

Barking College

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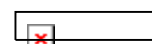
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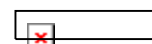
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Basic information about the college

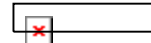


Name of college:	Barking College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	E R Parker
Address of college:	Dagenham Road Romford RM7 0XU
Telephone number:	01708 770 000
Fax number:	01708 770 007
Chair of governors:	Carol Smith
Unique reference number:	130424
Name of reporting inspector:	Robert Avery HMI
Dates of inspection:	24-28 March 2003

Part A: Summary

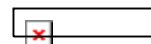


Information about the college



Barking College is a general further education (FE) college situated on the eastern boundary of the London borough of Barking and Dagenham. Within the borough, some 15% of the population are from minority ethnic groups. In 2001/02, approximately 19% of the college's income was generated by 10 franchise partners most of which were based in east London and the college enrolled approximately 12,500 students. Some 2,500 students studied at the college's community information technology (IT) learning centres and a further 4,250 students were enrolled on courses offered by franchise partners. Approximately 1,650 students aged 16 to 18 and 960 adult students attended full time. Over 9,000 adults attended part time. Some 42% of the college's enrolments were from minority ethnic groups. An equal number of female and male students were enrolled at the college. The college is directly responsible for the management of approximately 50 modern apprentices, the majority following programmes in the construction crafts. Much of the college's curriculum is vocational and is taught in 16 schools of study organised within two faculties. The college has been awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status in manufacturing and automotive engineering in partnership with a nearby FE college and also in construction. In September 2003, it is planned to transfer much of the college's engineering provision to the new 'Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence', which is located close to the production plant of a local motor vehicle manufacturer. The college's mission is to promote social inclusion and to provide high-quality learning opportunities that are accessible to all.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the provision to be outstanding in performing arts and media, and good in business and administration, information and communications technology (ICT), health and social care, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Provision in construction, hospitality and catering, and art and design is satisfactory. The provision in engineering and for work-based learners in construction is unsatisfactory.

Key strengths

- improving overall retention rates on many courses
- improving pass rates on many courses for adults
- high standards of students' practical work in construction crafts, catering, ICT, performing arts and media, and business and administration curriculum areas
- much good or better teaching in performing arts and media, ICT and business and administration curriculum areas

- good IT resources and specialist equipment in many areas
- significant improvements to accommodation in many areas
- effective student support services
- broad range of vocational courses meeting the needs of students and the community
- good promotion of equality of opportunity and educational and social inclusion
- good progression of students from one level of course to the next within the college and to higher education (HE) in many areas
- good management of most curriculum areas
- effective links with employers and other external partners and organisations in most areas.

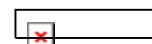
What should be improved

- pass rates on some level 3 and key skills courses for students aged 16 to 18, and on short courses for adults
- pass rates on many engineering courses
- retention rates on some courses
- completion rates of construction modern apprenticeship frameworks

- teaching and learning in some areas
- target setting and action planning for individual students
- management of the engineering curriculum area and work-based learning in construction.

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

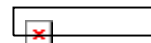


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Construction	Satisfactory. Pass rates on most National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are above national averages. The standard of many students' practical work is good. Teachers on craft courses use demonstrations effectively to illustrate theory. The teaching of theory in some lessons is unsatisfactory. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory. Many modern apprentices fail to achieve the full framework and management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory.
Engineering	Unsatisfactory. Pass rates on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced courses offered at the CoVE are outstanding. The pass rates on level 1 engineering and motor vehicle courses are poor. A significant proportion of engineering teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers in motor vehicle lessons make good use of information and learning technology (ILT) during lessons. Management of engineering at the main site is unsatisfactory.
Business and administration	Good. Pass rates on many courses are high, and many students attain high standards of work. There is much good teaching and links with employers are strong. Pass rates on some accounting courses are low, and the retention rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) courses are below national averages. The area is well managed.
Information and communications technology	Good. There is a broad range of courses to meet the needs of the local community. Pass rates are above the national averages on some courses. Teaching is good and provides very effective practical

