



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Paston College

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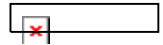
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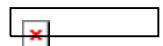
**Basic information about the college**



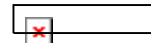
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Name of college:	Paston College
Type of college:	Sixth form college
Principal:	Peter Mayne
Address of college:	Grammar School Road North Walsham NR28 9JL
Telephone number:	01692 402334
Fax number:	01692 500630
Chair of governors:	Francis Harmer
Unique reference number:	130768
Name of reporting inspector:	Christine Steadman
Dates of inspection:	10-14 March 2003

**Part A: Summary**



## Information about the college



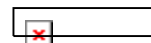
Paston College was established as a sixth form college in 1984, following a reorganisation of secondary education in northeast Norfolk. It serves a catchment area of approximately 400 square miles, which has little industry and a dispersed population. Despite being one of the smallest colleges in the further education (FE) sector, it is one of the largest employers in the area. The college occupies two main sites in the centre of the market town of North Walsham. Many students travel a considerable distance to attend the college and public transport is poor. The nearest alternative FE provision is 17 miles away in Norwich. In the area that the college serves, the proportion of people who progress to higher education (HE) is significantly below the national average. According to the Basic Skills Agency, a significant percentage of the population of northeast Norfolk have poor literacy levels.

In 2001/02, the college enrolled 531 full-time students aged 16 to 18, and 1,266 part-time students mostly aged 19 or over. Many of the adult students take courses in information and communications technology (ICT). In the college's catchment area, between 0.5% and 0.8% of the population are from minority ethnic groups, and this proportion is reflected in the college's student population. Some 59% of the students are female and 41% are male.

The college's mission is 'to provide high quality learning opportunities for the people of northeast Norfolk' and is known as the sixth form and community college in north Norfolk. Its aim is to be the 'first choice' of 16-year-olds in high schools in the area by offering high quality academic and vocational learning. It also seeks to offer 'second and third chances to young people and adults'. Some 95% of the college's full-time students are aged 16 to 18, and of those, 75% are following advanced-level courses. The college provides General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) courses in 22 subjects and GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses in 27 subjects. It also provides General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) programmes in four vocational areas, a small National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programme in administration, and some work-based learning programmes. It works closely with partner schools and takes the lead in a project to provide a wider range of options for pupils aged 14 to 16.

Over the past five years, the college has sought to widen its role in the community by meeting local needs, particularly those of adult learners, and establishing itself as the 'learning hub' for the people of northeast Norfolk, by providing courses in community venues. The Paston learning centre was opened in 2002 as an open-access facility providing both Learndirect and conventional programmes. Outreach programmes operate from community locations throughout northeast Norfolk, and there is also provision for adults with learning difficulties.

## How effective is the college?



Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in all curriculum areas and are good in half the areas. The provision is good in business, visual and performing arts, health and social care, and English. It is satisfactory in science and mathematics, ICT, humanities, and literacy and numeracy. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- good teaching

- improved retention and pass rates on most courses
- wide range of appropriate courses at advanced level
- effective development of part-time adult provision
- good quality assurance procedures
- good support for full-time students
- good monitoring of progress of most full-time students
- effective use of partnerships to widen participation
- highly committed and involved governors.

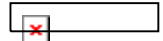
***What should be improved***

- inadequate strategic planning to deliver the mission of the college
- inadequate initial assessment
- poor social and recreational accommodation
- insufficient promotion of enrichment activities

- o unsatisfactory promotion of social inclusion
- o unsatisfactory response to equal opportunity issues

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

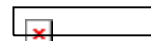


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are good on GCE A-level courses but poor on GCE AS courses. Retention rates are low on most courses. Most of the teaching is effective and good use is made of ICT to support learning. There are good science laboratory facilities but access is poor for those with restricted physical mobility.
Business	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on most courses and retention rates have improved significantly. Teaching is good. The wide range of teaching and learning styles used enables students to make good progress. Resources are inadequate to support learning on vocational courses.
ICT	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are good on foundation-level courses, but poor on intermediate and advanced information and business technology courses. Target setting is effective on GCE courses but ineffective for adults in outreach provision. Poor resources restrict learning on computer literacy courses. There is no long-term strategic plan for the co-ordination of ICT across the college.
Health and social care	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high, except in key skills examinations. Retention rates are low on two courses. Teaching and learning are effective. Students enjoy their studies and their work is of a good quality.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are good and improving pass rates on GCE A-level courses. Pass rates on most GCE AS courses are unsatisfactory and there are too few high grades. Most of the teaching is effective but some does not challenge the most able students sufficiently. Target setting is ineffective.
Performing arts and media	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are generally above national averages. Students on performing arts and media courses generally

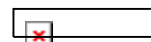
	achieve better than those on art and design courses. Students work productively and make effective use of their time. Teaching and learning are good and lessons and courses are well planned. Resources and accommodation are poor. The range of courses for adult learners is narrow.
English	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on all the GCE AS and A-level English courses, but the pass rate on the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English course was poor in 2002, and retention rates are low. Most of the teaching is good or better. The marking of student work is accurate and constructive and students are well supported. Teachers work well together to develop and teach the courses, but too little use is made of ICT.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Opportunities for progression are limited. Teaching on adult programmes is good but some teaching on programmes for 16 to 18 year olds is unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are weak and impact adversely on the planning and monitoring of learning. Good individual support is provided to both college students and adults.

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



Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strategic plan contains considered and achievable targets but does not set out clearly enough how the college will achieve its longer-term goals. The college is hindered in achieving its plans for the future by poor accommodation. Despite these problems, students' achievements have continued to improve. Since the last inspection, much energy has been devoted to improving the quality of teaching and learning and to raising achievement rates. Teaching and learning are both good and students who complete their courses achieve well in relation to their starting points. The quality of curriculum management and curriculum planning is satisfactory but the target setting process is inconsistently applied. Quality assurance arrangements are generally effective and work with the full support of all teachers. Self-assessment is mostly rigorous and self-critical. The quality of management information is much improved. The college offers as many courses as it can afford to teach, but these do not always meet students' needs sufficiently well. Much needed adult and community provision has been rapidly and successfully developed. There are good links with some partners and these are energetically sustained to the benefit of adult students, but relationships with other stakeholders, particularly 11 to 16 schools, are not as good as they need to be. There is still much to be done to make the college more socially inclusive and there are a number of important equal opportunity issues to be urgently addressed. Despite the lack of compliance with recent legislation relating to equal opportunities, governance is good. Governors are well informed. Financial management is satisfactory and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

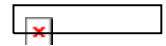
#### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is unsatisfactory. There are too many occasions when the college functions as separate components working to individual agendas rather than as a coherent whole. There is still much work to be done to improve equal opportunities policies and practices. Actions to address acknowledged areas of weakness are not yet given a sufficiently

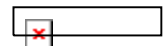
access for students with restricted mobility is unacceptably poor. The colleges' response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act is slow and governors and managers have not yet fulfilled their statutory duties. The college is now expanding its outreach facilities to better meet the needs of its community. Recruitment is increasing and most full-time students are well supported. While some important partnerships have been developed to the benefit of adult students, those affecting 16 to 18 year old students are not so well developed. The relationship with special schools is strong but those with local 11 to 16 schools are not as effective as they need to be, despite the college's participation in the 14 to 16 link project. The college is increasing its provision of courses for adults rapidly. Literacy and numeracy provision for adults is good.

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



The formal and informal support for learners on full-time programmes is good. The strong and well-focused tutorial system is effective. Students' attendance and punctuality are monitored thoroughly. Parents of 16 to 18 year old students are kept fully informed of, and involved in, this process. There is an appropriate range of internal student support services, such as counselling and good access to more specialised external agencies where necessary. Induction arrangements for full-time students aged 16 to 18 are good, but induction for adult learners is insufficiently formalised, and procedures are not yet adequate. There are good curriculum extension activities for full-time students, but enrichment activities are limited in scope and are poorly promoted.

### **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***

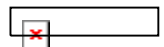
- relaxed, friendly and supportive atmosphere
  
- dedicated and helpful teachers
  
- opportunities for independent learning
  
- small size of the college
  
- transport arrangements from inaccessible areas

- good monitoring of individual progress
- access to local provision in outreach centres.

