

Hackney Community College

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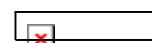
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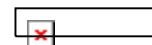
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Basic information about the college

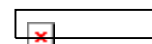


Name of college:	Hackney Community College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Ms C P Farley
Address of college:	Shoreditch Campus Falkirk Street London N1 6HQ
Telephone number:	020 7613 9000
Fax number:	020 7613 9016
Chair of governors:	Mr Paul Barnes
Unique reference number:	130407
Name of reporting inspector:	Bernard McDonald
Dates of inspection:	10-14 February 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Hackney Community College is a general further education (FE) college in the London borough of Hackney. It was established in 1992, through the merger of the borough's sixth form centre, FE college and adult education service. The college's main location is in Shoreditch, in imaginatively designed, purpose-built accommodation. The college is in the process of relocating provision from its other main site, Brooke House, which is the venue for the recently established Brooke House Sixth Form College. Community education programmes are delivered in partnership with over 80 organisations and in over 40 outreach and community centres.

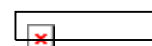
The borough's population exceeds 200,000. The wards within Hackney are amongst the most deprived, economically and socially, in the country. Nearly 95% of the students reside in disadvantaged areas. Almost half of all schoolchildren in the borough are eligible for free school meals. The unemployment rate in Hackney in May 2002 was 7%, compared with a national average of 3%.

The population of Hackney is ethnically very diverse, with nearly half of the people belonging to 23 minority ethnic groups. Over 90 languages are spoken and over 50% of children have English as an additional language, compared to 8% nationally. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. Within the college, the majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. In 2001, 34% of Hackney school pupils achieved at least 5 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) passes at A* to C compared with a national average of 48%.

The college is the only general FE college in the borough. Brooke House Sixth Form College has recently opened, and there are four general FE and three sixth form colleges in adjacent London boroughs. Three voluntary-aided schools and one special school, all catering for students aged 16 to 18, are in the borough.

The college offers a wide range of courses, with a significant proportion of enrolments in the foundation area of learning.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of the provision to be adequate. In four curriculum areas, the provision was good; it was satisfactory in six areas and unsatisfactory in two. A wide range of courses is offered. The provision is sensitive to the needs of the local community. The standards being achieved by adults are improving. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- high pass rates on short courses and improvements in adults' achievements
- imaginatively designed and well-maintained accommodation at Shoreditch
- range and reach of the provision
- productive links with local communities
- good progression routes from entry level and community-based courses
- good support for students, including well-developed childcare provision
- strong and effective emphasis on social inclusion and equality of opportunity
- good management of resources
- highly effective governance.

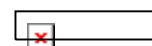
What should be improved

- attendance and punctuality of students
- pass rates amongst students aged 16 to 18
- teachers' use of information learning technology (ILT)
- the quality of teaching and learning in some areas

- opportunities for students to gain experience of work
- the consistency of the quality of assessment practice across the college
- the additional learning support
- the sharing of good practice by staff
- the consistency of the quality of curriculum management
- the quality of the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and information and communications technology (ICT) provision.

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

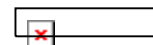


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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 and mathematics	Satisfactory. There has been a marked improvement in pass rates for GCSE mathematics, a significant part of the provision. Teaching in mathematics and chemistry is good, and subject teachers provide high quality additional support sessions. Checks on students' learning are insufficient and not enough use is made of ILT. Students' progress is hindered by their poor punctuality and the lack of additional learning support.
Construction	Good. Good pass and retention rates on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) painting and decorating and bricklaying. Teamwork and collaboration amongst staff are highly effective, with

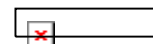
	good teaching in many practical lessons. Good workshop facilities and equipment support learning. Specialist provision of mastic asphaltting courses is excellent. Poor punctuality affects learning and attainment and there is a lack of work-based assessment.
Business administration, management and professional	Satisfactory. Pass rates on some NVQ courses are good. Most of the teaching is satisfactory or better. Students are well-supported. Staff shortages have had a negative impact on the students' experience. Some assessment practices are poor. Most resources are adequate but the poor reliability of ICT equipment adversely affects learning.
Information and communications technology	Unsatisfactory. Pass rates are good on some full-time courses but retention rates are often low. Pass rates on part-time courses are poor. Too much teaching is unsatisfactory and there is too little good teaching. The monitoring of students' progress is weak but internal progression rates are good.
Sport, leisure and tourism	Good. Achievement is good on vocational courses at levels 2 and 3. There is much effective teaching, which prepares students well for employment. Students receive effective support and make good progress. Sports students demonstrate very good coaching skills. Work experience on some courses is insufficient.
Health, social care and early years	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are improving but pass rates in some areas remain low. There is good teaching, which motivates students to progress both within class and to higher level courses. Key skills provision is not well developed. Attendance is poor.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Many areas have good pass rates and students achieve a high standard of work. Other areas are less successful, and there is insufficient sharing of good practice between departments. There is an extensive range of courses that is very responsive to the needs of a diverse local community.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Retention rates on access courses are good. Much teaching is good, particularly of adults, but the use of ILT is not well developed. Attendance and punctuality are poor in too many classes. There is a good range of access courses, which are often oversubscribed.
English	Good. The area is well led, with good student achievements and much good teaching. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subject. They monitor students' progress carefully, both in lessons and through good tutorial support. There is insufficient use of ILT.
English for speakers of other languages	Unsatisfactory. Teaching on full-time courses is good but there is too much weak teaching on the extensive part-time provision. Retention rates are good on internally accredited courses. Insufficient account is taken of students' prior experience and achievements.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Pass rates in literacy and in entry-level numeracy are currently low. Teaching is good, with much variation of activity and a range of tasks that challenge students. Courses meet the diverse range of needs in the community, including outreach provision that widens participation. There is insufficient co-ordination and sharing of good practice across the college.
Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. Students' achievements of their personal learning goals are good. Teaching and learning in activity-based sessions are good, and students receive effective support for their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In some lessons, there is insufficient differentiation for the varied abilities of students within the group. The well-managed provision has a wide range of courses, with good opportunities for progression. Diagnostic assessment is under-developed.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college provides a secure and welcoming environment that is highly responsive to the needs of diverse local communities. Arrangements for quality assurance have improved. Overall, retention and pass rates are rising, but some pass rates, particularly for students aged 16 to 18, remain below the national average for colleges of the same type. There is some unsatisfactory provision. Effective actions by governors and managers have led to a number of improvements since the last inspection, for example, in the reliability and use of management information. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

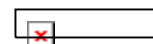


The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college is highly committed to widening participation, seeks to be fully inclusive and values diversity. It promotes education and training to students from a wide range of cultural and economic backgrounds. Over one-third of students currently enrolled have learning difficulties and/or literacy, numeracy and language needs.

The college's strong emphasis on outreach work involves working closely with many voluntary and community groups, regeneration agencies and others to ensure a wide range of accessible and innovative provision. There are entry-level courses in over 40 accessible outreach and community centres in Hackney. Strategies to increase participation from groups under-represented in FE have been successful. The college has franchise arrangements in order to reach some students who otherwise would not undertake courses: for example, in the School of Asian and Oriental Catering. The college has a special team of staff to recruit and retain groups of students that have been traditionally hard to reach, for instance, those with mental health difficulties. There are significant enrolments by refugees and asylum seekers. The college analyses students' achievements by age, gender and ethnic grouping. All sites have good disability access.

The college offers discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes, as well as support in these areas. There is currently insufficient support available to meet the needs of all the students on vocational courses and the quality of the support is uneven across the curriculum areas.

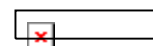
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The college provides good, impartial advice and guidance for prospective students. Admission procedures are clear, although there are some instances of students receiving less than satisfactory initial guidance and being placed on courses at inappropriate levels. There is a range of induction practices to suit full-time and part-time students. Students in the sixth form centre receive a well-structured induction. Induction to some part-time and community programmes is not so effectively implemented. Students receive good support from their vocational subject tutors during lessons. Arrangements for tutorials are effective in the sixth form centre. The core tutorial programme introduced in 2001/02 is not yet fully implemented across the curriculum and in the community

insufficient to meet the language, numeracy and literacy needs of all the students. Students make good use of a highly effective range of welfare, finance and personal support services operated by a team of multi-lingual advisers. Provision of careers guidance and advice on progression to higher education (HE) and employment is good for students aged 16 to 18 but insufficient for adult students on part-time and community programmes.

Students' views of the college



Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

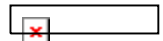
What students like about the college

- the safe and secure and environment
- the quality of buildings and resources
- the friendly and relaxed atmosphere
- approachable teachers who are knowledgeable, supportive and provide lots of feedback
- that the college 'cares'
- the advice and guidance given
- the child care facilities
- that the college prepares them for work or HE and they have a future
- the sports facilities.

What they feel could be improved

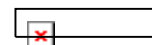
- the access to, and quality, of computers
- the computer network
- somewhere to eat their own food
- the range and cost of food
- financial support for transport
- security arrangements that are less intimidating
- more flexible times of childcare
- some students' punctuality
- additional learning support in the classroom for language and literacy.

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



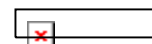
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	62	30	8
19+ and WBL*	58	35	7
Learning 16-18	60	26	14
19+ and WBL*	57	34	9

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 college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses. Work-based learning is not a significant feature of the work of the college. Courses are offered in all of the LSC's areas of learning, with the exception of retailing, customer service and transport. There were too few enrolments in land-based provision, engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy to justify inspection. The inspection covered 10 areas of learning. Three grades were awarded in the foundation area, which accounts for more than one-third of the college's provision. There are about 1,500 students aged 16 to 18 and some 8,000 adults enrolled on courses.

2. Overall, college pass rates have risen over the past 4 years to 72%. This is, in part, due to a significant rise in enrolments on short courses. Pass rates on these courses have risen sharply over the last four years. Pass rates are better for adults than for students aged 16 to 18. The college's data for 2001/02 show that pass rates fell for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1, 2 and 3 and they were below the national average for colleges of the same type. Pass rates for adults rose in 2001/02 although, at levels 1 and 2, they remained below the national average.

3. Overall, college retention rates have also risen over the past four years, to 82%. This is also due, in part, to the high retention rates of short courses. There is no established trend of improvement in retention rates for long courses. At levels 1 to 3, retention rates fell in 2001/02 and were below the national average, with the exception of students aged 16 to 18 at level 3.

4. The attendance rate of students at lessons observed by inspectors was 63%. This is below the national average and below the figure for the previous inspection. The inspection coincided with the religious festival of Eid. This explains the absence of some of the students.

5. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C provide more detail about students' achievements and the standards reached on particular courses.

16 to 18 year olds

6. Three-quarters of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18, whereas just 16% of part-time students are in this age group.

7. Based on college data, the overall pass rates for students aged 16 to 18, in 2001/02, on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were 38%, 65%, and 68%, respectively. The latter two figures are in line with national averages for colleges of the same type, but the first figure is well below, placing the college in the lower quartile for colleges of the same type. Rates of retention amongst students aged 16 to 18, in 2001/02, fell at levels 1 and 2 for long courses, and they are below the national average. At level 3, retention rose to 75%, just above the national average.

8. Pass rates at General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A level) are good, and above the national average. The college's analysis of value added data suggests that students' performance is roughly in line with what would be expected, given their entry qualifications. Pass rates on Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and precursor qualifications at level 3 improved over the 3 years to 2000/01 but fell in 2001/02. The number of students aged 16 to 18 taking NVQs at level 3 is small. Retention rates on level 3 courses tend to be in line with, or better than, national averages.

9. The achievement of higher grades on GCSE courses is good and well above the national average. By contrast, General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) level 2 and NVQ level 2 pass rates fell in 2001/02 and are below the national average. A similar picture emerges at level 1. However, in some areas, for example, entry level art, students are producing work of a high standard. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 tend to be in line with, or below, the national average.

Adult learners

10. The majority of adult students attend part-time courses at the college. There are significant enrolments in the foundation area of learning.

