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 2000 to 2002**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Entry vocational skills award	entry	No. of starts	12	11	*
		% retention	75	73	*
		% pass rate	78	88	*

Entry vocational skills certificate	entry	No. of starts	24	15	12
		% retention	75	67	42
		% pass rate	0	0	0
Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network FE award (Level Up)	entry	No. of starts	8	8	13
		% retention	88	100	92
		% pass rate	100	88	100
Independent living	entry	No. of starts	6	13	11
		% retention	100	46	91
		% pass rate	83	67	9b
Open college network	entry	No. of starts	21	39	*
		% retention	95	100	*
		% pass rate	75	92	*
City and Guilds 3330 preliminary cookery	entry	No. of starts	13	15	6
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	77	40	0

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

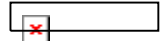
### **Quality of education and training**

279. The majority of the teaching is good or better and the activities in lessons are well planned. Most teachers use appropriate teaching methods, including role play and group work to develop students' interpersonal skills and to strengthen students' learning. Working relationships between students and staff are productive. Tutors motivate students and make them want to learn. They challenge the students to give of their best and show what they can do. For example, in two excellent lessons, students prepared and served food in a café rehearsing a range of literacy, numeracy and practical skills. Each student concentrated on completing specific tasks related to his or her learning targets. Many lessons, however, were not as well planned as these. Many lesson plans did not identify what the students were intended to learn. The individual learning plans for most students do not contain targets that are sufficiently specific or demanding. Targets in learning plans are not short-term and are not reviewed frequently enough in the light of students' progress. The learning plans for a small number of adults with severe learning difficulties are good.

### **Leadership and management**

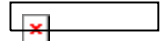
280. Courses in the curriculum area are well organised. There is a clear development plan for full-time and link courses which takes account of local circumstances. Clear information and good support are provided for staff working in the area who function well as a team. The recording and management of student data on the college system are poor. Data on retention and pass rates for most courses were inaccurate. Course leaders did not agree with the data on the printouts produced through the college's management information system. In the main, self-assessment and action planning to improve provision are carried out well. The self-assessment process, however, had failed to identify significant weaknesses relating to the initial diagnostic assessment of students and the lack of specific targets in individual learning plans.

## **Part D: College data**



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

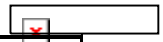
Level	16-18	19+
1	8	38
2	18	18
3	70	13
4/5	0	1
Other	4	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



*Source: provided by the college in 2002*

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	2,200	86	12
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	206	149	2
Engineering, technology and manufacture	344	492	5
Business administration, management and professional	796	905	10
Information and communication technology	661	817	9
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	936	795	10
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	284	539	5
Visual and performing arts and media	1,598	95	10
Humanities	2,212	143	13
English, languages and communication	1,478	52	12
Foundation programmes	152	2,000	12



<b>Total</b>	<b>10,867</b>	<b>6,073</b>	<b>100</b>
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Source: provided by the college in 2002

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,806	991	463	480	449	431
	Retention rate (%)	94	91	82	85	89	80
	National average (%)	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	68	51	65	40	49	54
	National average (%)	59	65	68	60	66	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,719	1,661	1,374	544	394	406
	Retention rate (%)	78	80	80	86	82	83
	National average (%)	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	77	79	82	44	33	29
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	69
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	4,157	4,427	7,872	543	347	484
	Retention rate (%)	90	78	82	83	85	83
	National average (%)	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	84	85	88	39	57	60
	National average (%)	72	74	76	62	66	69
<b>H</b>	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	134	115	97
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	92	82	87
	National average (%)	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	44	46	46
	National average (%)	64	66	55	56	56	53

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1999 to 2002: College ISR.

\* too few students to provide a valid calculation

**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)	68	27	5	169
Level 2 (intermediate)	55	32	13	47
Level 1 (foundation)	64	29	7	14
Other sessions	67	24	9	21
<b>Totals</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>251</b>

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