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

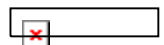
- poor social facilities, such as the lack of a student common room and the early closure of the canteen
- inadequate library size and stock
- poor storage space for student's work
- difficult road crossing between sites
- computer network problems.

**Other information**



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

**Part B: The college as a whole**





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

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	66	29	5
19+ and WBL*	52	48	0
Learning 16-18	62	29	9
19+ and WBL*	36	56	8

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. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and there have been some significant improvements in retention rates since the last inspection. The college analyses its own data effectively and uses a nationally recognised value added system for comparing its examination results with those predicted on the basis of entry qualifications. The latest figures for 2000/01 indicate that the college is in the top 20 when compared with sixth form colleges. Pass rates on many courses have risen over recent years and are now above national averages. Retention rates, while not yet satisfactory, have improved, except on GCE AS courses, where both retention and pass rates on some courses are unsatisfactory and the number of students transferring to GCE A-level courses in some subjects is low.

### 16 to 18 year olds

2. The college completes a detailed analysis of retention and pass rates for each subject and for each curriculum area. The three-year trend data show overall improvements in pass and retention rates, although the results on some individual courses remain low. For example, of the 28 different GCE AS courses, 7 had pass rates below 75%. The college has high overall pass rates at GCE A level and an improving pass rate on most GCE AS courses.

3. In 2001, the overall pass rate for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses was close to the national average. However, some GCE AS students did not complete their course of study and their rate of progression from GCE AS to A level was low. This was partly due to the planned dropping of one subject as anticipated in Curriculum 2000, but was added to by students starting a new subject or leaving the college. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 2 courses, and in particular GCSE courses, are poor.

4. While the overall college retention rate is improving, retention rates on some courses remain lower than national averages. On level 2 courses, retention rates are well below national averages, particularly on some GNVQ courses. Retention rates on foundation level courses are below national averages for students aged 16 to 18, but those who complete their courses achieve good results.

## **Adult learners**

5. The college does not always separate out the achievements of 16 to 18 year olds and adult learners clearly, but adults achieve well on most courses. Most adult learners take ICT courses in community locations, and there is also a small but expanding provision in literacy and numeracy. During 2002/03, the college's provision for adult students with physical and learning disabilities increased, involving programmes on the main college site and in various community locations throughout north-east Norfolk. Achievement on vocational courses is good but retention rates are relatively low.

6. Attainment was at least satisfactory in most lessons and it was good or very good for half of them. In English and visual and performing arts, standards of attainment were good or very good in over three quarters of lessons. No lessons were observed where attainment was outstanding.

7. Attendance during the inspection was satisfactory overall at 85%, in line with the national average for sixth form colleges. It was outstanding in humanities at 95%, but only satisfactory in health and social care and literacy and numeracy lessons. Punctuality was very good during the inspection and in the few instances where students were late, the teacher appropriately asked about the reason for the lateness. The college has been successful in improving students' attendance and punctuality and has overcome many of the difficulties associated with transport in rural areas.

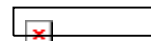
8. The standards achieved in most lessons indicate that staff have high expectations of their students on all courses. In a few lessons, the pace was too slow and some students were unable to complete work because of technical faults on the computers. Students on business and leisure courses were not able to develop skills in the use of some office machinery due to the lack of appropriate equipment.

9. Several courses had students who achieved outstanding results. In humanities, three students gained 100% in geography, in expressive arts three students gained 100% in a GCE A-level unit on textual analysis and three students gained 100% in GCE A-level media debates. In October, three media students had their films screened at the Co-op National Young Peoples Film Festival held in Bradford. Three students in performance studies were awarded top A grades for an exceptional piece of work integrating drama and dance based on the life of Jacqueline du Pre. Another student achieved 100% in GCE A-level design project work, and their work was used as exemplar material for national training and moderation events. In design technology and engineering, students have gained awards and commendations for design, including one student being runner up in the Audi young designer of the year award, and one winning the Rotary Club young designer of the year award.

10. Last year in the mathematics department, three students won two silver and one gold award in the national mathematics challenge, and one GCE A-level biology student won a Nuffield scholarship. A student in health and social care has completed a double AVCE with a double A grade. In literacy and numeracy, several students have had to overcome significant physical and emotional difficulties in order to be able to complete their studies. One student had a history of behavioural difficulties at school. During his time on the course he has passed entry-level courses in literacy and numeracy, and is currently on track to pass a GNVQ foundation course in health and social care. He is also representing the local area at a scout jamboree in Thailand.

11. College students have substantial achievements in sports and recreation. Three students have played for the England under-18 hockey team, and one is a member of the county under-18 cricket squad. The college is the current Norfolk county netball champion and three students play on the county team. One student plays for the county football team, and another plays for the county rugby team. In 2002, one student captained the England world cup football team in the disability world cup and another gained an American basketball scholarship.

## **Quality of education and training**



12. Teaching is satisfactory or better on the majority of courses, and is good on two thirds of them. Staff are knowledgeable about their subjects and about the students they teach. They use a range of appropriate teaching strategies to promote learning. In a minority of lessons, the teacher talks too much, at the expense of involving students in group or practical activities. In the best lessons, staff share their expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm through practical activities which illustrate, and are underpinned by, theory. The college has been successful in encouraging teachers to complete formal and informal classroom observations to improve teaching and enhance the learning experience of students.

13. Most lessons are well planned and have clear aims and objectives which are explained to students. Some group activities do not take enough account of the needs of individual students. Individual learning plans incorporating specific and relevant targets are not well used across the college, although staff regularly work with students on a one-to-one basis to identify areas for attention or development. Initial assessment procedures and the use of information about students' prior attainments are both underdeveloped. The imprecise match of individual needs to course requirements has a significant impact on some students, who struggle with their courses and find them too difficult or not what they had expected.

14. Relationships between staff and students are very good. Students value and appreciate the support they are given and work hard to meet course requirements. Their motivation in lessons is generally high. In courses for performing arts and media, students engaged in rehearsals and production accept and share critical observations whilst improving their own and the group's performance.

15. Whilst enrichment activities are not well attended, those students who take part work well and enjoy themselves; many gain confidence. For example, students working in the college 'Far East Theatre Company' perform a range of productions throughout each year with three shows presented at the Edinburgh festival in the last three years. Students in the sports area enjoyed working on the trampoline and spent considerable time perfecting their techniques.

16. The proportion of teachers with qualified status is high among full-time staff and is improving for part time staff. The college provides a programme of training and opportunities for accreditation to minimum required levels for all staff. Those teaching on courses for adults are employed primarily on the basis of their skills and expertise, and the college provides opportunities to study for teaching and training qualifications where necessary. However, too few staff hold specialist qualifications for teaching people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A range of staff development opportunities are provided for all staff with increasing numbers taking externally-provided courses. Senior managers monitor staff development outcomes during appraisals and curriculum reviews to ensure that the needs of the college, as well as those of individual members of staff, are met.

17. The college occupies the sites of two former grammar schools. Two of the buildings having listed status, which restricts what can be done to make them more suitable for their purpose. Whilst the college has worked to overcome some of these problems, for example, through the provision of a new building for adult learning, there are still areas of the college where the accommodation is inadequate. The accommodation and property maintenance strategies are satisfactory but failure to keep the work on schedule has resulted in some buildings looking shabby and in need of decoration.

18. Access for students with restricted mobility is poor. There are many uneven pathways and some dangerously narrow staircases. Social accommodation is very poor. Students have to gather in corridors to socialise during non-teaching time, particularly in bad weather. Refreshment facilities are also inadequate. The college has recently refurbished classrooms with new tables and chairs, but some of the rooms are cramped. Staff in some curriculum areas have made their own specialist resources, which are highly valued by students, but overall, learning resources are poor.

19. The learning resource centre and library are located on one site, which is a disadvantage to students not based on that site. However, the centre is relatively well stocked and the limited space

is used productively. Most of the rooms in the college are equipped with computers. Further developments in science, design and technology and the sports areas have improved provision significantly. In the sports area, a multi-purpose fitness centre and weights room have been added to the gym facilities. A jointly-funded project in association with the local council to provide a swimming pool and sports centre is nearing completion. During the inspection, a small number of health and safety issues were identified. These included unsatisfactory risk assessment procedures for outreach staff. Overall, risk assessment is underdeveloped at the college.