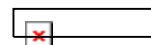
11. In 2001/02, the overall pass rates for students aged 19 and over on level 1, 2, and 3 long courses were 58%, 60% and 72%, respectively. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year, although only at level 3 does the figure exceed the national average for colleges of the same type. Pass rates also rose significantly on higher level courses, where the numbers are quite small, and on short courses, where the numbers are very significant.

12. The number of adults taking GCE A-level courses is declining, but the pass rates have risen steadily since 1998/99 and are now well above the national average for colleges of this type. Pass rates are good for adults taking GNVQ level 3 and precursor qualifications. For example, the pass rate for adults taking GNVQ level 3 precursor qualifications in 2001/02 rose to 85%, from 76% in the previous year. This is well above the national average of 72%. Adults taking NVQ at level 3, where the pass rate is well below the national average, do not share this degree of success. There is no established trend of improvement in the retention rate at level 3. It is poor at GCE A level and GNVQ but good for NVQ.

13. In most cases, adults perform well on GCSE courses and GNVQ and NVQ courses at levels 1 and 2. For example, the pass rates at NVQ level 2 in 2001/02 rose to 77%, from 58% in the previous year, well above the national average of 65%. A similar improvement occurred at GNVQ level 1. Overall retention rates fell at levels 1 and 2 in 2001/02, although, in some cases, there was a marked improvement. At NVQ level 1, the retention rate remained well below the national average.

14. In areas of the college where achievement is not always formally accredited, for example, where there are students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, adults successfully achieve challenging personal and learning goals.

Quality of education and training



15. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 247 lessons. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 59% of the lessons observed. The corresponding figures for learning and attainment were 58% and 43%, respectively. The overall standard of teaching was found to be higher than that observed at the time of the last inspection, undertaken by the Further Education Funding Council, in November 1999.

16. The standard of teaching is uneven across the curriculum areas. Teaching is most effective in visual and performing arts and media, English, literacy and numeracy, sport and leisure and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, too few lessons are good or better in business, ESOL, ICT and health and social care. In ICT and ESOL, the incidence of ineffective teaching is too high. Overall, 8% of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The grades awarded for learning were broadly similar to those for teaching, although in just over 10% of lessons, learning was judged to be unsatisfactory. The incidence of unsatisfactory learning is more marked in lessons for students aged 16 to 18 than in lessons for adults.

17. Just over 60% of the lessons observed were for adults. The quality of teaching in lessons for students aged 16 to 18 is slightly higher than in lessons for adults. However, in some areas of learning, the difference in the quality of teaching between students aged 16 to 18 and adults is quite marked. In construction, ICT, humanities and literacy and numeracy, the quality of lessons for adult students is significantly higher than is the case for students aged 16 to 18. The opposite is the case for sport, leisure and tourism, English, ESOL and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

18. The quality of teaching varies according to the level of course. The variations are more marked in relation to particular types of qualification. Over 60% of lessons at level 3 were judged to be good or better, whereas 54% of lessons at level 1 were of this quality. The better teaching is more often found on GCE A-level, AVCE and GNVQ intermediate courses. Students are much less well taught on GNVQ foundation, GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS), Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national and NVQ level 3 courses. All of the tutorials observed were at least satisfactory, and 56% of them were judged to be good or better.

19. About two-fifths of the lessons observed were taught by part-time teachers. Overall, lessons taught by full-time staff are better than those taught by part-time staff. The proportion of lessons taught by full-time teachers that were judged to be good or better was 63% compared to 56% for part-time teachers. The corresponding proportions for unsatisfactory teaching show a very slight difference in performance, with the respective figures being 7% for full-time and 8% for part-time teachers.

20. Generally, lessons are well planned and, in most areas, there are appropriately detailed schemes of work. In some cases, an interesting programme of educational visits enriches the teaching, for example, in sport and leisure and art and design. In others, for example, in health and social care, work experience is fruitfully integrated into lesson activity. Students benefit from good teamwork amongst teaching staff in some areas, for example, construction and English.

21. In the lessons that are good or better, teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods. This is particularly so in lessons in literacy and numeracy, construction and in the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Theory and practice are carefully linked and, in the better lessons, teachers ensure that students of differing aptitudes and abilities are appropriately challenged and stretched.

22. In some of the less successful and unsatisfactory lessons there is insufficient checking of learning. This is a feature of some ICT lessons. In too many areas a lack of differentiation fails to

cater for the needs of students with a range of abilities. This was seen in some of the lessons in business, ICT, GCSE English and in the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

23. Two factors have a negative impact on the quality of learning in many lessons. First, students' lack of punctuality in several curriculum areas, including business, construction, ICT and sport and leisure. The college has a strategy to improve both attendance and punctuality and inspectors observed it being implemented. Nevertheless, the frequent disruption to lessons caused by the late arrival of students has a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The second factor is the insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning. This is so in several curriculum areas, including science and mathematics, construction, ICT, health and social care and ESOL.

24. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Students benefit from the strong links with industry evident in some curriculum areas, for example, sport and visual and performing arts and media. They also benefit from the enthusiasm for their subject shown in some areas, for example, English. In some areas of learning, staff shortages have had an adverse impact on the provision, namely ESOL and business.

25. Accommodation is good. The well-designed Shoreditch campus provides good quality teaching and specialist accommodation. Rooms are clean, tidy and well maintained. The two main sites have good access for wheelchair users. Childcare facilities are good. Some accommodation in the outreach centres is poorly suited to teaching and learning.

26. Both main sites provide a very secure environment. Access to the campus is carefully controlled. Students and staff feel safe. Sports facilities at the Shoreditch site are very good. The college has very good specialist resources, for example, in sports, art and design, mathematics and science, construction, dance and motor vehicle. The college has one of only two facilities in the country for mastic asphalt training. Accommodation for dance, digital media, photography, music and ceramics is excellent.

27. There are learning resource centres at each of the two main sites. Resources at Brooke House will transfer to Shoreditch when the college moves out in April 2003. The library stock is good and up to date. Students receive a useful induction to the service and a session on information skills. The centres are used well by students. The computerised library catalogue is available not only in the libraries but also on the student intranet.

28. The college has over 760 computers for students' use, giving an approximate ratio of six full-time equivalent students to each computer. However, both students and staff experience difficulty in gaining sufficient access to them. There are too few computers in some curriculum areas and in some classrooms there is a high number of computers out of use. In some specialist areas, computers are unreliable and students often experience difficulties in accessing the network. Provision of specialist hardware and software in digital media is good.

29. Some 86% of permanent teachers have, or are working towards, a teaching qualification. The dependence upon a high proportion of hourly paid teachers in some departments is recognised by the college as a weakness. The college's staff development policy ensures that all teachers are able to undertake an appropriate teaching qualification. The staff development programme is well linked to the college's strategic plan.

30. All students undertake an initial assessment at the beginning of their programme, when additional support needs are identified. However, the results are not always used to plan additional support. In some curriculum areas, the results of assessment are not effectively used to plan students' learning.

31. The college does not have clear guidelines for the management of assessment. A broad policy has recently been produced, but has not been implemented in all curriculum areas. The rigour and standard of assessment varies considerably across the college. For example, sound assessment criteria are used in sports and leisure. Students' work is rigorously marked. Useful and constructive

feedback is given. Assessment of students' work in humanities is very good. Marking is regular and accurate and students receive helpful feedback. However, in ICT, there is little formative assessment and, in business studies, there is insufficient recording of assessment for students on Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) courses. In ESOL, assessment for full-time students is satisfactory but this is not the case for part-time students. Some teachers fail to correct students' poor spelling, punctuation and grammar. In most curriculum areas, assessment schedules are shared with students. The college handbook for internal verification is out of date and is not well understood by all staff. The quality of the verification of assessment practice varies considerably across the curriculum areas.

32. The college has a very clear mission which stresses the importance of partnerships, widening participation and meeting the needs of local communities. An increasing number of students in most areas progress from entry through to advanced level. This includes progression for students from community venues to main sites. There is a well-established and successful access programme enabling good progression to HE.

33. The college has a variety of strong community links which enable it to assess and respond to community needs. The college plays a pivotal role in innovative projects specifically designed to meet local needs. These links provide education and training for many groups who may have difficulty in enrolling on mainstream courses, for example, working with hospital in-patients and outpatients. In some cases, students progress on to college-based courses. The ESOL department works with a local company to provide language training for bus drivers.

34. Collaborative working with local schools and schools for pupils with special needs is a well-established part of a co-operative approach to 14 to 19 education across the borough. For example, the college provides adult classes in local schools for parents. These have recruited successfully and they are well attended. There are also school links courses operating in engineering, maintenance and construction for 40 students from schools in Islington.

35. The cross-college enrichment programme has an excellent range of activities appropriate to the needs of a culturally diverse population. For example, educational visits, visiting speakers and additional qualifications for full-time students are available. The college recognises, however, that only a narrow range of students take up these opportunities. Some 59 activities were undertaken by 13% of the students in 2001/02. Student liaison officers promote the programme but it is not sufficiently publicised. Within some curriculum areas, for example, in sport and leisure, ESOL and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there is a very good take up. The sports academies are very well attended.

36. A team of multi-lingual advisers provides good impartial advice and guidance about courses running at the main sites. Students hoping to attend courses in community locations do not have similar access to advice. There are some excellent initiatives to reach vulnerable groups. For example, initial language assessment and guidance is provided at a local refugee housing association hostel. A mental health project offers specialist staff development to advice and guidance staff. College staff visit local schools and careers events and invite school pupils to attend taster courses. The college collaborates with other providers of education and training in the borough to provide comprehensive information.

37. All full-time students have tutorials. Tutorials are more effective in the sixth form centre than on part-time and community programmes. Many students report considerable satisfaction with informal support from subject tutors beyond the tutorial system. There is variable practice in tutorials. Not all staff monitor progress against agreed targets. Many targets are not sufficiently precise.

38. Students receive effective careers advice from their subject tutors and, more formally, from Connexions advisers. Advice on welfare matters and counselling is readily available. The college has good links with local specialist support agencies. Financial help is provided from access funds and charities. A significant number of students are given childcare assistance.

39. The induction programme in the sixth form centre is well structured. The quality of the induction

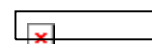
process is not uniformly good across all curriculum areas and community centres. Late starters do not always receive an appropriate induction.

40. The systems in use for initial diagnostic assessment vary in their effectiveness. All students are initially placed on key skills level 1 programmes for communication skills. There is insufficient provision of key skills at levels 2 and 3 in application of number and ICT.

41. Much of the one-to-one literacy and numeracy support is effective. A pilot scheme involving learning mentors contributes to improving retention. The current arrangements for identifying students' support needs are not fully effective and many students experience considerable delays before receiving help. English is an additional language for a significant number of students. The language needs of many of these students are not being met within their lessons on vocational courses. The quality of language support is generally unsatisfactory. Support for dyslexic students is particularly effective. Students with disabilities are very well supported.

42. The college monitors attendance and punctuality. A strategy to address weaknesses is in place. It is too early to assess its impact but inspectors noted that punctuality was poor in several curriculum areas.

Leadership and management



43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The community college is an essential ingredient in the life of the borough. It offers a high quality environment that is in stark contrast with much of its surroundings. To create this oasis has taken clear strategic vision, firm management and extensive support from governors and the local community. There is a commitment to maintaining a safe and welcoming environment that is evident from staff and students in all areas of the college. Over the last 3 years, the college has faced major challenges. For example, a new sixth form college has been created using a building that was once part of the community college. This has necessitated relocating some of the college provision. Managers, teachers and support staff had to cope with this difficult situation while maintaining students' morale and keeping them learning. To a great extent, they have succeeded.

44. There have been other successes in the last two years. More adults now successfully complete their courses and achieve their qualifications than previously, and in a few curriculum areas the retention and pass rates are higher than the averages in FE colleges of a similar type. Quality assurance has improved and now focuses much more on the quality of teaching and learning and includes accurate analyses of students' performance. New and outstanding sports facilities have been developed and are well used by students and people from the local community. Many of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. For example, governors now monitor students' performance very closely, poor quality engineering provision has been reduced significantly, leaving only motor vehicle courses and management information regarding students is accessible to and well used by managers.