20. The monitoring of progress for most students is good. Full-time students are assessed regularly using well-planned and thorough procedures. Feedback to students is encouraging and constructive. Most students are aware of their progress and understand what they need to do to improve their performance. Students' progress is recorded systematically by subject teachers, and reviewed thoroughly at scheduled half-termly meetings with tutors. There is effective internal moderation in most areas. In literacy and numeracy, the college review system is not being used effectively to record and review learners' progress, and to plan future individualised learning. Potential full-time students value the good pre-entry information provided by the college. There are very effective links with local special schools, which encourage and support progression to FE. However, the college's arrangements for initial assessment do not meet the needs of many students. Insufficient use is made of students' prior achievements at school in guiding students onto suitable programmes. On part-time courses, adult learners often complete a self-assessment, using a form which only identifies their personal objectives. This is inadequate for the purposes of programme planning. The assessment of students' literacy and numeracy needs does not lead to the production of sufficiently individualised learning plans.

21. The college provides a wide range of courses at advanced level and students are able to combine a variety of subjects at this level. Students appreciate the flexibility of these arrangements. However, there are some gaps which limit entry or progression, especially at intermediate level and in vocational programmes. For example, provision in childcare and opportunities for progression in visual arts are limited. In addition, there is lack of cross-college co-ordination of some curriculum areas, for example, ICT and literacy and numeracy. There are too few opportunities for entry-level students to progress to more advanced vocational programmes.

22. The college has substantially increased its range of adult and community-based provision. It has responded effectively to local needs by establishing a number of outreach centres. In addition to entry-level provision in ICT and literacy and numeracy, there is an increasing range of imaginative short programmes for adults. For example, there are programmes for parents and ICT courses in local residential homes.

23. The college is involved in local partnerships, such as the North East Norfolk Learning Community, and has effective links with local Connexions service. There is a good range of general and targeted marketing to adults, for example, through local junior schools. Additional funding has been obtained to support new community developments in widening participation. The Cromer 'Learning for Life' pilot scheme is a good example of this with its funding now extended for a further three years. There is some co-operation with the local adult education service, but there are also examples of both providers bidding competitively for LSC funding.

24. Links with local schools are reinforced through regular contact and presentations to pupils. Curriculum enrichment activities are well established in the college and provide an extra dimension for many of the curriculum areas. For example, in English, there are theatre trips and a poetry festival, and in performing arts, there is a successful college theatre group, which performs in public and holds open rehearsals to which school pupils are invited. The college holds an annual fashion show which tours local schools. There are 40 student designers and models involved this year with live music supplied by college bands. These events are well attended by students despite the irregular transport in the area. Wider enrichment activities are not adequately promoted. The scope of current activities is too narrow and those activities offered outside curriculum enrichment are not well attended. Many students feel that the activities do not reflect their broader interests, such as ICT. Students are rarely given the opportunity to sample activities from other curriculum areas.

25. All full-time students are expected to work towards a key skills qualification in communication,

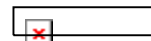
and the college has appointed a cross-college key skills co-ordinator for communication. There is a clear cross-college system for recording of evidence of competence in communication, and the tutorial system is used satisfactorily to support portfolio building and to provide additional opportunities to demonstrate competence. In some areas, such as English, humanities and physics, key skills in communication are carefully integrated with other aspects of the curriculum. Although students following GNVQ and AVCE programmes in business administration collect relevant evidence towards key skills awards in communications, this evidence is not separately accredited. Full-time students are not required to gain key skills awards in application of number, but those without GCSE mathematics at grade C or above are encouraged to retake the qualification, and where appropriate, to achieve the key skills award in application of number at level 1 or 2. Some students studying accounts expressed a wish to gain additional key skills awards in application of number. In addition to their main programme of learning, all full-time students are expected to work towards an external award in information technology (IT) at an appropriate level.

26. There is good support for learners on full-time programmes. Teaching staff provides effective informal support. For example, many teachers provide additional lessons during lunchtimes. There is a strong and well-focused tutorial system. Students' attendance and performance are monitored at weekly tutorials and half-termly reviews. College support services provide advice and guidance. There is a good range of services, such as counselling, and advice has been made available recently on progression to HE. The information centre provides an appropriate range of information to all students and is well used. In addition, full-time students have good access to more specialised external services.

27. The college has strong links with the local Connexions service, and visits are arranged to the local office to familiarise full-time students with the careers services. There is a good system of additional learning support for students identified as having particular learning needs, such as dyslexia. Although there are well-developed induction arrangements for full-time students, induction arrangements for adult learners on part-time courses are not yet adequate. For example, there are no standardised induction packs or checklists for part-time tutors. Adult learners do not routinely receive information about college equal opportunities policies. Publicity and induction materials make insufficient references to equality of opportunity. Although adults have access to the information centre, support structures for part-time adult learners are insufficiently developed. People unable to attend college or those with learning difficulties are not catered for adequately.

28. Attendance is carefully monitored for all students. Absences of full-time students are promptly followed up at weekly tutorial sessions, and in half-termly performance reviews. Parents of those aged 16 to 18 are routinely involved and kept well informed of issues that may impede progress. Regular feedback is also given to parents at scheduled parents' consultation events. Attendance of adult students is also monitored closely, and appropriate systems are in place to track and follow up absence in a supportive way.

## Leadership and management



29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college's strategic plan contains considered and achievable targets, but it does not set out clearly enough how the college will achieve its longer-term goals. In many ways, the college caters separately on a day-to-day basis for three discrete groups of students: students taking mainly GCE A-level courses; students studying for pre-entry and foundation qualifications; and adults taking mainly part-time courses at off-site locations. The staff involved with each of these groups plan their provision separately and do not share matters of common concern sufficiently. There is a widespread perception that some courses and some students are valued more than others. While there is no disharmony between these groups, neither is there a strong sense of common purpose. The college is hindered in bringing about a sense of common identity by the poor accommodation and the almost complete lack of social spaces where students can meet and share each other's company.

30. Despite these problems, students' achievements have continued to improve. Since the last inspection, much energy has been devoted to improving the quality of teaching and learning and to raising achievement rates. These efforts have been successful and the college has maintained the strengths reported in the last inspection report while effectively addressing some of the weaknesses identified. Teaching and learning are both good, and students who complete their courses achieve well in relation to their starting points. Pass rates on many courses have risen and are now close to national averages. Retention rates, while not yet satisfactory, have improved, except on GCE AS courses where both retention and pass rates on some courses are unsatisfactory and the number of students transferring to GCE A-level courses in some subjects is low.

31. The quality of curriculum management and planning across the college is satisfactory rather than good. While most students' progress is closely monitored, the target setting process is inconsistently applied. There is much informal sharing of good practice within and between subject teams, but there is too little cross-college curriculum dialogue and discussion. With some notable exceptions, teachers meet less frequently than is needed to plan to keep abreast of curriculum developments that affect their work, and some teachers, particularly those on part time contracts, are not always well integrated into the life and work of their departments. However, the support provided for newly qualified teachers is good. Many curriculum areas have good schemes of work but a minority do not. Nearly all teachers have embraced the need to improve student outcomes by paying careful attention to the quality and effectiveness of the teaching, student learning and management systems.

32. While, in total, the college offers as many courses as it can afford to teach, these do not always meet students' needs sufficiently well in some areas. Much needed adult and community provision has been rapidly and successfully developed and there are plans to increase the provision further. However, the development of the adult curriculum is undertaken independently from the 16 to 18 curriculum and to different criteria.

33. Quality assurance arrangements are generally effective and work with the full support of all teachers. Self-assessment is mostly rigorous and self-critical. Senior managers have successfully established a concern for improvement across the college. This has ensured that all staff and governors are fully involved and informed about how the college sees its achievements. The outcomes of systematic internal and external lesson observations are used in the planning of the staff training and development programme. This process has helped to raise the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Staff are sensitively appraised and outcomes are linked to individual performance targets. The college has recently conducted a survey of students' views. Full-time students are well supported by their teachers and tutors but this is not yet the case for part-time students.

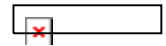
34. The management of many areas of college business is satisfactory or better. The quality of management information is much improved, although, it is not always well used. There are good links with some partners and these are energetically sustained to the benefit of adult students. Relationships with other stakeholders, particularly 11 to 16 schools, are not as good as they need to be.

35. There is still much to be done to make the college more socially inclusive, and a number of equal opportunity issues need to be addressed urgently. The college does not comply with all the requirements of current legislation and access for students with restricted mobility is unacceptably poor. The colleges' response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act has been slow and governors and managers have not yet fulfilled their statutory duties. The college equal opportunities policy has not been fully implemented across the college and does not provide sufficiently robust guidance to ensure that all students are treated equally and are well prepared for living in a multicultural society. The monitoring of the performance of students by gender is undertaken, but the outcomes have not been taken into account sufficiently in teaching and learning strategies. Other aspects of governance are good and governors are well informed about the college's curriculum, financial and management strengths and weaknesses. They make an effective contribution to the college's continued improvement. Teachers appreciate governors' involvement in curriculum matters as well as their contribution to the self-assessment process. Members of the Corporation are drawn from a variety of backgrounds and are becoming more closely involved in helping to question and influence the

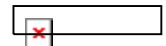
strategic direction of the college. They now receive appropriate, reliable and timely information about the college.

36. Financial management is satisfactory, but financial data are not yet used to help plan the development of the curriculum for 16 to 18 year-olds cost effectively in the way that it does the curriculum for adult learners. The expansion of adult courses has been well managed. The college is financially secure. It manages its day-to day-finances carefully, but needs to take a more strategic view of its financial options. The college recognises this fact and a finance manager has recently been appointed. The college is providing satisfactory value for money. Since the last inspection, new challenges have arisen, especially the need to offer a more comprehensive range of courses to meet the needs of northeast Norfolk more effectively. The college is seeking to play a central role with other partners in addressing the 'Success for All' agenda for its large catchment area. It is hindered in its ability to respond to community needs not only by poor accommodation, but also through a lack of agreement with the local LSC about its role.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Science and mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- effective teaching
  
- good pass rates on GCE A-level courses
  
- good use of ICT to promote learning
  
- good science laboratory facilities
  
- effective monitoring of students' progress.

#### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on GCE AS courses

- poor retention rates on most courses
  
- poor access for people with restricted physical mobility
  
- inadequate target setting.

**Scope of provision**

37. Most students in this curriculum area are aged 16 to 18 and attend full time. GCE A-level and AS courses are provided in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and further mathematics. There are GCSE programmes in biology and in mathematics. No vocational science courses are offered.

**Achievement and standards**

38. The overall attendance rate in the lessons inspected was 83% but it was 79% for the two GCSE courses. Students arrive punctually for lessons. The retention rate on the GCE A-level mathematics course is high and on the GCSE biology course, the rate has improved and is now good. However, the retention rates for most level 3 science courses other than physics and for GCSE courses in mathematics are below the national average for sixth form colleges.

39. The pass rates on all the GCE A-level courses are above national averages. In 2002, the pass rate was 96% in biology and 100% in chemistry. However, the pass rates on the one-year GCE AS mathematics and science courses are below national averages. In biology the pass rate fell from 90% to 70%, and in physics from 82% to 65%, between 2001 and 2002. The pass rates on the GCSE courses in biology and mathematics have improved and are now above the national averages. The proportion of higher grades is below the national average for all GCE AS subjects and all GCE A-level subjects except chemistry. On average, the grades achieved in GCE AS/A-level mathematics and science examinations are lower than those predicted on the basis of students' GCSE results. Progression rates to science-based HE courses are good.

40. The quality of students' work is good and demonstrates that they have acquired appropriate knowledge and understanding. Students develop a wide range of skills in their practical work. GCE A-level biology students undertake challenging fieldwork projects in the local environment. For example, one student studied the effect of nutrient pollutants on the rate of growth of duckweed in the Norfolk broads. Another student measured changes in plant populations by comparing the growth of plant life in the sand dunes at two points along the Norfolk coast.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	20	19	20
		% retention	70	79	85
		% pass rate	29	60	53
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	95	70	55



		% retention	65	69	73
		% pass rate	33	27	51
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	45	33	18
		% retention	84	88	100
		% pass rate	91	93	89
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	22	27	14
		% retention	91	78	86
		% pass rate	92	100	92
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	33	33	14
		% retention	91	73	93
		% pass rate	96	79	100
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	31	35	26
		% retention	77	63	92
		% pass rate	90	95	96
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	42	64
		% retention	*	88	86
		% pass rate	*	64	65
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	*	17	34
		% retention	*	100	94
		% pass rate	*	82	63

Source: ISR (2000, 2001, and 2002)

\*course did not run

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

41. All the teaching observed in science and mathematics was satisfactory and the majority of it was good. Most lessons are well planned and ensure that the course is covered at an appropriate pace. In science practical lessons, appropriate attention is paid to health and safety. Teachers relate theory to practice clearly and effectively. For instance, a GCSE biology group monitored the growth of yeast cells by using a light sensor to measure the reduction in the cloudiness of the solution over a two-day period and recorded the outcome on the laboratory computer. They were then able to interpret the data in terms of the fermentation process taking place.

42. In most mathematics lessons, the teaching is designed to promote students' interest, participation and learning. For example, in a GCSE mathematics lesson, students explored the topic of probability through various group activities. They used dice to simulate a shooting range at a fairground, analysed the statistics relating to the numbers drawn in the national lottery and calculated the probability of scoring a single, double, treble or 'bulls' eye' in a game of darts. In a few lessons, teachers use inappropriate teaching methods and fail to check whether students have understood the topic.

43. Science teachers make good use of the modern, networked computers in the laboratories to promote learning. For example, in GCE A-level lessons, physics students obtained relevant data and diagrams from the Internet as part of their study of nuclear reactors. The college is developing intranet sites for mathematics and chemistry students.

44. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Staff take full advantage of professional development opportunities. Since the last inspection, the laboratories have been refurbished to a high standard and now provide a good learning environment. Most of the mathematics teaching takes place in two rooms in a listed building. They are unnecessarily large but they are well furnished, have comfortable seats and appropriate teaching aids. All the rooms used by science and mathematics students have interesting displays of students' work and other relevant materials. However, none of these rooms, except the chemistry laboratory, are accessible to people with restricted physical mobility. The range of books in the learning resource centre is narrow and many of them are outdated. Class sets of textbooks are made available on each course.

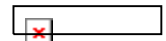
45. Students' work is set regularly and marked fairly. Some teachers are more thorough than others in correcting errors, but most provide appropriate encouraging and helpful comments. There is effective monitoring of students' progress through a well-structured tutorial system. Each student is given a helpful progress review twice a term. Teachers make contact with parents as appropriate. Additional mathematics tuition is available for all students three times a week.

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

46. The science subjects are managed as one curriculum area. Mathematics is managed with ICT. In both cases, curriculum management is satisfactory and there is efficient deployment of staff. Self-assessment is well established and points for action are identified. For example, as a result of self-assessment, a choice of foundation and intermediate-level mathematics programmes was developed to take account of students' different previous attainments. This led to improvements in attendance, attitude and achievement. However, the action plans do not include year-on-year targets for continuous improvement. There is a programme of classroom observations and staff have shown a commitment to improving the quality of teaching by observing each other and sharing good practice.

47. Equality of opportunity is not promoted effectively. The proportion of female students on mathematics and physical science courses is low.

## **Business**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates
  
- good and improving retention rates
  
- wide range of opportunities to engage in research in the community
  
- good support for students

- effective use of learning materials.

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate access to ICT resources
- inadequate work-based learning resources.

### **Scope of provision**

48. The college provides GCE AS and A-level programmes in business and accounts, AVCE single and full awards in leisure and recreation, GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, and NVQ administration at levels 2 and 3. Most of the students are aged 16 to 18 and attend full time. A small number of adults join the younger students on NVQ courses. There is no level 1 provision.

### **Achievement and standards**

49. Pass rates are good. GCE A-level business students improved performance from 93% to 100% between 2001 and 2002. The majority of students achieve better grades than those predicted on the basis of their entry qualifications. This was particularly true in GNVQ advanced business, AVCE leisure and recreation, and GNVQ advanced leisure and recreation. In 2002, the percentage of high grades was excellent in GNVQ advanced business at 83%, and GCE A-level business at 62%.