45. Not everything has gone well or improved. Provision in ICT and ESOL, where there are significant numbers of students, is unsatisfactory. In some areas of the college, student numbers are falling. Retention and pass rates for many students aged 16 to 18 fell last year. Retention and pass rates for students on long courses at levels 1 and 2 were below the national average in 2001/02. The quality of course and programme management varies and is sometimes poor.

46. The college plays an important part in the diverse cultural life of the local community. There are close links with many organisations ranging from those that encourage involvement in the arts to those that help people into employment. Courses and activities at around 40 local outreach centres generally recruit well and provide an effective introduction to learning for many of the most disadvantaged people in the area. A quarter of all students who begin to study in community centres

go on to study at the main college site.

47. Governors play a full and effective part in setting the strategic direction for the college and monitoring progress. They are well informed, know the college well and keep it clearly focussed on the local community. They monitor closely the financial and academic performance and are involved in self-assessment. The strategic planning cycle starts with the governors' annual conference, over two days in the autumn, where governors are briefed and meet with staff and students. The planning cycle is clear and logical.

48. Governors and senior managers have successfully created a culture and an environment that encourages and enables participation and focuses on raising peoples' aspirations and achievements. Many courses and programmes such as the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, humanities, English, construction, sports and leisure and the arts are well managed. In these areas, communication is good, resources are well used to support learning and self-assessment and other quality assurance processes are thorough. However, there are some areas, notably the provision for ESOL and ICT, where management is unsatisfactory. Problems in these areas include too much unsatisfactory teaching, too few teachers, some poor communications and problems with computer equipment. In literacy and numeracy there is a lack of co-ordination across the college. Attendance and punctuality are long-standing problems that the college has sought to address. The inspection shows that the strategies adopted have not succeeded in many areas. Attendance patterns for many students are unsatisfactory. Too many students arrived late at lessons and interrupted the learning of other students.

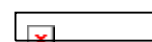
49. Quality assurance has improved further since it was re-inspected. It now focuses closely on the quality of teaching and learning. Trained observers regularly undertake lesson observations and there are staff development sessions which teachers attend as a result of the outcome of their observation. The college's own analysis of the quality of teaching is reasonably well matched to that of the inspectors. There is now accessible and accurate data regarding retention and pass rates that is used in self-assessment. Good use is made of benchmarking of performance against national averages but there is little effective use of value added measures to gauge improvements in achievement. Some course reviews are less thorough than others. Managers monitor targets set for retention and achievement. The quality assurance system effectively covers the other aspects of college life. There are service level agreements for business units in the college.

50. The appraisal system covers all staff. It includes the observation of teaching and forms an important element of the management supervision system in the college. The appraisal identifies staff development needs. A wide range of staff development opportunities is available. Staff value these and speak highly of the quality of such support.

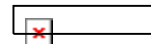
51. Clearly expressed policies are in place to ensure that there is fair and equal treatment for all students and staff. These policies are monitored effectively by both governors and the equality and inclusion group. This group and a governors' committee receive regular and clear reports regarding recruitment and the performance of students analysed by gender and ethnicity. Reasons for any weak performance are discussed and actions requested. There is a good range of activities to raise awareness and provide training on equality issues.

52. The college has managed well the processes around convergence of the average level of funding. It has reduced its costs and made efficiency gains. Much of the accommodation and many of the resources to support learning are of high quality. However, there are staff shortages in some areas and some difficulties with the computer network that are impeding students' learning. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- significant improvement in pass rates for GCSE mathematics
- good teaching in mathematics and chemistry
- high quality extra help from subject teachers
- good quality work of students on mathematics and chemistry courses.

Weaknesses

- insufficient additional learning support for students
- insufficient checks on learning in many lessons
- impact of lack of punctuality on students' learning and achievement
- little effective use of ILT in lessons.

Scope of provision

53. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. Carefully chosen syllabuses provide students with courses that they find interesting. Enrolments on these courses and the national diploma in science were approximately the same in 2000 and 2001 but declined in 2002. The college has replaced the GNVQ intermediate course in science with a first diploma in science, and the double certificate science award has been introduced in the place of GCSE separate sciences. Over 200 students take GCSE mathematics. The courses are offered on a full-time and part-time, day and evening basis. No part-time science courses are offered. A range of

numeracy classes from entry level to level 2 is also offered, and this provision was separately inspected alongside literacy.

Achievement and standards

54. Most pass rates are satisfactory and, in 2002, were at or just above the national average for colleges of the same type. Some pass rates are significantly better than this. Pass rates at GCE A level were over 90% in both chemistry and physics and over 37% of students passing GCE A-level chemistry or mathematics obtained grades A or B. Results in GCE AS and GCSE mathematics showed a significant improvement in 2002. In GCSE mathematics, the percentage of grades A* to C was 51%, which is higher than the national average for all colleges. The retention rate is close to the national average for colleges of the same type.

55. Most students perform at least as well as would be expected from their prior achievement but a few show very significant underachievement. Many students for whom English is not their first language start courses with qualifications below the national average but make good progress and reach good standards. For example, second year students taking GCE A-level chemistry are confident in discussing the concept of entropy in relation to equilibria and similar students in mathematics carry out complex integration. Adult students, with few prior qualifications, use appropriate terminology and successfully perform calculations in GCSE mathematics relating to cumulative frequency. Too many students arrive late for their lessons, causing disruption to the learning and achievement of everyone in the class.

56. Some students' work is imaginative and challenging. For example, physics students write assignments about fundamental particles using information gathered from popular science sources and biology students investigate bacterial growth in milk. Practical skills are not well developed but there is a strong emphasis on safety. There is little use of computers to improve the presentation of assignments, although all students are expected to achieve level 2 key skills in information technology (IT) and the Internet is often used as a source of reference material. National diploma students are helped to develop information skills through the use of a well-designed pack produced by the college's learning resources centre.

57. There is good progression from science courses to related HE. In 2002, eleven students progressed to courses in pharmacy or medicinal biochemistry.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	246	230	209
		% retention	71	69	68
		% pass rate	31	38	53
National diploma in science	3	No. of starts	57	48	42
		% retention	61	79	67
		% pass rate	88	92	77
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	39	45
		% retention	*	87	78
		% pass rate	*	12	57
GCE AS chemistry (Nuffield)	3	No. of starts	*	43	46
		% retention	*	84	80
		% pass rate	*	83	76
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	*	29	27

		% retention	*	76	81
		% pass rate	*	77	59
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	*	35	43
		% retention	*	86	91
		% pass rate	*	63	67

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

58. Almost all teaching is at least satisfactory. In chemistry and mathematics there is some very good teaching. Most lessons are well organised and there is flexibility in response to students' needs. For example, part-time GCSE mathematics classes were behind schedule because students needed more explanation while, in a first diploma class, students completed work more rapidly than expected and were given extension experiments. In a GCE A-level physics class, a photometer experiment was rapidly redesigned, as the sun was not shining. Schemes of work are mainly lists of topics. Few lesson plans contain objectives that are shared with students.

59. Rapport between students and teachers is good and, in most lessons, students are confident about asking for assistance. There is some use of alternative questions and additional material for more able students and teachers try to give more support to less able students. Because of difficulties in the use of English, many students need significant help in order to follow instructions, extract information from a text or write clear answers. Very little additional learning support is available in class to help with these difficulties. This leads to underachievement and limits learning. A few students have extra support from a learning mentor; both teachers and students value this.

60. Good lessons are characterised by clear exposition and lively discussion. In a GCE A-level mathematics lesson, students discussed how a problem should be solved and then were taken systematically through the necessary procedures. Models and cardboard boxes were used effectively to enable students in a GCSE mathematics class to identify shapes and grasp the principles underlying the calculation of volume and area. All GCE AS and A-level students are expected to attend extra support lessons which focus on increasing the achievement of gifted and talented students through problem solving and additional work on examination papers. These sessions are of a high quality and are valued by students. Teachers also provide a great deal of additional advice and explanation outside scheduled lesson times.

61. In the less effective lessons, teachers provide significant amounts of information but students are given few opportunities to contribute and there is insufficient checking on learning. There is reference to practical activities in science lesson plans but little constructive use of practical work was observed. Although laboratories contain computers, no effective use of ILT was observed. Work experience makes a valuable contribution to students' experience on the national diploma course. Some students have the opportunity to work in university laboratories.

62. All students have an initial assessment to identify their level of skills in communication and numeracy. The results are used to ensure that students start an appropriate course in mathematics but they do not inform the planning for individual need in lessons. A value added system, linking these initial assessment results to final GCSE mathematics grades, has proved helpful in monitoring improvements to the course but is not used in setting targets for individual students. Similarly, value added data for GCE AS and A-level courses are compiled but are not used for formative monitoring or to set target minimum grades.

63. Tests are set every two or three weeks in order to monitor progress. Homework is regularly set and it is returned fairly promptly with suitable annotation. A structured homework scheme has been

used to bring about improvement in GCSE mathematics and a sheet has been introduced to provide structured feedback. BTEC assignments have a frontsheet that allows for feedback but it is often not fully completed and does not contain evidence of internal verification. Key skills are assessed separately from other qualifications causing some duplication of effort. For example, BTEC students, giving a presentation as part of their course, needed to repeat the activity at a different time in order to be assessed for their communication skills.

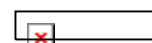
64. Students value their links with subject teachers through the tutorial system. They receive good guidance on progression to HE, including advice sessions from former students. There is also discussion and identification of learning styles and a great deal of personal support.

65. The classrooms and well-equipped laboratories are in a relatively new, purpose-built block. There is little attempt to use displays to give the area an identity. Each science subject has its own, well-qualified and experienced, technician and a preparation room. Equipment is used flexibly and is ordered and stored centrally. Computers in the area are too few, and those that are available are out of date. A range of data-logging equipment is provided, which is also made available to schools, but the more modern items require connections that are not available on most computers. Teachers are well qualified and experienced.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory overall, but there is a lack of coherence in science where leadership is shared by two senior lecturers. Effective action has been taken to improve upon poor results in mathematics and physics and to replace unsuitable courses with more appropriate ones. Meetings take place regularly and some sharing of materials and good practice occurs. There is no clear team ethos across the whole area although there are a number of teams based around separate subjects or courses. Until recently, classroom observation has been insufficient to identify weaknesses and to encourage the sharing of good practice. Students' views are collected by the college and also in surveys specific to the curriculum area, but there is no evidence that this has led to any changes. There are targets for retention, recruitment and achievement. All staff in the area were involved in the self-assessment process which produced an accurate and evaluative report.

Construction



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

Strengths

- good pass and retention rates on NVQ painting and decorating and bricklaying courses

- good teaching in practical lessons

- highly effective teamwork and collaboration amongst staff

- good workshop facilities and equipment that support learning
- excellent specialist provision and high standards being achieved in mastic asphaltting.

Weaknesses

- poor punctuality affecting learning and attainment
- lack of work-based assessment and recording of evidence for NVQs
- no work experience for full-time students.

Scope of provision

67. The college provides construction courses at two campuses but it is planning to relocate all of the provision to one site by the summer term of 2003. The construction department offers courses in bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing, electrical installation, mastic asphalt, cleaning and waste management, housing and building studies. The majority of courses offer progression from pre-foundation to level 4. At the time of inspection, there were nearly 1,000 students enrolled on full-time and part-time courses. Just over one-fifth of the students are aged 16 to 18. Key skills are a part of some courses but they are not available within bricklaying.

Achievement and standards

68. Most students are successful. Retention and pass rates on NVQ painting and decorating and bricklaying courses are well above the national averages for these courses; improvements in pass rates over the last three years are significant. There has also been substantial improvement in pass rates in electrical installation at level 1. Students' attainment on most courses is good, with many students confidently able to demonstrate the development of their practical skills. There is no work experience for full-time students.