50. The standard of students' written and other work is good. Teachers keep careful records of each student's minimum target grade based on GCSE results, predicted grades and modular assessment records. They have high expectations of their students and use these records to encourage students to achieve their full potential. Students use appropriate business terminology and can explain theoretical concepts. The skills of evaluation, research and analysis are apparent in their work. Many students on work-based and vocational programmes have inadequate keyboarding and word processing skills. In 2001, 50% of students on advanced-level courses went on to university, an increase of 8% over the previous year.

51. Retention rates have been improved by the introduction of a number of effective strategies and are now good. Teachers are quick to follow up any absences and work well with parents and carers to deal with any problems at an early stage. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course was 83% in 2001/02 and 94% for the part-year of 2002/03. The GCE A-level accounts course has a retention rate of 100% in its first year. Teachers have recorded some poor attendance rates during the year but in lessons observed during the inspection, the attendance rate was 88%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	25	9	15
		% retention	72	67	87

		% pass rate	94	83	85
GNVQ leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	19	16	18
		% retention	68	64	83
		% pass rate	62	100	100
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	41	47	31
		% retention	76	65	94
		% pass rate	94	93	100
GCE AS accounts	3	No. of starts	15	29	25
		% retention	73	89	84
		% pass rate	91	62	86

Source: ISR (2000, 2001 and 2002)

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

52. Most of the teaching is good. Lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace. Theoretical principles are explained clearly and teachers make effective use of questioning to check students' understanding. Most teachers plan their lessons carefully and vary the pace and style of delivery to meet students' needs. In a few lessons, students became restless and inattentive during prolonged copying from the whiteboard or ineffective small group work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their own ICT resources extensively to provide topical and interesting teaching and learning materials. In one lesson, digital photographs were used effectively to challenge students' thinking on aspects of countryside management. Where teachers have commercial experience, this is well used to provide illustrative examples and to inform debate. Students are provided with opportunities to engage in research in the community. Teachers overcome various problems, such as those relating to public transport in a rural area, to make it possible for students to broaden their range of experiences. Students who work part time are able to relate the skills and knowledge gained at work to various aspects of their courses and are encouraged to conduct further research as part of assignments and coursework. NVQ students undertake work placements for one day every week. These placements are carefully arranged and monitored to ensure that they are accessible and provide suitable opportunities to gather evidence of competence for assessment. When gaps in skill development are identified, teachers arrange for students to work in various college departments to acquire the necessary skills.

53. Teachers are well qualified. The library contains an adequate stock of books. Teachers have placed relevant learning materials on the college intranet. Students make excellent use of the Internet to collect material for their assignments, despite the lack of ICT resources. There are insufficient computers in teaching rooms. Students on leisure courses make good use of facilities in the learning resource centre. This requires careful planning by teachers, particularly as the resource centre is on a different college site from the teaching base room. NVQ students are hampered by not having access to a full range of ICT equipment, other than computers, in their training room. For example, there is no photocopier, fax machine or switchboard available to enable them to develop the skills expected in a commercial office. There are inadequate storage facilities and a lack of reference materials and other resources.

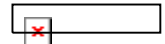
54. Assessment is rigorous, and is used effectively to monitor students' progress. Students are able to judge their current level of performance against examination standards and can compare this with their minimum target grade. Written feedback on assessed work, whilst generally comprehensive, varies in the effectiveness with which it provides guidance for further improvement. Some teachers provide no more than oral feedback and a numerical mark. Internal verification is rigorous and systematic.

55. Teachers provide good academic and personal support for students. Where under-performance is identified, students are given additional help.

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

56. Business and leisure courses are managed efficiently. The teaching team has high aspirations and a joint commitment to the maintenance of high standards. Team meetings are scheduled regularly, but full attendance is rarely attained because of the high proportion of part-time staff and the competing commitments of senior staff. The curriculum leader overcomes this problem by discussing issues with individual members of staff and then circulating comments and recommendations for action. Students' progress is well monitored and records are kept in course logs. The self-assessment report was honest and evaluative. Many of the action points in the development plan had been addressed by the time of inspection.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good retention and pass rates on courses at level 1
  
- good progress by most full-time students
  
- effective target-setting on GCE courses
  
- valued and expanding community provision.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on information and business technology courses
  
- inadequate target setting for adult learners
  
- insufficient learning materials for computer literacy courses
  
- unsatisfactory cross-college strategic approach to ICT development

- narrow range of ICT provision.

### **Scope of provision**

57. There are 779 students studying ICT courses at the college and its 21 outreach centres. Over 80% of students are adults. Some 70 students are undertaking GCE AS and A-level courses in ICT. The computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses at level 1 and 2 have 435 students, of whom 49% are adults. Full-time 16 to 19-year-old students study the CLAIT courses at level 1 and 2 as an alternative to IT key skills examinations. Over 150 adults are undertaking an entry-level course in IT and another 30 are attending IT taster courses. The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) course has 18 adult students and there are small numbers of adult students on other IT courses such as desktop publishing, word processing, spreadsheets and databases.

### **Achievement and standards**

58. In recent years, students have achieved well at foundation level and pass rates on CLAIT courses are well above the national average. The retention rate is good on the one-year version of the course and is better than the national average on the short course. However, pass rates on the intermediate and advanced-level integrated business technology (IBT) courses are poor. On the GCE AS ICT course, the pass rate improved markedly over the past two years but the retention rate declined. On the GCE A-level ICT course, the pass rate was 100% in each of the last two years. In most lessons observed, student attainment was satisfactory or better. Students are confident in their ability to perform basic computer operations such as file handling and using application software.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT (1 year)	1	No. of starts	252	66	152
		% retention	75	95	81
		% pass rate	64	86	84
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	19	18	66
		% retention	84	78	89
		% pass rate	56	79	87
IBT stage 2 (1 year)	2	No. of starts	117	61	21
		% retention	79	93	81
		% pass rate	32	77	47
IBT stage 3 (1 year)	3	No. of starts	*	12	8
		% retention	*	92	75
		% pass rate	*	27	0
GCE AS ICT (1 year)	3	No. of starts	*	45	61
		% retention	*	82	74
		% pass rate	*	60	84
GCE A-level ICT 2	3	No. of starts	24	22	13

2001/02)		% pass rate	76	100	100
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Source: ISR (2000, 2001 and 2002)

\*course did not run

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

59. Teaching is a least satisfactory. All students on full-time courses are well motivated and they are kept busy by the teachers, who select appropriate resources and teaching methods. Almost all classes for adults include students working towards different qualifications. Teachers manage these lessons well. They provide support to individuals and small groups and succeed in promoting learning and building confidence. There is no significant difference between the quality of the teaching and learning in the full-time classes and that in the sessions for adult learners.

60. There are well-equipped computer suites for use by students at the main college site, although the use of the college intranet as a learning resource is underdeveloped. The portable resources used in the outreach centres are adequate for this developing initiative but the small screen on a laptop computer is unsuitable for demonstrations to groups of students. Although students find the self-study materials easy to follow, they are not allowed to take them home. Staff on full-time courses are well qualified, but outreach tutors are chosen more for their abilities to relate to students than for their ICT capabilities. However, these teachers are studying for teaching qualifications. The staff development programme helps them add to their IT capabilities.

61. The assessment of students' progress is inconsistent. Insufficient use is made of initial diagnostic assessment or individual learning support on GCE AS/A-level programmes. On adult courses, students' progress is tracked but there is too little target setting to aid completion of courses to agreed timescales. Some students were unclear about the number of modules they were to take or how much of the course they had completed. On full-time courses, clear target setting and careful marking of work help to keep students informed about how they are performing and how they could improve.

62. The range of courses is narrow. There is only one full-time IT course, and introductory computer literacy courses suitable for adults are only available to intermediate level. These courses also provide the key skills component for full-time students. There are no planned ICT activities as part of the college's enrichment programme. The adult provision forms a valuable and expanding service to the north Norfolk community. Courses are provided in 21 outreach centres including schools, social clubs, libraries and residential care homes. Adult students on part-time courses are given good personal support which boosts their confidence, but there is no formal tutorial support for them. They are encouraged to consider progression to other courses during a short post-course review.

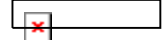
### **Leadership and management**

63. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is insufficient co-ordination between the 16 to 18 and adult IT courses. For example, course meetings for courses which attract from both groups frequently involve tutors from one area only. The current strategy for the expansion of ICT in the college was prepared without the involvement of those responsible for the community and adult provision. However, the recent establishment of a cross-college IT user group demonstrates that efforts are being made to remedy this weakness. On many courses, teachers are insufficiently involved in setting course targets and in self-assessment. Appraisals are carried out annually and linked to relevant staff development. There is a programme of internal observations of teaching and learning which produces useful results.

64. Tutors teaching on community IT courses at outreach centres are responsible for the delivery and return of IT equipment. Many of the centres are in isolated locations, and the safety of these lone tutors has received insufficient attention. There is little promotion of equality of opportunity. Course information does not encourage wider participation by those with disabilities. People with

impaired mobility would have difficulty accessing IT facilities at most of the community venues.

## Health and social care



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates
  
- good teaching
  
- effective student participation in lessons
  
- rigorous assessment
  
- strong support for students.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates
  
- poor pass rates in key skills
  
- narrow range of provision.

### **Scope of provision**

65. The college offers full-time GNVQ foundation and intermediate, and AVCE courses in health and social care. In the academic year 2001/02, there were 34 enrolments in the 16 to 18 age group and 8 enrolments in the 19 and over age group, representing 1% of total college enrolments. In the current academic year, there has been an increase in enrolments to 67 in the 16 to 18 age group and 28 in the 19 and over age group, representing 3% of total college enrolments. There are no



courses in the evening or in community venues.

### **Achievement and standards**

66. Students make good progress on their courses and are successful in achieving their learning goals. Pass rates are high. In 2002, on foundation, intermediate and advanced-level courses, pass rates were well above national averages for colleges of a similar type. A high proportion of students are awarded merit and distinction grades. Retention rates have been below national averages over the last three years on the intermediate and advanced-level courses. Pass rates are low in key skills examinations in communications. The standard of students' work is high. Their portfolios are well presented and generally of good quality. At advanced level, research projects are thoroughly prepared and findings are carefully evaluated, by referring to relevant academic and vocational literature. Students' work at intermediate and foundation level is also of a high standard. For example, students working on an assignment designed to promote health and well being produced graphic individual health plans which could be applied to their own health or that of clients.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	*	*	12
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	100
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	13	15	14
		% retention	62	67	71
		% pass rate	88	90	90
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	21	26	13
		% retention	57	69	69
		% pass rate	92	78	100

Source: ISR (2000, 2001 and 2002)

\*course did not run

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

67. Teaching is effective and is clearly matched to course requirements and group needs. Lessons are well planned. Most students participate willingly in classroom activities. For example, in a lesson designed to explore care practice values, students analysed a case study which contained a number of ethical dilemmas for the care practitioner. Following discussion, students role-played the scenario, which helped them to understand the ethical issues in an applied context. Teachers select appropriate learning materials, make clear the links between theory and practice, and provide helpful feedback to students on their work.

68. The teaching staff are appropriately qualified. They hold appropriate academic and vocational qualifications, and all of them, including the learning support assistant, are teacher trained. Teaching rooms are adequately furnished and suitably equipped with teaching aids, although most of them do not provide easy access for people with mobility problems. Textbooks are available for class work in the base rooms and are used frequently. Relevant books in the library are catalogued in a way which is unhelpful to care students. Many of the computers available to the students are unreliable.

69. The setting and marking of students' work is rigorous. Assessments are an integral part of lessons, and learners' progress is monitored effectively. Students are given clear guidance on assessment criteria. Formative assessment is detailed, informative and helpful in improving students'

performance. Outcomes are systematically recorded and reviewed in lessons and also in tutorials.

70. The range of courses is narrow. All courses are full-time and are aimed primarily at 16 to 18 year olds. No courses are provided in the evening or in community venues. All students on intermediate and advanced-level health and social care courses undertake appropriate work placements. Workplace learning is effectively integrated with other aspects of the curriculum, but the time spent on work experience is insufficient to develop practical caring skills fully. There are no work experience opportunities for foundation students.

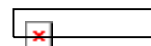
71. The guidance and support provided for students in lessons and tutorials are effective. Students have weekly tutorials and have four personal reviews a year. Outcomes are systematically recorded and reviewed in a tutorial log. The targets set for students as a result of the reviews are insufficiently specific. Induction arrangements are inadequate for students aged 16 to 18, and some adult students do not receive complete course information. All students aged 16 to 18 identify additional support needs. A learning support assistant is available to help students on the foundation course in health and social care.

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

72. Apart from the key skills work, the courses are well managed. Students' attendance, retention rates and progress are monitored regularly and recorded. Notices of previous course pass rates are displayed in base rooms. Teaching performance is monitored effectively through the college lesson observation process. Teaching staff were involved in the self-assessment process at department level. Although inspectors agreed with most of the judgements made in the self-assessment report, they did not agree with the grade awarded by the college for health and social care.

73. There is a module on equality of opportunity in the health and social care courses. However, in practical terms, not enough is being done to widen participation and attract a more diverse range of students.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on GCE A-level courses
  
- effective and well-planned teaching
  
- good assessment in most subjects
  
- high attendance rates.

### **Weaknesses**

- unsatisfactory pass rates on most GCE AS courses
- low proportion of high grades on GCE AS courses
- some insufficiently challenging teaching.

### **Scope of provision**

74. The college provides a range of humanities courses at GCE AS and A level. There are 23 students studying geography, 58 studying history, 139 studying psychology, 43 studying sociology and 47 studying law. The inspection covered all these subjects. There are also 55 students studying general studies. There are no intermediate-level courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

75. Pass rates in most GCE A-level humanities subjects are above national averages for sixth form colleges. There are particularly high pass rates in GCE A-level sociology and psychology and improving pass rates in history and geography. In 2002, many students achieved higher grades than were predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. Pass rates on most GCE AS courses, and the proportion of higher grades, are well below national averages. During the inspection, the average attendance in the lessons observed was 95%.

76. In the classroom, law students were able to apply their knowledge of sentencing aims to case studies and to justify their decisions confidently. Students in history displayed impressive knowledge on the strategies to eliminate Jewish people in Germany, and operation Barbarossa. GCE A-level geography coursework is of a very high standard. In psychology, some students were not able to explain key ideas clearly.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	24	21	9
		% retention	88	86	100
		% pass rate	89	83	100
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	20	16	8
		% retention	75	81	88
		% pass rate	47	62	100
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	32	54	42
		% retention	72	70	93
		% pass rate	96	97	97
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	6	24	44

		% retention	83	75	86
		% pass rate	40	39	58
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	10	61	97
		% retention	50	87	85
		% pass rate	100	98	85
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	9	41	37
		% retention	100	73	84
		% pass rate	44	73	77

Source: ISR (2000, 2001, and 2002)

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

77. There is much effective and well-planned teaching. Most lessons achieve their learning objectives. In sociology, students were given helpful advice on meeting the coursework requirements of their course. Newspaper articles were used effectively in psychology to demonstrate how the media might affect behaviour; this led to a well-managed and step-by-step approach to writing an essay, using a summary of key words. There is some insufficiently challenging teaching. Some teachers spend too long reviewing theories or research. Some exercises on correlation are too undemanding for students with good mathematical ability. Stimulus material and case studies in law are not always used effectively to spark debate and discussion.

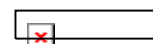
78. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable. Accommodation is adequate. There are at least two computers in each room, but these are used infrequently. Most rooms had well presented displays of students' work on the walls. In one room, used predominately for psychology, the arrangement of the furniture made group work difficult, and there was no suitable screen for use with the overhead projector.

79. Students' work in most subjects is well marked and teachers' comments give a clear idea of what students need to do to improve. In history, for example, teachers provide detailed guidance on how to interpret the marks given for assessed work; the five levels that students can achieve are explained in detail. However, assessment procedures are not clear in psychology. Course logs are not used effectively to monitor students' progress in relation to their target grades. When targets are set they are insufficiently precise. Particularly effective course booklets have been developed for the GCE AS psychology and geography courses. They are well structured, and contain appropriate activities and review exercises.

### **Leadership and management**

80. Feedback following lesson observations is rigorous, constructive and detailed. There are mid-year and end-of-year reviews but insufficient use is made of target setting to improving retention and achievement rates. Self-assessment is thorough. Departmental meetings are infrequent and do not focus sufficiently on teaching and learning. Not enough opportunities are provided to share good practice.