69. Students achieve a good standard of practical work. In a practical lesson on door hanging, many students were able to fit locks and hinges to a good commercial standard and to meet NVQ requirements. In bricklaying, students were constructing one-brick walls in English bond to an acceptable standard for the level of the course. Many students have had a highly successful involvement in craft competitions. In 1999, two plumbing students achieved gold medals and, last year, two carpentry and joinery students achieved 2nd and 3rd places in regional heats.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 2360-	1	No. of starts	20	17	43

06 electrical installation part 1		% retention	90	60	61
		% pass rate	56	78	80
NVQ in decorative operations	1	No. of starts	38	39	50
		% retention	58	79	64
		% pass rate	41	67	59
NVQ in trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	47	44	5
		% retention	70	66	80
		% pass rate	22	72	75
NVQ in wood occupations	1	No. of starts	7	47	9
		% retention	100	60	100
		% pass rate	57	70	89
NVQ in painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	36	23	19
		% retention	64	78	79
		% pass rate	35	78	87
NVQ in bricklaying	2	No. of starts	21	16	16
		% retention	80	100	88
		% pass rate	63	73	86

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

Quality of education and training

70. The quality of teaching in practical lessons is good. Most of the teaching is good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In the better lessons, individual learning is supported by effective team teaching. Students achieve high levels of work when involved in resource-based learning. The preparation and organisation of most of the lessons is satisfactory or better. In many lessons, there is clear evidence of good planning. There are clear links with the previous lessons, the outcomes of which had been evaluated. In a minority of lessons, some uninspiring theory teaching failed fully to capture students' attention. In most practical periods, good individual support is provided with appropriate demonstrations of craft skills.

71. Facilities at both campuses are good. The practical workshops are of adequate size to meet current needs. They are suitably equipped with a range of tools, materials and equipment. There is appropriate recycling of materials in bricklaying but students encounter difficulty when re-using old fittings in the plumbing workshops. Access to ICT is good, but it is not used to its full potential.

72. Within one workshop, an area has been designated for the assessment of plumbers. It includes a good range of finishes. This excellent facility is regularly redecorated by painting and decorating students as an area to develop their skills; it is also used by the cleaning students to meet their course requirements.

73. Provision for mastic asphaltting is excellent. To support these specialist courses there are experienced and qualified staff with technician support, a mechanically ventilated workshop and an adequate number of tools and timber-framed models for practical work. Students gain experience in testing new granite asphalt flooring. Students travel from all over the south of England to attend these courses.

74. Assessment practice within the college is satisfactory. There is a lack of work-based assessment and recording of evidence for NVQs. In most workshops, wall charts are displayed which illustrate students' achievements and progress in practical activities, although in some bricklaying courses

there is a lack of individual progression targets for students.

75. The good range of programmes meets the needs of the local construction industry. Students may progress from craft course to technician or higher technician studies. In placing students on courses, good account is taken of earlier attainment and experience. This is not formally accredited, even though staff are qualified to do this. Close links are being developed with local schools that include a number of pupils visiting the college to sample building crafts. A consortium of local colleges has recently started to work together to improve the construction provision in the area.

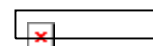
76. All construction students undertake a literacy and numeracy test during their induction. A number of the students attend additional support lessons. Construction staff work with learning mentors to provide appropriate support materials. However, there is no analysis of the effectiveness of learning support. The tutorial and student review procedure for full-time and part-time students is good. Monitoring of individual students' progress is managed well.

77. Curriculum tutors use a good informal system to monitor students at risk of leaving their course early. Termly progress and attendance reports are produced for most students, with copies going to individuals, parents or employers. Students' punctuality was poor during the inspection, adversely affecting both learning and attainment. A system had been introduced, linked to the tutorial process, to address this issue.

Leadership and management

78. Leadership is clear and effective. A thorough self-assessment report and development plan have resulted in improvements. Communications are good. Regular formal team meetings involve staff in the development of the provision. There is highly effective teamwork amongst staff to support the students. This includes much sharing of good practice. Staff work closely together to ensure the success of events such as the prize awards evening. Staff have good access to management information but the use of targets is not fully developed. Resources are effectively deployed. The accommodation is used efficiently. The learning of full-time students is impeded by a lack of work experience.

Business administration, management and professional



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on NVQ courses
- good teaching on business courses
- well-supported students.

Weaknesses

- weak aspects of some vocational programmes
- poor assessment practices.

Scope of provision

79. The college provides courses in business studies, business administration accounting, as well as a range of short courses and single secretarial subjects. Courses range from entry level to level 4 and are both part time and full time. Many part-time courses are available in the evenings as well as during the day. Full-time courses include GNVQ foundation and intermediate, AVCE and NVQs in administration and accounting. There is a varied programme of part-time courses including payroll and computerised accounts. The courses are offered to both students aged 16 to 18 and to adults. In 2001/02, there were over 2,000 enrolments in the business administration, management and professional curriculum area. Three-quarters of the students are adults on short or part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

80. Pass rates are good and are above the national average for NVQ administration at levels 2 and 3 and also for NVQ accounting at level 2. The 88% pass rate on the NVQ administration level 3 course is well above the national average. In accounting, at level 2, 90% of the students pass the course and this compares well with the national average.

81. There are some signs of improvements in retention rates on a small number of courses but there is no established trend. There was a significant decline in the retention rate during 2001/02 on the BTEC national diploma course. Staffing difficulties encountered during the year have now been resolved. A newly developed e-learning course is gradually replacing this course for full-time students; the retention rate on this course is satisfactory.

82. The retention rate has improved on the GNVQ foundation course and it is now just above the national average. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory, with a few examples of really good work in some portfolios, particularly in the general business area. Many students on vocational courses are employed or are in work placements and the evidence used by the students from these workplaces is satisfactory.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, management and professional, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	45	37	42
		% retention	87	59	71
		% pass rate	49	41	43
NVQ accounts	2	No. of starts	53	61	64
		% retention	79	79	79
		% pass rate	80	79	90
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	32	25	41
		% retention	72	88	70
		% pass rate	100	81	79

NVQ accounts	3	No. of starts	57	40	52
		% retention	88	90	96
		% pass rate	37	33	54
NVQ administration	3	No. of starts	26	30	22
		% retention	91	90	85
		% pass rate	100	85	88
National diploma in business and finance	3	No. of starts	138	118	23
		% retention	66	75	48
		% pass rate	93	93	89

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

Quality of education and training

83. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. The majority of lessons are well planned and teachers maintain the interest of students. A suitable variety of teaching methods are used and teachers support individual students to help them to make progress in lessons. In some inspiring and challenging theory lessons, teachers make good use of their own industry and business experiences to enhance students' learning.

84. During lessons, students' progress is assessed regularly by teachers, using effective direct questioning techniques. Students receive informal verbal feedback regarding progress and performance during lessons, but this feedback is rarely documented. In accounting courses, there is insufficient use of the college's central learning resources to support learning and underpinning knowledge requirements.

85. In some lessons, there are additional exercises available for more able students. In other lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently for the needs of students of differing abilities. Some of the less able students are given support in class by their teachers but, on some secretarial and accounts courses, there were no extra learning materials provided to meet the needs of the more able students. In one lesson, the teacher posed questions to the whole class. The more able students provided most of the responses and answers and the teacher did not challenge or encourage responses from the other students.

86. The opportunity to gain work experience is highly valued by students. An accounts student was able to speak confidently about her useful work experience with the rest of her class during a presentation in which she described how she had been able to use her expertise to help full-time staff at work. Some aspects of vocational programmes are unsatisfactory. In some cases, students on administration courses have yet to gain a work placement and, in a minority of instances, the students' duties whilst in the work placement are not sufficiently varied, or at an appropriate level, to provide evidence or assessment opportunities. College staff visit students when on work placement, but do not take the opportunity to carry out assessments.

87. Teaching accommodation is adequate. Classrooms are of an appropriate size with good natural light. However, the décor is dull and unstimulating. The IT resources on the e-commerce national diploma course have repeatedly proved to be unreliable.

88. Assessment practices are poor. Students receive a good induction. The results of initial assessment are not always used effectively to identify additional support needs or to tailor teaching styles to meet those needs. There is insufficient formative assessment and progress tracking, particularly on NVQ courses. Formal monitoring of students' progress is inadequate. Internal verification lacks rigour. Some activity takes place but this is usually based only on portfolios and it occurs towards the end of the course. There is insufficient observation of assessor activities.

89. Students are well supported. They value highly the support offered by tutors and make good use of it. Many courses offer additional qualifications. These are provided by a variety of modes of attendance. The availability of the crèche facilities enables many young mothers to attend business courses. Students speak highly of this facility and appreciate the vocational tutors' understanding attitude to their need to reconcile personal commitments with the pursuit of qualifications.

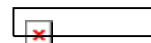
90. Progression to higher level courses is good. Many students across the curriculum have achieved their individual learning goals. For example, a significant number of current higher national certificate students have progressed from lower level business courses at the college. There is a steady progression of students through the three levels of the AAT accounting course. Many of the students have relatively low entry attainments and demonstrate a significant personal commitment to learning.

Leadership and management

91. For the past 18 months, there has been a shortage of staff in this area. Other resources, whilst adequate for the curriculum area, are not always used or, in the case of some IT, equipment is not always in working order. Although the ratio of computers to students is good, the drop-in facilities students use in their own time are insufficient to meet demand.

92. The curriculum team meets regularly to discuss student and course needs and requirements. An effective college system supports newly qualified teaching staff. Data are available to curriculum managers to track progress against targets. A strategy to improve students' punctuality is in place but the effectiveness of this is not yet established. The self-assessment report describes a fairly accurate picture of strengths but fails to identify the weaknesses identified during inspection.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- Well-managed and effective work experience on the national diploma
- good progression from entry level to HE
- very good pass rates on national diploma and GCE AS courses
- effective programme of additional subject-based lessons to support students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on part-time courses

- poor retention and pass rates on some full-time and part-time programmes
- much poor and unimaginative teaching
- inadequate assessment of students' learning needs and weak monitoring of students' progress
- little sharing of good practice
- inadequate resources.

Scope of provision

93. Computing and IT classes are offered within a programme area that also includes business and secretarial studies. There are full-time BTEC first and national awards for IT practitioners for both students aged 16 to 18 and adult learners seeking a broad-based IT qualification. The college also offers City and Guilds 7261/2 programmes. Part-time courses account for three-quarters of all enrolments. There is a significant amount of provision at levels one and two. This includes courses for beginners, for people aged over 50 and in web page design. The extensive part-time provision at level 1 is available in 26 adult and community learning centres. There is no level 4 provision.

Achievement and standards

94. Pass rates on some full-time courses are good. Every student retained on the course passed the BTEC national diploma in computer studies in 2001/02. The City and Guilds 7261/2 course has pass rates well in excess of national averages over the last two years. However, pass rates are poor on many part-time courses. In particular, short courses in computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) courses have very poor pass rates. On a wide range of level 2 courses the pass rates are also poor. Some of the courses that have good pass rates also have poor rates of retention, for example, the national diploma.

95. Overall, levels of attainment are poor. Classes do not progress at the planned rate. In some cases, the rate of progress is hampered by students' poor attendance. In many others, individual students' learning needs have not been adequately assessed or addressed. Currently, 10 students are receiving additional learning support, which is not delivered in the classroom.

96. Some assignment work on BTEC first and national courses is good and imaginative. There is little evidence of exceptional work by students. The standard of student work is poor in part-time short courses. Students' files often lack coherence and structure. Students are able to follow routines and manipulate text and data but are not able to use routines creatively to fully exploit the potential of application packages. A student working in a class using databases understood how to query the database but had no appreciation of the circumstances under which the creation of a database might be valuable.

97. There is a climate of high aspiration for level 3 students. A very high proportion of students from last year's national diploma progressed to university. Progression rates are good across the full-time provision, with almost nearly half of all of the level 2 full-time students progressing to level 3.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 4242	1	No. of starts	*	87	235
		% retention	*	89	63
		% pass rate	*	40	41
City and Guilds 7261 IT certificate	1	No. of starts	82	34	84
		% retention	72	53	67
		% pass rate	61	83	73
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	365	109	36
		% retention	90	95	83
		% pass rate	5	9	30
ECDL (short)	2	No. of starts	6	102	73
		% retention	100	97	88
		% pass rate	0	0	19
First diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	45	43	67
		% retention	71	60	78
		% pass rate	72	78	67
National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	56	69	61
		% retention	63	58	49
		% pass rate	91	85	100

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

98. Some teaching is very good. In these lessons, which are well organised, students are fully engaged and their learning is positively reinforced by systematic checking and by praise. During a lesson covering formatting styles, the teacher adroitly used two students to lead their peers. All of the students were encouraged to use their imagination and their recent experience. The value of formatting styles in terms of time saved and document appearance was very well understood by all of the students.