### **Performing arts and media**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good retention and pass rates in performing arts and media
- high standard of students' work
- good teaching
- well-planned courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory retention rates in art and design
- poor resources and accommodation
- narrow range of courses
- ineffective risk assessments.

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

81. Approximately 65% of students in this curriculum area are on courses in performing arts and media, and 35% on courses in art and design. GCE AS and A-level courses are provided in performance studies, drama and theatre studies, film studies, media, art and design, and photography. A GCSE course is provided in photography. These courses recruit well. For example, there are 77 students studying GCE AS media studies, 36 studying GCE AS performance studies and 28 studying GCE AS art and design. Apart from the GCE AS and A-level programme, the range of courses is narrow. There is one vocational programme at intermediate and advanced level in art and design but none in performing arts and media. There are no part-time or evening programmes, although a small number of adult students attend daytime GCE AS and A-level and AVCE courses as part-time students.

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

82. Pass and retention rates on performing arts and media courses are above the national average. In the last two years, 100% pass rates have been achieved in GCE AS and A-level performance studies, GCE AS drama and theatre studies, and GCE A-level media. Pass rates on GNVQ and

AVCE art and design courses are consistently above national averages. Pass rates in GCE AS and A-level art are at or below the national average. Retention rates on performing arts and media courses have been at, or slightly above, the national average in recent years. Those on GCE A-level media, GCE AS performance studies and GCE A/AS drama and theatre studies courses are now well above national averages, but those on art and design courses are unsatisfactory.

83. Standards of written and practical work in performing arts and media are high. Students use a wide range of rehearsal techniques to increase their understanding of performance conventions and character. In most courses, students research and evaluate coursework thoroughly. Portfolios in GCE AS and GNVQ art courses are carefully assembled and demonstrate that students have experimented with a range of media. GCE A-level art portfolios demonstrate a narrower range of skills and contain work that relies heavily on other artists for its inspiration, rather than students' observational skills. Students show a good understanding of their subjects and participate in discussions, written tasks, note taking and practical work with enthusiasm.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	17	11	15
		% retention	76	82	73
		% pass rate	92	100	91
GCSE art and design (photography)	2	No. of starts	45	36	30
		% retention	80	69	53
		% pass rate	89	60	94
GCE AS performance studies	3	No. of starts	*	24	28
		% retention	*	79	93
		% pass rate	*	89	100
GCE A-level art and design/fine art	3	No. of starts	42	23	11
		% retention	74	74	91
		% pass rate	96	82	70
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	66	63	43
		% retention	82	63	100
		% pass rate	98	95	100
GCE AS drama and theatre studies	3	No. of starts	*	22	23
		% retention	*	91	96
		% pass rate	*	85	100

Source: ISR 2000, 2001 and 2002)

\*course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

84. Teaching is good. Teachers set clear objectives and monitor students' progress towards their achievement. They prepare lessons well and ensure that students apply the knowledge they have previously acquired. For example, GCE A-level drama students apply the knowledge they gain about theatre practitioners from GCE AS course materials to practical sessions. Teachers provide good formative advice to students on how to improve their work. Courses are well planned. Teachers work

together to evaluate the courses and improve them. They use information provided by their students and data from exam boards effectively in their planning. Staff set stimulating and challenging tasks which help to create a purposeful working atmosphere. They are good at identifying opportunities to enrich the students' experiences. Group work is well managed and suitably challenging, although students in some GCE A-level lessons are given insufficient opportunities to develop skills that allow them to work on their own.

85. Teachers are well qualified and most have considerable experience. Those appointed recently have brought fresh skills that have enriched the students' education. Accommodation and resources for arts subjects are poor. Both teachers and students in art and design work in a cramped environment. Printmaking and etching are undertaken in a room that is too small to accommodate more than three people safely. The photography darkrooms are small and there is no photography studio. The computing facilities available to art students are also unsatisfactory. There is some digital video production equipment but this is not available for students on art and design courses.

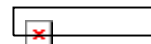
86. Students receive constructive verbal and written feedback from teachers. Teachers are particularly good at giving feedback during lessons to help students to improve their practical work. Course logs are used effectively for setting targets and monitoring progress. The quality of assignments and assessment decisions are not monitored sufficiently rigorously.

87. The range of courses is narrow. There is insufficient attention to photography or the digital arts on full-time arts and media courses. There are no discrete courses to meet the demand for media production and music. There is no evening or part-time provision. The college recognises these weaknesses. Course handbooks provide students with effective guidance on course content, assessment and expectations. Students are receptive to new ideas and work hard in lessons. They speak enthusiastically about their courses and appreciate the individual learning opportunities that teachers and technicians give them. The enrichment programme provides a wide range of trips to arts events and venues.

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

88. The college has an art and design department and a performing arts and media department. Both are managed well and a common approach is being developed to improving the quality of the provision. This approach is well established in performing arts and media but is new for art and design. Quality assurance procedures are not always carried out systematically, although teachers share good practice in teaching and assessment. Schemes of work are prepared thoroughly but there is insufficient collaboration between the departments. An attempt to address this has been made by teachers in drama and art through a project to design masks that will be worn in a performance. Some health and safety issues are not being addressed effectively; for example, no thorough risk assessments are being carried out.

## **English**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on all GCE AS and A-level courses
  
- good teaching

- accurate and constructive assessment of students' work
  
- good support for students
  
- effective team working.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rate on GCSE English course
  
- poor pass rate in GCSE English in 2002
  
- insufficient use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

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

89. The college provides daytime courses in GCSE English, GCE AS English language, and GCE AS and A-level English literature. This provision is adequate to meet the needs of full-time students aged 16 to 18, but does not cater for any part-time adult students who could not attend during the day. There are no access to HE programmes. At the time of the inspection there were 197 students enrolled on the English courses.

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

90. Pass rates on all the GCE AS and A-level English courses are consistently very high, with most at 100% for the last three years. The college's value-added analysis indicates that students are, on average, achieving better grades than those predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. Retention rates are variable, with some above and some below the national averages. The pass rate of 59% for grades A\* to C in GCSE English was significantly above the national average of 50% in 2001, but was poor at 37% in 2002. Although the retention rate in GCSE English has been improving over the past three years, it is still below the national average.

91. Students generally have good note-taking skills. Those on GCE AS and A2 courses work well together in pairs or small groups, but many students on the GCSE courses find this difficult. Standards of written work and contributions to class discussion are good for those on GCE AS and A level courses, but more variable for those on the GCSE courses. Attendance and punctuality are generally good. During the week of the inspection, attendance in the observed lessons averaged 82%.

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



Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	85	70	92
		% retention	66	73	77
		% pass rate	50	59	37
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	51	48	33
		% retention	78	73	97*
		% pass rate	100	100	97
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	*	19	20
		% retention	*	95	90
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	*	44	57
		% retention	*	86	91
		% pass rate	*	100	98
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	14	10	*
		% retention	93	60	*
		% pass rate	100	100	*

Source: ISR (2000, 2001 and 2002)

\*course did not run

\*\*retention rate over one year

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

92. Courses are well planned, and most of the teaching is good or better. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and relate well to their students. They make effective use of a variety of teaching and learning methods including individual, pair and group work, in addition to whole class activities. They also make effective use of questioning techniques. Tasks and activities are generally well planned to ensure that students develop appropriate knowledge and understanding. For example, in a GCSE English lesson where two poems by Wilfred Owen were reviewed, the teacher checked that students understood the meaning of all the words before starting small group work to complete various appropriately demanding tasks relating to the poems, and then provided feedback to the whole class. The students enjoyed the activity and benefited from sharing their ideas and views. In a small number of lessons, students were unwilling to participate in the learning activities. Teachers make good use of handout materials to support learning, and have also produced some very useful subject booklets and study support packs for the different courses. The conclusion of many lessons is too brief, and lacks a review of the learning that has taken place.

93. Teachers are appropriately trained and qualified. Classroom accommodation is good. Nearly all the English lessons take place in two dedicated base rooms. They are well furnished and equipped, and the walls are decorated with attractive posters relevant to the subject. Library resources for English are good. There is an extensive collection of modern fiction, a good collection of texts and criticism for English literature, an adequate collection for English language, a section with readings for GCE AS and A level English, videotapes of some Shakespeare plays, and some other useful resources. The college provides the students with all their course books. Although students have good access to computers in the college and the two English base rooms, each contain two computer workstations with Internet access, little use is made of IT to support teaching and learning. The English section of the college's intranet is undeveloped.

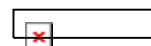
94. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly, and include comments to encourage them and help them improve. Written work is returned promptly. Internal moderation of coursework is thorough, and ensures accuracy and consistency. Tutorial support is effective. Students' progress is reviewed twice each term, including progress against target grades, and actions are agreed. Reports are written after each review and parent consultation evenings are held after every report has been issued. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored, and unexplained absences and lateness are quickly followed up.

95. There is good support and guidance for students taking English courses. Pre-entry arrangements include presentations in feeder schools, open evenings, and taster days when prospective students have the opportunity to sample the courses they are interested in. A two-week induction period enables students to settle into the college. Students receive very good support from their teachers, who are exceptionally generous with their time in giving extra help where required or requested. Extra lessons are regularly put on at lunchtimes.

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

96. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are effective. The English team consists of three full-time teachers. They meet frequently, both informally and in formally recorded meetings. They work together very well as a team to plan and develop the courses, develop resources, discuss students' progress, and share good practice. The college's quality assurance procedures are implemented effectively. Course reviews, action plans, self-assessment reports and development plans are all completed thoroughly and accurately. Actions are taken to address identified weaknesses, and many improvements have resulted. There is a strong commitment to professional development within the college and the curriculum area, and teachers are supported in attending appropriate training courses.

### **Literacy and numeracy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good support for students
  
- responsive development of adult provision
  
- good teaching on adult provision.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory assessment procedures

- inadequate progression routes for entry-level students
  
- limited opportunities for experiential learning at entry level.
  
- restrictive learning environments.

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

97. Literacy and numeracy provision for students aged 16 to 18 year includes Skillpower and foundation GNVQ programmes. Currently, there are 11 students on level 1 and 13 on entry-level literacy programmes, and 27 on entry-level numeracy programmes. Adult learners make use of the college's literacy and numeracy provision in outreach centres. These include residential and day-care settings for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a unit for people recovering from alcohol and drug abuse, and family literacy provision in two nurseries. The college is also involved in Learndirect programmes. There are 65 adult learners on entry-level programmes for literacy and 22 for numeracy. A GCSE English and mathematics programme can lead to key skills awards in application of number and communication after six months. Key skills development is also provided through the tutorial programme.

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

98. Achievement is satisfactory overall. On several courses, retention rates have improved and in 2001/02, they were above national averages on the Numberpower certificate of achievement in English courses. Though not all learners achieve full awards, all successfully complete units towards awards. For example in 2000/01, 10 out of 17 students gained a full certificate, six gained up to three units and one a single unit. The following year, seven out of 28 students gained a full certificate, while 11 passed up to three units and eight gained one unit. On the certificates of achievement in English programme in 1999/2000, 18 students achieved distinctions and three achieved merits. The following year, 15 students achieved certificates at level 3, and one at level 2.

99. Many students overcome significant personal difficulties whilst on courses. One student had been bullied at school and attended the college for a year before successfully undertaking a GNVQ health and social care course. Adult learners' achievements are not certificated, though there is evidence of achievement through progression to mainstream college courses. For example, two learners with mental health problems, taught initially in a hospital, have begun to attend the Cromer Lifelong Learning Shop and will attend the main college for health and social care and art and design courses. Attendance in lessons observed during the inspection was 77%, which is satisfactory when taking into consideration some of the difficulties experienced by students.

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

100. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in most lessons. There is good teaching on the adult programmes, where teachers take account of learners' prior achievements and future needs in planning and implementing individual learning plans. Schemes of work map planned learning activities against the core curriculum in literacy and numeracy at pre-entry and entry level. Practical activities are used to develop transferable skills, for example, measurement of wood in a carpentry lesson. Similarly, learners in a rehabilitation unit who were about to re-enter independent life were learning about temperature by studying washing machine instructions.

101. Some of the teaching to 16 to 18 year-olds is unsatisfactory. Too much emphasis is placed on

whole class teaching and worksheet completion. Activities are not practical enough and are not planned to meet individual needs. Some of the tasks set are too difficult for some students and too easy for others.

102. Good relationships help to ensure that learners' personal and emotional needs are appropriately addressed. Tutors and learning support assistants show skill in encouraging students to maintain their concentration. Many students become increasingly self-confident and make good progress. For example, a number of school pupils attended college in Year 11, moved on to the college Skillpower course, and then on to a GNVQ foundation-level course in health and social care

103. Teaching is satisfactory on the Skillpower course for 16 to 18 year olds and good on the adult programmes. A recent programme of professional development for teaching staff on the adult programme has been effective. Specialist learning resources are inadequate. Most resources are paper based and inappropriate for provision at this level. There is no centralised bank of learning resources.

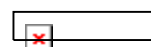
104. Many aspects of assessment practice are unsatisfactory, particularly in the provision for 16 to 18 year olds. Individual learning programmes do not take sufficient account of the results of assessments. The setting of individual learning targets and the monitoring of learners' progress are ineffective. Assessment is based on task completion, with too little identification of the learning achieved. Review documents used by the college are inappropriate for entry-level students. Schools provide detailed information about school leavers' prior achievements but this is not used effectively to plan individual programmes of learning. In adult provision, better use is made of initial assessment when planning individual learning programmes, but assessment methods are unsatisfactory.

105. The guidance and support provided for learners is satisfactory overall. Tutors provide sensitive personal and emotional support. For example, a student with family problems was given effective one-to-one help and advice, and learners in a rehabilitation unit were able to share their personal worries and discuss suitable strategies with staff. The outreach programmes for adult learners helps to overcome geographical and educational barriers to learning. Adult learners on the life skills programme are able to make informed decisions about the suitability of programmes of study. However, the limited range of entry-level provision restricts choice. Arrangements to assess and meet students' specific learning needs are inadequate. Key skills support is inadequately linked to the curriculum needs of individual students.

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

106. The outreach provision for adults is well planned and managed, although those involved have insufficient awareness of the current requirements of the adult curriculum for literacy and numeracy. Provision for college students is not well managed. The co-ordinator has too many responsibilities and does not have enough time to monitor the provision. Training for staff has not taken account of specialist courses available both locally and nationally, and staff are not sufficiently aware of good practice in this area. Equal opportunities are not well promoted and some students feel marginalised. For example, students on entry and pre-entry courses do not use the library and learning resource centre on a regular basis because it is on another site and does not properly cater for their needs. Access to classrooms on the first floor is unsatisfactory for those with restricted mobility or sensory impairment.

## **Part D: College data**



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

Level	16-18	19+
	%	%
1	9	90
2	76	24
3	92	7
Other	4	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>

Source: ISR 2002 data

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2001/02**

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	411	653	25.8%
Business administration, management and professional	172	217	9.4%
Information and communication technology	403	488	21.6%
Health, social care and public services	34	8	1.0%
Visual and performing arts and media	415	226	15.5%
Humanities	341	47	9.4%
English, languages and communication	218	11	5.5%
Foundation programmes	49	184	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2226</b>	<b>1906</b>	<b>93.5%</b>

Source ISR 2002 data

**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	317	104	80	296	206	325
	Retention rate	67	72	95	92	93	82
	National average	81	83	*	74	74	*
	Pass rate	60	74	84	45	77	80
	National average	70	66	*	65	66	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	578	372	370	112	162	121
	Retention rate	74	74	80	81	90	66
	National average	81	81	*	75	74	*
	Pass rate	79	87	84	47	51	68
	National average	79	83	*	68	67	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	852	1478	1364	43	66	104
	Retention rate	81	81	90	60	80	54
	National average	80	84	*	70	71	*
	Pass rate	87	83	87	79	73	73
	National average	785	85	*	63	66	*

\*data not available

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for 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 1997/8-1998/9: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for 1999/2000: provided by the college in spring 2001.

4. ISR validated data 2002.

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	71.2	28.8	0	59
Level 2 (intermediate)	68.4	21.1	10.5	19

Level 1 (foundation)	45.5	54.5	0	11
Other sessions	51.6	38.7	9.7	31
<b>Totals</b>	<b>63.3</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>120</b>

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