99. In a significant minority of lessons, the teaching is very dull. These lessons are typically teacher-led, with little or no engagement of, or participation by, students. In one lesson, the teacher talked to the class for 45 minutes without any attempt to test for understanding. Copying from the overhead projector or whiteboard is a significant part of some of the poorer lessons. Not enough lessons are well planned. In particular, little allowance is made for the different learning needs of students. Where such plans exist, they often involve tasks for those students who complete work more quickly than other students. The plans do not extend to the setting of targets for individual lessons for individuals or groups of students. More able students are not provided with more challenging work; weaker students are not given extension work to ensure that they attain the standards of the course.

There is a general failure to differentiate learning outcomes and to use differentiated learning materials for individual students.

100. The range of teaching strategies used is narrow. Small group work is rare and little use is made of the students' prior experience to provide colour and to improve engagement. Visual presentations to students and information and knowledge transfer are not enhanced by the imaginative use of ILT. There are three data projectors but these act as little more than complex overhead projectors. The use of whole group teaching in rooms full of PCs is underdeveloped. Learning materials are produced to a good standard but do not always reflect the cultural diversity of the students.

101. Lessons start on time. Students' punctuality is poor. Too many lessons suffer from very low levels of attendance. An attendance checking and follow up system is now in place but it is too early to assess its impact.

102. There is a very effective and well-managed work experience programme. This provides students with a valuable and much-appreciated opportunity to shape career paths. The BTEC national diploma students have five weeks' work experience, which is predominantly taken in schools, colleges and universities. The positive outcomes are well captured through perceptive and provocative de-briefings. A minority of students have been offered job opportunities as a result of this work.

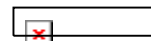
103. Staffing resources are sufficient. However, the sharing of good practice amongst staff is not fully developed. This area of work is well suited to the common provision of schemes, materials and assessments. The accommodation is good and the environment is of a high standard. The college computer network is poor and this impacts adversely on the student. Many students have to wait too long to log on to the network and students and staff are clearly frustrated by its inadequacy. There is sufficient access to computers in common areas and additional capacity within teaching rooms is available for further exploitation. There is a small number of broken chairs in computer rooms. Display screen regulations are not rigorously enforced as a matter of routine practice.

104. Unit progress is effectively tracked and monitored. Assessment practice is not standardised. In the best examples, deadlines are recorded and students are given helpful advice on how to complete referred work. Assignment deadlines are not routinely recorded. Internal verification does occur, but there is little evidence of good feedback being given. The cross-moderation policy does not fully exploit the potential sharing of good practice. Tutorials are positively perceived by students and they support learning, but there is insufficient emphasis upon individual target setting. In-class additional learning support is not provided. Initial screening and diagnostic testing does not effectively inform individual learning plans. The college has introduced a learning mentor scheme. Currently, 48 computing students are receiving detailed support on a one-to-one basis for a range of issues including punctuality, behaviour and progress. This is effective support. In addition, there are extra lessons provided under this scheme during half term and other holidays and on some Saturdays. Students speak very warmly of this support.

Leadership and management

105. Managers have been slow to respond to students' poor performance and weak courses have continued to be offered. A climate of progression and achievement has been well established amongst full-time students. The use of testing and target setting is underdeveloped at course and individual level. The college's internal teaching and learning observation profile is over-generous and does not provide a sound basis for improvement. There is no systematic use of value added data to set targets for students or to measure the effectiveness of teaching. Although the college has records of students who have progressed through from level 1 to level 4 and to HE, there is no overall analysis of progression.

Sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- good pass rates at level 3
- much effective teaching
- excellent and effectively used sports resources
- good range of provision for full-time students and in the local community
- well-managed curriculum teams.

Weaknesses

- declining pass rates on short courses
- insufficient work experience on leisure and tourism courses.

Scope of provision

106. The provision in this area has increased considerably within the last year, making good use of the new college sport and recreation centre. Full-time courses include the GNVQ leisure and tourism at foundation and intermediate levels, the intermediate diploma in travel operations and the AVCE in travel and tourism. New sports courses include the first and national diploma in sport and modular courses in exercise and fitness that are offered to part-time or full-time adult students. Short courses in sport, exercise and fitness are offered as additional courses to full-time students and are held at various community venues. Students undertake a range of visits in and around London. This enhances their learning and helps to prepare them for employment. For students who aspire to excellence in sport there are sports academies in football, basketball and cricket. These students train regularly and compete at a high level. Links with local clubs provide pathways for progression. There are opportunities for male and female students to receive specialist coaching and to represent the college.

Achievement and standards

107. GNVQ intermediate pass rates are high. On the AVCE travel and tourism course, pass rates

are higher than the national average. Pass rates on some short courses are declining. However, many students progress into employment as fitness instructors and sports coaches once they have achieved their primary learning goal.

108. Students' work is of a high standard. Sports students demonstrate considerable proficiency in practical skills. Innovative warm-up drills and games practices are proficiently demonstrated by students when leading games sessions. Students communicate well and give informed feedback when coaching new skills. Travel students demonstrate confident use of ICT, using technology that is similar to that used in industry. They are well prepared for employment. On level 3 fitness courses, adult students are making good progress. Students offer sound advice on exercise and healthy lifestyles to different types of customers and are encouraged to plan their own learning and complete tasks independently. However, students aged 16 to 18 are not so good at this.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	40	23	18
		% retention	73	73	72
		% pass rate	86	94	69
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	35	28	33
		% retention	69	89	76
		% pass rate	88	79	80
Weight training instructor certificate (short course)	2	No. of starts	14	11	9
		% retention	86	82	100
		% pass rate	75	78	56
Community sports leader's award (short course)	2	No. of starts	12	13	24
		% retention	58	100	92
		% pass rate	86	46	**
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism/AVCE travel and tourism double award *	3	No. of starts	19*	15*	16
		% retention	58	67	67
		% pass rate	80	70	90

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

* GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism for 2000 and 2001; changed to AVCE in 2002

** data incomplete

Quality of education and training

109. Teaching and learning are good or better in most lessons. Thoroughly planned lessons involve creative activities geared to the ability of the students, ensuring that all students are challenged. The very good lessons demonstrate a range of activities that engage students well. In one foundation class, the tutor had previously arranged for other staff and students to surprise the class by role playing different scenes in which a variety of customer service practices were demonstrated. Students enjoyed this approach and discussed and evaluated the relative merits of each of the methods used.

110. Within lessons, much reference is made to the sport, leisure and tourism industry. Educational visits to various attractions and sports organisations extend students' knowledge of the industry.

Lessons capture the imagination of the students and encourage them to investigate aspects of their vocational area. Key skills form part of most lessons and students are able to understand their significance within the leisure and tourism industry. Outside speakers from across the sector give students an insight into employment opportunities. Students' ICT skills are particularly well developed. Sports students gain work experience locally and are involved in voluntary community projects to enable them to prepare for employment. There is insufficient work experience for travel and tourism students, although a strategy to address this has been introduced. Teachers have a good rapport with their students. Students speak positively about the benefits of the support they receive from staff. Diversity and equality issues are addressed sensitively. Some students have poor attendance records and they arrive late for lessons. This adversely affects their learning. Staff are working hard to address this issue.

111. Staff have relevant industry experience and a good staff development programme ensures that they maintain up-to-date industry skills and that best current practice is taught. They maintain good links with local fitness centres and sports organisations. This ensures that students can get access to employment, training and coaching opportunities. The college sports centre is an excellent resource. A dance studio, multi-purpose sports hall and gymnasium enable students to use modern industry equipment and technology. The learning resources centre is used frequently by students. Classrooms are of an adequate size for each group and there are bright and colourful displays on the walls, much of it demonstrating students' own work.

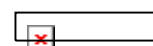
112. Continuous assessment of students' progress is effective. Challenging but realistic targets are agreed with students to help them to meet deadlines. Constructive feedback following assessment of practical skills is valued and improves students' performance. Most students are achieving high grades in assignments completed so far. Individual learning plans are well used, and students appreciate the efforts by staff to encourage progress. Completed assignments are assessed and returned promptly with written feedback indicating areas for improvement. Students understand the assessment procedures. Internal verification processes follow college procedures, are well documented and are used by managers as an effective quality assurance measure.

113. Appropriate advice and guidance ensures that students are placed on the correct course. The induction period provides further support for students who are unsure of their choice. Students are clear about progression routes available to them and of possible career opportunities. There is a good relationship between staff and students. Staff show a keen interest in student welfare and progress. The tutorial system provides good individual support and workshops provide help with portfolio completion and examination revision.

Leadership and management

114. Staff work effectively as a team to enhance the curriculum provision and support students. Management has successfully ensured that courses are inclusive and attract students from a diverse local community. The sports academies attract students who might otherwise shy away from FE. The new sports and fitness instructor courses give students living in the community new employment opportunities. Weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report have been addressed, although efforts to improve attendance are continuing. Staff are aware of targets for retention and achievement and work hard to achieve them.

Health, social care and early years



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

Strengths

- high pass rate on GNVQ foundation course
- good pass rates in therapeutic counselling
- good teaching motivates students to progress
- good range of courses.

Weaknesses

- late achievement on NVQ programmes
- poor pass rates on AVCE health and social care
- undeveloped provision for key skills
- poor attendance.

Scope of provision

115. The health and community section offers a range of courses, from entry level to level 4. Courses are available in care, counselling and early years. Most students are adults and a large majority have English as an additional language. The curriculum offer has been developed to match the needs of students. They are offered many entry points. Courses are chosen to reflect the preferred assessment methods.

Achievement and standards

116. The trends in retention and pass rates are improving. Counselling courses have very good pass rates and the GNVQ foundation health and social care pass rate is 9% above the national average. In 2001/02, the retention rate on the diploma in childcare and education was low, at 61%, as was the pass rate on the AVCE health and social care, at 26%. In the current year, there is an improvement in the rate of successful completion of assignments and tests. Both early years and care NVQs have unsatisfactory pass rates. Improved course management is now leading to students achieving within the time scale. Students' coursework is of a satisfactory standard and there is an increasing proportion of high grades. In lessons, students take initiative and pursue issues with confidence. They are considerate of the views of their peers when teachers break off to support those students with additional language needs. Students demonstrate that they can translate classroom learning

into the workplace. A diploma in childcare student on work experience in a school was able to contribute confidently to the assessment of children. She clearly linked child development theory with the performance of children against the early years curriculum. Students progress successfully to higher level courses, employment and HE.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and early years, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	*	17	34
		% retention	*	88	74
		% pass rate	*	53	80
Foundation award in caring for children	1	No. of starts	*	17	31
		% retention	*	94	90
		% pass rate	*	75	71
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	36	39	41
		% retention	67	46	85
		% pass rate	57	48	63
CACHE certificate in child care and education	2	No. of starts	26	28	25
		% retention	81	71	77
		% pass rate	67	70	70
Certificate in therapeutic counselling	2	No. of starts	20	57	40
		% retention	80	79	93
		% pass rate	81	82	100
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	21	24	17
		% retention	67	75	71
		% pass rate	57	72	25

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

* data not available

Quality of education and training

117. Vocational teaching is good and includes recognition of the needs of students for whom English is an additional language. Teachers are careful to ensure that all students understand and can interpret meanings and concepts. This is particularly true of cultural aspects of life in Britain. These are carefully explained to students new to the country. In an NVQ care class, there was animated discussion amongst students on the use of eye contact and touch when dealing with different client groups. Students exchanged experiences of the ways in which accepted norms of behaviour differ between countries. Students are keen to learn and take advantage of every opportunity. In an entry level class, the teacher encouraged students with learning difficulties as well as language difficulties to learn and increase their vocabulary by recording unfamiliar words and spellings in a notebook. Students frequently requested correct spellings and made records. These were later discussed in additional individual support lessons. Poor punctuality and attendance hinder learning. The majority of students are adults, and for most it is their first experience of education in this country. Students are highly appreciative of the good support they receive from teachers. Most students aim to progress to higher level courses.

118. Teachers have a variety of appropriate vocational qualifications and experiences. The majority

are teacher trained. Staff undertake development activities and there is evidence that this benefits students through projects such as the learning styles project and research-based activities. The outcomes from these projects can be seen in the variety of teaching methods used within the classroom. In particular, the recognition that many students learn more readily through visual media encourages the use of short video extracts and the use of photographs to trigger discussion and understanding. These are popular with students.

119. Accommodation and general resources are good. The learning centre offers a wide range of books and journals. The computers are used effectively by students for research, as well as presentational activities. Child observation reports made by early years students refer to a wide range of up-to-date authors and experts.

120. Progression is evident in the assignments given to each level of course. Internal verification is robust and internal moderation exercises confirm that work is in line with national standards. Assignment briefs are clear and feedback is helpful and focused. In the weaker areas, staff fail to address spelling and grammatical errors. Homework is set regularly, and there is evidence that this is completed and discussed. There is insufficient concentration on target setting in tutorials.

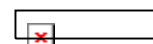
121. There is a broad range of provision in this area. Plans to work more closely with employers are being developed. Contacts with larger organisations representing employers such as the Health Service Workforce Confederation and Sure Start are effective. New programmes have been designed to meet the needs of entry level students with a vocational interest, as well as higher level counselling courses that allow progression.

122. Students feel well supported by their teachers. They recognise the importance of the student support funds and childcare arrangements in enabling them to study. Students speak highly of the additional learning support that they receive, mainly associated with additional language needs, but feel that it is insufficient, as they would like further to improve their language skills. This is seen as particularly important to the students who will work with children. Many of the adult students have previous experiences that are not acknowledged by their level of course.

Leadership and management

123. The manager of this area is a recent appointment. There are clear plans to develop the provision and work closely with the community and local employers. Managers are giving appropriate emphasis to the need to raise standards and meet the needs of a diverse community. Efforts are being made to ensure that the curriculum suits the needs of students. Teaching teams in the three areas of health care, early years and counselling are effective. The teams share good practice and this is seen both in teaching and in developing the curriculum.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- much good teaching in digital media, GCE A-level art, dance and music
- good pass rates on some courses

- outstanding entry level art and design course
- wide range of courses very responsive to diversity of local community
- high standards of work achieved in music, dance, art and design and digital media
- excellent accommodation, resources and good specialist facilities in most areas.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on a number of courses
- poor pass rates on some courses
- student learning disrupted by lateness and absence
- lack of sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

124. The college offers a broad range of courses in all aspects of visual and performing arts and media. This includes courses in music, theatre, dance, drama, media, video, photography, art and design and fashion and textiles. The provision is very responsive to the diverse nature and needs of the local community and most of it is vocationally orientated. Full-time courses include GNVQ foundation and intermediate levels plus AVCE advanced double and single awards. There are specialist national diplomas in media and fashion, a national certificate in photography and an array of part-time London Open College Network (LOCN) courses ranging from level 1 to 3, together with GCSE and GCE AS and A-level courses in art, media and drama. The college has expanded its range of modular provision and this has enabled students to have an increased access to courses and subjects through both day and evening attendance.

125. Progression across most of the curriculum is good, with 100% of students continuing to HE in AVCE art and design and 88% progressing on from the LOCN intermediate multi-media access programme.

Achievement and standards

126. The standards of students' work and levels of achievement are varied across the provision. High standards of work are achieved in digital media and art and design, where pass rates are good. The students on the entry level art and design course are reaching very high standards of attainment and this is reflected in outstanding pass rates and good retention rates. In one session, students prepared for an art sale, which involved group work, and identified roles of organising, marketing, finance and communication. The project challenged and enthused students, many of whom turned up 20 minutes early for the session.

127. The AVCE art and design and GCE A-level drama and theatre courses have been consistently successful with high retention and pass rates over the last three years when compared with national averages. Work in media is good, with high pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses, although the GCSE media results are below the national average. Retention rates on a number of other courses within the area have been low, including the national diploma in fashion, GCE AS art and City and Guilds 7700 certificate in media techniques. Standards of work are poor in fashion and clothing, with insufficient evidence of visual research and development. Students are relying on too heavily on ready-made images from magazines. Attainment in photography and GNVQ intermediate art and design is satisfactory.

128. The modularisation of areas of the curriculum has led to significant improvements in retention and pass rates, particularly on digital media, dance and music short courses. In ballet and contemporary dance, students worked with enthusiasm and demonstrated good technique while working on an expressive sequence of moves.

129. Overall, learning is good in relation to students' prior achievements. Students are given stimulating assignments that give opportunities for individual creativity and exploration. For example, in one media class, students were introduced to and involved in a lively debate on stereotypical gender representation in relation to designing and producing a women's magazine.

130. Many classes suffer from lateness and absence disrupting students' learning. Attendance is well below the average for this area.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 7700 certificate in media techniques	2	No. of starts	24	14	26
		% retention	58	79	62
		% pass rate	64	64	50
NOCN music	2	No. of starts	*	307	220
		% retention	*	62	55
		% pass rate	*	38	61
GCE AS art	3	No. of starts	*	14	15
		% retention	*	64	73
		% pass rate	*	44	73
GCE AS media	3	No. of starts	*	36	43
		% retention	*	72	91
		% pass rate	*	96	85
GNVQ/AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	20	32	23
		% retention	45	73	83
		% pass rate	88	91	89
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	17	18	9

design fashion		% retention	53	67	44
		% pass rate	88	100	75

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

131. Much of the teaching is very effective. Three-quarters of the lessons observed were good or better. The majority of staff are well prepared with good lesson plans and thorough schemes of work. Classes are well managed in most areas. In the best lesson plans, differentiation is clearly noted and individual student needs identified. Most areas have well-qualified and expert staff. In many classes, particularly those taught by visiting tutors, staff use their professional experience and knowledge of contemporary issues as artists, performers and musicians to inform their teaching.

132. In music, expert performers in areas such as Indian tabla drumming and African drumming enable students to develop a professional level of skill in these specialisms. There is a wide range of very experienced and skilled dance teachers, teaching jazz, ballet and contemporary dance.

133. Teaching is effective in GCE AS art, digital media, music and performing arts. In one GCE AS lesson, students worked independently on a project on growth and decay, where multiple large-scale works were encouraged. Teaching in the entry level art and design class is outstanding: it is very well organised and ensures that students are encouraged to develop independence in their learning.

134. In some of the less successful lessons, the lesson plans are simply lists of tasks with no clear aim. A small number of lessons are unsatisfactory. In these lessons, staff are poorly prepared for the class and the teaching lacks challenge and focus.

135. Assessment is thorough in many areas, with good written feedback. Students' progress is well monitored and students report that they are well informed about their progress. There is an effective use of individual learning plans in some areas, particularly art and design.

136. Students are, in general, well supported on their programmes, with regular access to tutors and one-to-one tutorials. In both media and performing arts, students can attend a drop-in tutorial session to discuss any issues or gain additional support. Teacher-student relationships are good, with students feeling positive about their programme of study.

137. In art and design, students can progress from entry level to level 3. In digital media and art and design, there is good progression to HE. Links with local arts organisations and industry are strong. Annual summer art exhibitions and performances are promoted and open to the public. Educational visits are used effectively in many areas to support teaching and learning. GCE A-level media students visited a British Board of Film Classification road show session to support their study of censorship. Dance students benefit from a formal link with Sadler's Wells Ballet. Students' art and sculpture is prominently displayed around the college.

138. The quality of accommodation is outstanding in all areas. Specialist facilities are good, particularly in digital media where there is a new suite of industry-standard computers. Students comment on the excellent support provided by technician staff. There are a small number of problems with the computers. In fashion, a lack of access to ILT and colour copying is limiting opportunities for students.

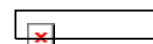
Leadership and management

139. This broad provision involves eight separate subject areas managed by senior lecturers and co-ordinated by a head of curriculum, who also co-ordinates leisure and tourism and health and fitness.

There is currently no overall strategy for the whole arts provision, although steps are being taken to produce one and some areas, for example, art and design, have a three-year plan. The move toward modularisation of courses across the subjects has enabled closer integration of the subjects. There are many inconsistencies in policy and practice across the area, for example, in approaches to lesson planning, tutorials, progress monitoring and course management. This does not support students' learning in the modular courses.

140. A number of areas and courses are well managed, including art and design, media and digital media. The process of course review is good and action plans are regularly reviewed in most areas. The management supervision of staff, including part-time staff, is working well. Part-time staff feel well supported. There is a full programme of staff development, including professional updating, for example, in the video and digital media area. Equality of opportunity is very well promoted across the whole curriculum area.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good retention rates on many courses
- much good and some excellent teaching, particularly on access courses
- rigorous assessment and consistent verification on LOCN courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on some GCE AS subjects
- poor learning and attainment in GCE AS and A-level courses
- much poor attendance and punctuality
- insufficient use of IT to support learning.

Scope of provision

141. The college provides a satisfactory range of humanities courses for students aged 16 to 18 and a good range of access to HE opportunities for adult students. In the sixth form centre, GCE AS and A-level courses are offered in sociology, psychology, history, government and politics and law. In the adult learning centre, the access to HE provision is offered in business, social work, nursing, teaching and law. Additionally, there is a part-time pre-access course. Access courses have proved to be very popular and students often have to join a waiting list because many subjects are over subscribed. Demand for access courses has increased over the last three years and students find out about the provision from the Internet, university departments and from previous students. The LOCN validates the course.

Achievement and standards

142. GCE A-level pass rates in the past year were generally poor and below the national averages. Some GCE AS results showed a decline from the previous year. There were low pass rates in law and psychology. Most students on GCE AS and A-level courses have a basic understanding of their subjects, and have acquired some factual knowledge, but they have not developed the critical and evaluative skills required to achieve high grades. Students on the GCE AS law and GCE A-level psychology courses have insufficient understanding of simple ideas. Often this reflects the fact that they have not done any required preliminary reading.

143. In contrast, the pass rates for all the access courses are good and retention rates are also good, although there are no national averages available to compare these with at present. Most of the mature students on access courses have developed a high standard of skills. Much of their assignment work is of a very high standard, contains well-written analyses and demonstrates an ability to effectively evaluate evidence. Most adult students make good progress in applying knowledge and understanding of their subject and they are significantly better at this than most of the students in the sixth form centre.

144. Students' course files are well organised and notes are appropriately used and incorporated into assignments. The best students in sociology and psychology can assess the comparative strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical perspectives. They are able to apply examples from their own experiences to support an argument. For example, access to social work students could draw upon several academic models of mental disorder, using up-to-date references, sensibly combined with their own personal perspectives and experience, to demonstrate the recognition of Parkinson's disease and its effects. Access course students bring to their lessons a rich range of prior experiential learning that provides opportunities for further development in the classroom. By contrast, standards are poor in both written and practical work in some GCE AS sociology and law classes. Students have insufficient knowledge to be able to choose and handle material to achieve their objectives. They do not translate ideas into action easily and they take little pride in their work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Pre-access	2	No. of starts	44	40	40
		% retention	68	79	68
		% pass rate	60	68	67
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	4	63	60
		% retention	100	67	87
		% pass rate	100	80	69
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	*	19	23
		% retention	*	79	100

		% pass rate	*	53	52
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	23	26
		% retention	*	74	85
		% pass rate	*	71	50
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	39	48	35
		% retention	87	96	91
		% pass rate	71	74	88
Access to social work	3	No. of starts	39	48	35
		% retention	87	96	91
		% pass rate	71	74	88

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

145. More than half of the lessons observed were good or better. Most are carefully planned and their content accurately reflects the requirements of awarding bodies. There is some very high quality teaching on the access courses. Students are immensely enthusiastic and keen to learn, and tutors find no problems holding their interest. For example, in a sociology lesson, students were asked to construct a scatter diagram to look at the processes of health care. They all responded, drawing on their personal experiences to help them. The students showed considerable intellectual excitement in grasping the new concepts, which effectively matched their own perceptions of the study.

146. In too many of the GCE lessons, the standard of attainment and the extent to which students are learning is poor. Students demonstrate little interest or curiosity in their subject. Too often, the questioning of students by teachers is superficial. Responses are not probed or developed by the teacher and, in some cases, the whole class is simply asked if everything is clear. By comparison, most students observed on the sociology access course applied skills effectively to meet the objectives agreed with their tutor and all were totally engrossed in their learning, constantly challenging their tutor on points of information. Progression from the access courses is good, providing the majority of students with the opportunity of choice of subject in HE.

147. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and many are effective at ensuring that students understand and learn basic factual knowledge. Most teachers pay sufficient attention to developing their students' capacity for effective study and frequently convey their enthusiasm for their subject in class. There is, however, poor use of IT to support learning. The lack of ILT in GCE A-level psychology and sociology lessons disadvantages students needing to analyse data and conduct research. There is insufficient provision of industry-standard computers in the curriculum area.

148. Attendance and punctuality during the week of the inspection were poor. A third of students in some classes were absent. This may be explained, in part, by a religious festival, which coincided with the inspection. However, some of the students present were hindered in their progress because of their poor attendance in previous weeks.

149. Courses are well planned. Schemes of work give a clear indication of teaching and learning activities and appropriate resources. Students are provided with a good range of handout materials and reference notes that support the teaching. The best of these include demanding tasks for the students to complete or critically analyse. The level of consistency in the quality of the access courses is good. The rigour of assessment and the effective verification systems have enabled the

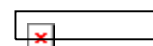
college to develop a strong reputation for this provision.

150. Students are well supported by their personal tutors and subject teachers, who are well informed about their progress.

Leadership and management

151. Overall, the departments covering the broad provision of humanities courses are effectively managed. The very good practice on the best courses in the access provision is not shared across the whole of the humanities curriculum area. Although managers recognise the need to improve students' punctuality, attendance and achievements, no successful measures to improve these aspects of performance have yet been effectively introduced. Quality assurance arrangements at course level, including lesson observations, are not sufficiently self-critical. As a result, teachers' own perceptions of the quality of the humanities provision are unrealistic in the GCE AS and A-level courses.

English



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

Strengths

- high and improved pass and retention rates on GCE A-level courses
- much good teaching
- good course management and teamwork
- good standard of students' work
- good monitoring of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning
- insufficient attention to individual learning needs in GCSE classes.

Scope of provision

152. The English curriculum area offers an appropriate range of courses including GCSE English and GCE AS and A-level English literature and English language and literature. GCSE is offered as a re-sit course for students who wish to improve their grade. It is also offered to adults who want to do the course as means to further study. Many of the students studying GCSE speak English as a second language. GCSE English is offered in the day, in the evening and on Saturday morning.

Achievement and standards

153. Standards achieved in GCE A-level examinations are high. Pass rates improved and in 2002 all students passed. The proportion of students gaining high grades is well above the national average. Current students on GCE AS courses are attaining above average standards. The proportion of students achieving higher grades in GCSE English has been above the national average for two of the last three years.

154. The observation of students' work confirms these high standards. On GCE AS and A-level courses, students achieve good standards, producing varied and original pieces of writing. Students are able to make good close readings of texts, showing a good understanding of how choice of language informs meaning. They confidently apply linguistic concepts to the analysis of language. Students on GCSE courses show originality and skill in their writing.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English language (one year)	2	No. of starts	173	133	170
		% retention	70	80	65
		% pass rate (A* - C)	59	50	36
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	*	22	23
		% retention	*	91	52
		% pass rate	*	95	67
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	14	16	17
		% retention	86	69	88
		% pass rate	55	82	100
GCE AS English language and literature	3	No. of starts	*	25	32
		% retention	*	80	88
		% pass rate	*	90	68
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	17	17	16
		% retention	82	59	94
		% pass rate	62	50	100
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	18	18	*
		% retention	83	83	*
		% pass rate	80	80	*

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

** course not running*

Quality of education and training

155. The quality of teaching and support for students are good. Teaching is carefully planned. Teachers generally adapt their lessons to suit the learning needs of students. However, in some GCSE lessons, the learning needs of a minority of students are not catered for. There is insufficient in-class learning support. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and carefully select materials to match the aims of the course and to be interesting. Teachers have high expectations of students and communicate these to them in lessons, in the marking of their work and in the support they give them in tutorials.

156. Students work effectively on their own, in pairs and small groups and as a whole class. They develop their skills in responding to texts, using the concepts and the technical language of literary and linguistic study. In a lesson examining how writers convey attitudes and values, students discussed a travel article from a popular magazine and showed good skills in close reading of the text, using concepts of tone, audience, authenticity and choice of language.

157. The English classrooms have attractive displays of students' work. The library has a good range of resources, including a selection of writers from the Caribbean and from Africa. There is little representation of writers in English from the Indian sub-continent. The English team has begun to make use of IT in teaching and learning but its use in the classroom is insufficient.

158. Feedback on students' written work is detailed, thorough and constructive. It gives appropriate praise and encouragement and shows students how they can improve. This communicates to students the standards that are expected of them.

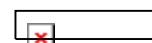
159. Students enjoy a good enrichment programme, which includes creative writing workshops, study days out of college, theatre visits, visiting speakers and enhancement classes. Provision for key skills is effective.

160. Staff take care to ensure that students are enrolled on appropriate courses. The English team supplements the college's initial assessment with its own, to ensure students are on the right level of course. Teachers communicate clearly to students the demands of the English courses. Support for full-time students is good. There are clear and effective procedures to support students and to monitor their progress.

Leadership and management

161. The leadership of the curriculum area is good. Staff work well as a team and share good practice. Managers and teachers have successfully raised standards in the area. Quality assurance procedures lead to improvements in the experience of students. The use of value added measures to support review and target setting is underdeveloped. The promotion of equality of opportunity is excellent: students comment that everyone feels valued and is welcomed by the college.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good retention rates on internally accredited part-time courses for adults

- good teaching on full-time courses
- highly responsive and innovative provision meeting community needs.

Weaknesses

- weak teaching on adult part-time provision
- insufficient attention to students' prior learning, experience and achievement
- insufficient monitoring of part-time students' progress
- ineffective support for bilingual students on ESOL and vocational courses
- insufficient impact of recent management changes on adult students' experience.

Scope of provision

162. ESOL courses constitute a significant part of the college's provision. There is a good range of full-time and part-time courses for adults at the two college centres and at numerous community locations. Full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18 include additional subjects such as computing, media and mathematics. English language support is provided for students with language needs on vocational courses. At the time of the inspection, 62 bilingual students from all curriculum areas were receiving additional language support and 1,803 students had enrolled on ESOL courses, 80% of whom are on adult part-time courses and 20% on full-time 16 to 18 and adult courses. The majority of students are on internally accredited courses at entry level. External qualifications offered include Pitmans, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Cambridge First certificate.

Achievement and standards

163. Retention rates are good on internally accredited courses. Pass rates in 2001/02 on internally accredited part-time adult courses were slightly below the 100% national average. On courses for students aged 16 to 18, the pass rate of 84% is well below the national average of 97%. Overall, the number of students taking Pitmans spoken and written examinations has decreased by some 12% in the period from 2000 to 2002. The retention and pass rates on Pitmans basic spoken English courses are good and above the national average. The percentage of students who passed the Pitmans basic written examination, at 31%, is well below the national average of 59%. Only 18% of

adult students progressed to higher level ESOL courses in 2001/02.

164. Students gain confidence in developing English oral skills. Those on full-time courses develop skills of critical evaluation and research. For example, in one ESOL media lesson, students aged 16 to 18 were able to produce and record a car advertisement on a news programme for teenagers.

165. Rigorous monitoring of students' attendance and punctuality has led to some improvements. For instance, students notify tutors in advance of intended absence.

Quality of education and training

166. Teaching on full-time courses is good. Schemes of work and lesson plans are cross-referenced to the ESOL core curriculum. The more successful lessons are detailed and well planned. Teachers use a variety of activities to reinforce learning. In one lesson, the issue of gender stereotyping was effectively tackled through discussions. In another lesson, a carefully managed discussion about Valentine's Day developed into an interesting comparison of cross-cultural traditions, building on students' prior experiences. This led to a lively and sensitive debate with students valuing each other's opinions. The teacher encouraged students to develop their oral communication skills to a high standard and checked the accuracy and use of language structures.

167. Teaching is poor on part-time courses at the main sites and in some community centres. In too many lessons, teachers use inappropriate teaching methods and they often fail to take account of students' varied learning styles, abilities and prior attainments. The weaker students often struggle to complete the set work and they make little progress during lessons. Many students do not have sufficient skills to organise their learning and the quality of their work is poor. Teaching fails to stimulate and challenge the more able students, who often wait unproductively whilst others complete the same activity. They also have to wait while the teacher checks the learning of the whole group. During lessons, the methods of assessment and marking of students' work do not help students to develop independent skills for checking their own work.

168. Learning materials do not reflect the range of students' ability levels. They often consist of worksheets photocopied from textbooks. The content of materials does not reflect students' cultural backgrounds and experiences. Students work individually on paper-based exercises in lessons. They are not given sufficient help to enable them to become independent students.

169. ESOL staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Owing to difficulties in recruitment of staff, some courses are currently not running. Learning resources are good, including computers at the main site and an ESOL resource base room. However, IT facilities and learning materials are inadequate at the second main site. The accommodation at some community venues is unsatisfactory. At one centre, the class did not take place because of renovation works and in one lesson held in a public area, constant noise and the presence of children disrupted learning.

170. Insufficient attention is paid to students' prior learning and achievement during initial assessment. Individual learning plans are not used to evaluate how learning could be improved in lessons and they are rarely used to review and record progress. Students' progress on courses for those aged 16 to 18 is reviewed at the end of each term. Tutorials have been recently introduced for part-time students. In most cases, they are not yet effective because the sessions are not well planned. They are not used to set targets for improvement and to systematically review individuals' progress. Not all students receive advice and guidance on careers and progression opportunities. Language support for bilingual students on vocational courses is ineffective. Most of the support is provided on an individual basis. Often, students have to wait for a significant time to receive help as there are too few staff to meet the needs of all the students. The teaching focuses on improving grammar and punctuation, but does not develop effective language skills relevant to the area of study.

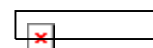
Leadership and management

171. The management of this curriculum area is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient clarity of

direction in the planning and quality of the provision. As the system of internal moderation is not yet standardised across all internally accredited courses, evidence to evaluate how well students' progress is inadequate. No satisfactory method has yet been devised to record and verify achievements. Opportunities for students to undertake external qualifications are insufficient. Only 251 students on ESOL courses undertook external qualifications in 2001/02. Language support and tutorials are not included in the college's internal observation scheme.

172. The ESOL curriculum area has grown substantially in response to the needs of the community. The department is involved in a range of innovative national developments such as the ESOL pathfinder project, individual learning plan working group, and an ILT project. Internal developments include establishing a resource base at the main college centre, professional training for ESOL tutors, and the production of an ESOL tutor handbook. A recent restructuring has led to the appointment of fractional senior lecturers who manage different areas of the ESOL provision. This change in management has not yet had a significant impact on the planning, delivery and quality of teaching and learning.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning throughout the range of programmes
- well-motivated students benefit from effective teacher support
- effective initial assessment
- good progression rates between levels and on to vocational provision.

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory achievement
- insufficient reviews of students' learning
- limited use of IT to support learning

- lack of co-ordination of literacy and numeracy across the college.

Scope of provision

173. The college offers an adequate range of literacy and numeracy provision. The department works with a number of local agencies to develop courses for specific groups of students in community settings as well as on college campuses. Community initiatives include literacy and numeracy for people with mental health difficulties and ex-offenders, and the use of computers as a vehicle for assisting older people to develop their literacy skills. A discrete, full-time literacy and numeracy course is aimed at young people who need to develop their basic skills prior to undertaking a vocational programme. Most courses are part time. Many courses are at entry level 1, reflecting local needs, with progression opportunities to higher levels and to vocational programmes available. The college is beginning to support its vocational teachers to work within the core literacy and numeracy curriculum. This is currently an underdeveloped area. Additional in-class and one-to-one support is provided but is limited in the number of students who benefit. There are 11 students enrolled on the full-time course and 513 on part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

174. The pass rates for adults on literacy courses, particularly at entry level, are low, at 26%. However, there have been some improvements in pass and retention rates on level 1 numeracy courses. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and this has a negative impact on achievement. Progress is clearly evident in students' written work and one student on an entry level course was able to use some abstract ideas to powerful effect in creating a poem about time and space. Attainment in spoken English is occasionally very high. One student spoke evocatively about the place in London where she lived and drew warm applause from the other students for her contribution. The majority of students grow in confidence and self esteem during their time at the college, to the point where they are able to make an oral presentation of their work in front a diverse group of their peers. Students on a level 1 numeracy course were able to quickly grasp the concept of simplifying algebraic expressions and were then able to tutor other members of the class when needed. Many students who attend courses in the community progress to college-based provision. One half of the students already enrolled at the college progress to further college-based courses at a higher level.

Quality of education and training

175. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers plan programmes and lessons carefully to ensure they meet the individual needs of students in their group. Clearly defined objectives are reflected in most lesson plans that also often show realistic individual learning targets for each student. The assessment process for literacy and numeracy is effective in identifying students' needs, following initial screening, to ensure that they are on the appropriate level of course. Appropriate assessment techniques are used to build on students' prior knowledge, skills and interests. Learning activities reflect students' interests, personal circumstances or vocational goals. In a community outreach course, an individual's interest in the recent space shuttle disaster was effectively incorporated into his reading and writing programme. In a key skills plumbing class, a profile of a sport or film star was used as an introduction to report writing. This was followed by collecting data during a visit to a building site in order to report on health and safety procedures. Teachers question students skilfully to check their understanding during group sessions and to ensure the learning of individual students throughout the class. There is imaginative use of IT to support literacy and numeracy learning in some community venues. Students' fascination with the Internet was used in one class to register their e-mail addresses and to send and receive their first e-mail messages. In another class, a student used the Internet to research material on his hometown in Sierra Leone. With good teacher support this was a highly effective learning session. Teachers make challenging demands on students to encourage learning.

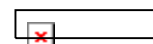
176. There are effective course teams teaching literacy and numeracy classes on both campuses and in the community. Teachers are well qualified. An in-house teacher-training programme assists professional development. Staff speak highly of the staff development available to support literacy and numeracy. Twelve teachers have a specialist qualification to enable them to assess dyslexia. Teachers of key skills at level 1 in vocational areas do not work closely with the literacy and numeracy teams. The limited availability of computers in rooms at the main sites discourages the use of IT in classes. Students' work is marked well and tutors give constructive feedback to students on areas of improvement such as punctuation, spelling, grammar and writing skills.

177. Teachers motivate students through effective support in class and, on occasion, provide students with additional support and the delivery of learning materials to their homes. This is in addition the provision of individual tutorials. Students value tutor support very highly. There is no tutorial provision timetabled for part-time literacy and numeracy students and there are insufficient reviews of individual student's progress and planning of future priorities. Individual learning plans are in place but are currently not used effectively. Targets recorded for individual students tend to be too general to assist them to develop as independent students. Students' portfolios are not consistently managed so that some students are not able to refer to work completed earlier in the course.

Leadership and management

178. Overall, there is no effective co-ordination of literacy and numeracy provision across the college. The community outreach team is beginning to work more closely with the campus-based literacy and numeracy team. The college has sought to appoint a full-time co-ordinator but has experienced difficulties in achieving this. This results in poor sharing of the good practice that exists in all three elements of the provision. Informal sharing of learning materials takes place but the lack of formal sharing results in some duplication of effort. The internal system for the observation of teaching closely matches the profile identified during inspection. The self-assessment process is thorough and identifies strengths and weaknesses in all key question areas.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- effective preparation for relative independence and participation in work and within the community
- good pastoral support and behavioural management
- good activity-based teaching and learning
- very good use of external agencies to enhance the provision

- well managed provision
- coherent programme with good opportunities for progression.

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped diagnostic assessment and recording of some individual students' achievement
- insufficient differentiation in some class-based activities.

Scope of provision

179. The college provides courses for school leavers and for adults. There is a good range of pre-entry level courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Essential skills, a programme at 3 levels for people who require a personal development programme, enrolled 34 full-time and 20 part-time students in 2002, leading to the Mencap essential skills award. Students can progress to the vocational skills course, which has six current enrolments. Nine students are enrolled on the entry level catering course. Where appropriate, students can also gain an adult literacy and numeracy qualification. Evening courses for art and craft, sport and leisure and drama are offered to existing students, to previous students and to local communities. A total of 35 students are enrolled on these courses. A Saturday school, a summer school and a school links course also provides opportunities for people within the community with learning challenges to have new experiences and to socialise. Seven entry level vocational courses across the college offer good opportunities for progression.

Achievement and standards

180. The achievements of students with learning difficulties are good. Courses are matched to individuals' needs. Students develop transferable skills that are relevant to mainstream courses, supported living within the community and employment. Students make good progress and are successful in achieving their learning goals.

181. Students achieve challenging learning goals linked to the curriculum, such as reaching the exacting standards set in a chef's master class. They achieve challenging developmental goals. For example, a student who needed total one-to-one support can now use the refectory independently. Students are effectively prepared for relative independence and participation in the community and at work where appropriate. Some have successfully created a roof garden where herbs and vegetables are grown for the café. In art and craft, students interpreted images from a range of cultures to produce their own prints. In these realistic working environments, students achieve high standards in the outcomes of their work, in motivation, self-respect and confidence.

182. Retention rates are good on all courses. They are above the national average for students with similar learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, the retention rate on the vocational skills course is 92%, compared with a national average of 72%.

Quality of education and training

183. Teaching and learning are good in most activity-based sessions and outstanding in some. In the outstanding sessions, tutors enable students to develop team-working skills to prepare, cook and serve a range of snacks for the café they operate. A wide range of teaching methods and learning styles is used in the majority of lessons. In a community-based drama group, students with a wide range of ages and disabilities were all totally absorbed when exploring feelings through a very moving shadow mime. Effective questioning by tutors challenges students to reflect and to contribute further. For example, the persistent and skilful questioning by one tutor encouraged students exploring the reasons why plants grow at different rates in the roof garden to think of a good number of responses. Tutors make good use of signing to ensure the inclusion of all students. Tutors promote good working relationships with students. They support their learning and are totally committed to the students' welfare. Extremes of behaviour by students are managed very well and do not impede the learning of other students. Effective strategies by tutors minimise disruption to learning by students with mental health issues. This is of great benefit to the students.

184. In the less successful lessons, too much time is spent planning as a whole group and insufficient time is left for carrying out activities. Where staff are working with a group to plan activities or reinforce learning, there is insufficient differentiation for the wide ability of the groups. Some students are not sufficiently challenged while others have insufficient understanding to participate.

185. Most accommodation is very good and enables the students to learn effectively through realistic practical activities. Special adaptations to the accommodation are effective and allow students with restricted mobility to participate fully. However, resources in the roof garden are insufficient for the size of the groups. The flat used for practice of daily living skills is too small for some of the groups. As a consequence, students have to wait for their turn for the practical activity. This is unsatisfactory. A few classes take place in inappropriate accommodation. A drama class for a group of students with limited oral communication skills was held in a large draughty hall. Insufficient resources for IT impede students' learning as there are delays while students wait to use computers. A wide range of staff development activity supports curriculum development. It also heightens understanding of students' additional learning difficulties and includes aspects of development identified through course reviews, such as writing better individual learning plans. Staff are well qualified and experienced in their curriculum area. They have a good understanding of the impact of the students' disabilities upon learning.

186. All students have individual goals and their progress is recorded. However, some goals are too vague and unsuitable to record stages of achievement. In the poorer cases, some reporting of students' progress is descriptive rather than evaluative. The initial assessment of students' skills is underdeveloped and is insufficiently diagnostic to form an effective base line to monitor students' progress. The college has recognised this in its self-assessment report and is developing additional assessment procedures including input from occupational and speech language therapists. The recognition of students' prior learning is not sufficiently incorporated into individual learning programmes. For example, one student who successfully does all the family ironing was learning how to iron during lessons.

187. Support for students is good. Support arrangements are coherent and well managed. The department makes effective provision in collaboration with external agencies for a range of individual support needs, including specialist intervention by speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. Induction arrangements to the college are less than effective. This is recognised by the college and an enhanced induction programme is being developed. The student handbook is produced in a format to make it fully accessible to the students. Tutorials are delivered through a well-structured framework, which includes one-to-one and group sessions. Although students' general progress and well being is discussed, progress towards their individual learning goals is not included. Students are unaware of their individual goals and their progress. Very good personal support ensures that pastoral issues raised by students are dealt with effectively.

188. The wide range of enrichment and evening activities is available, including educational visits to museums, art galleries and recreational evening activities such as drama, and sports.

189. Evening and Saturday recreational activities and the summer college provision meet the needs

and interests of the students prior to coming to college and promote learning. Extensive external links, such as those with the Worshipful Company of Cooks and Thrift involving a scheme for adults with learning disabilities to gain skills and employment, provide realistic transition activities into work.

Leadership and management

190. A clear direction has been set following the recent appointment of a senior lecturer in this area. The curriculum is planned and managed effectively to promote coherence and progression. Communications are good. The department has developed an activity-based curriculum with courses at different levels leading to entry level vocational opportunities. Good procedures for dealing with poor punctuality and attendance are used systematically by all staff. Comprehensive course reviews are evaluative and inform future development. Targets set for retention rates during course reviews have been met.

Part D: College data

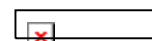
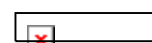


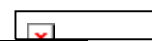
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18	19+
	%	%
1	33	16
2	28	14
3	22	10
4/5	0	0
Other	17	60
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	636	640	5
Land-based provision	0	113	0
Construction	220	773	4
Engineering, technology and	88	436	2

manufacture			
Business administration, management and professional	524	2,360	10
Information and communication technology	660	1,010	6
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	169	1,025	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	1	38	0
Health, social care and public services	161	1,558	6
Visual and performing arts and media	449	4,025	16
Humanities	268	1,539	6
English, languages and communication	591	511	4
Foundation programmes	1,275	9,009	37
Total	5,042	23,037	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	691	542	1,297	1483	799	2,412
	Retention rate (%)	82	81	72	77	82	69
	National average (%)	78	79	*	77	80	*
	Pass rate (%)	43	57	38	54	49	58
	National average (%)	63	65	*	66	69	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,261	887	1,001	1,607	1,626	1,428
	Retention rate (%)	78	71	65	74	77	72
	National average (%)	74	74	*	77	78	*
	Pass rate (%)	62	67	68	55	48	60
	National average	67	67	*	65	65	*

	(%)						
3	Starters excluding transfers	809	1,037	902	1,465	952	1,076
	Retention rate (%)	72	73	75	76	74	73
	National average (%)	75	74	*	78	77	*
	Pass rate (%)	77	75	68	47	67	72
	National average (%)	68	69	*	64	66	*
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	2	3	3	280	105	138
	Retention rate (%)	**	**	**	75	77	91
	National average (%)	77	*	*	84	83	*
	Pass rate (%)	**	**	**	58	29	60
	National average (%)	68	*	*	51	48	*

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 2000/01-2001/02: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 2001/02: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for 2001/2002: provided by the college in spring 2003.

** data not available*

*** numbers too low to provide 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)	61	30	9	85
Level 2 (intermediate)	57	39	4	49
Level 1 (foundation)	54	41	5	39
Other sessions	61	30	9	74

Totals	59	33	8	247
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