	instruction to students. Progression rates to higher level courses are high. Retention rates on some courses for adults are poor. Management of the area is good.
Hospitality and catering	Satisfactory. Pass rates on the NVQ level 3 food preparation and cooking course are outstanding, but retention rates on the level 2 courses are low. Students' attain high standards in their practical work. Teaching in practical lessons is good. Some tutorial practice is poor. Assessment on some courses is inappropriate. Management of the area is satisfactory.
Health and social care	Good. Teaching on courses for adults is good. Pass rates on some courses are high and many students progress to high level courses and employment. Students are well supported on these courses. In some lessons for students aged 16 to 18, the work is insufficiently demanding for the more able. Some rooms are too small. Management of the area is good.
Performing arts and media	Outstanding. Pass rates on most courses are outstanding. There is much good and some excellent teaching. Students achieve high standards of practical work in performing arts and photography. Students are able to participate in an extensive enrichment programme. Ventilation in a few classrooms is poor. The area is well managed.
Art and design	Satisfactory. Practical skills are well taught. New accommodation and equipment are effectively managed, but there is some disruption in open-plan studios and workshops. Progression is good, but retention and pass rates are below national averages on some courses and there is low attainment in key skills. Actions undertaken recently are leading to many improvements. Management of the area is good.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. There is a wide range of programmes to suit individual needs. Students are well supported. There is much good activity-based learning. Many students progress to other courses and accommodation is well planned. Teachers review and record students' progress insufficiently thoroughly. Some learning materials are of poor quality. Management of the area is good.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Attainment on adult literacy and numeracy and entry courses for students aged 16 to 18 is good. Teaching on the entry course for students aged 16 to 18 is good, but the teaching of level 1 numeracy key skills is poor. Support in literacy and numeracy is good. The review of students' progress during drop-in support sessions is inadequate. Management of the area is satisfactory.

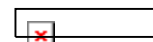
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. Governors and managers set a clear direction for the college and the strategic objectives are well communicated to all staff. Overall retention and pass rates have improved over the four-year period 1999 to 2002 and have been close to or above the national averages. The college has met its funding target for the current year. There are effective partnerships with local and other organisations to widen participation and regenerate the area. Financial management is sound and working effectively to improve difficulties experienced in the past year. Governors are well informed and play an active part in the self-assessment process. Quality assurance systems and procedures are well established and in many curriculum areas these

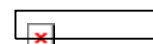
case and provision is unsatisfactory. Staff development is well organised and evaluated and linked to performance review. There is a successful accommodation strategy that has resulted in considerable improvements to many aspects of accommodation and plans for further refurbishment and development are being implemented. The college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



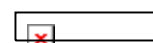
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college has successfully implemented a race equality policy and action plan. Students and staff are aware of the college's position on social inclusion. Provision is available to meet the needs of students with children or other dependants. There is an effective range of support services and resources for students. Students, staff, franchised providers and other partner organisations are also aware of the college's equal opportunities policy and students' charter. A high percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress to mainstream programmes at the college. Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds progress to higher qualifications or employment. Successful partnerships with schools have led to specialist projects enabling pupils aged 14 to 16 to participate in courses at the college. The college has undertaken a review of its basic skills provision, but some weaknesses remain in the setting of clear learning goals for students and in monitoring their progress.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. Effective advice and careers guidance are provided in partnership with the Connexions service, both on the main college campus and in community locations. Course induction programmes are well planned. Students speak highly of the counselling services available to them. Assessment of literacy and numeracy is undertaken for all full-time students and many part time students. Additional learning support provided during lessons is effective. Analyses undertaken by the college show that the learning support provided and arrangements for monitoring students' attendance at lessons are contributing to improvements in students' retention rates on courses. Comprehensive tutorial guidance is available for tutors. The quality of tutorial provision varies considerably across curriculum areas. In some areas, such as performing arts and media, both group and individual tutorials are undertaken effectively by tutors. However, in some other areas, tutorial procedures are poorly implemented by tutors. In many curriculum areas, students progress from one level of course to the next.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

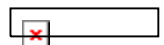
- friendly and safe environment

- helpful and supportive teachers
- learning resource and key skills centres
- bistro and fitness centre
- flexible modes of attendance
- good specialist facilities.

What they feel could be improved

- insufficient social areas
- provision of personal lockers
- too frequent changes in teachers and timetables
- poorly ventilated rooms in one teaching block
- insufficient quantity of tools in construction and engineering.

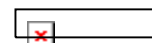
Other information



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

The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



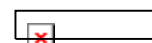
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	64	31	5
19+ and WBL*	64	27	9
Learning 16-18	61	28	11
19+ and WBL*	60	29	11

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. Overall retention and pass rates on long courses have improved over the four-year period 1999 to 2002 and have been close to, or above, the national averages for similar colleges identified by the LSC as enrolling a high proportion of students from disadvantaged areas. However, pass rates for key skills qualifications fell significantly in 2002, and the pass rates on some short courses have been low. Most students make satisfactory or better progress in their lessons and many achieve well. In particular, achievement and attainment in many practical lessons are good or better. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C provide more detail about students' achievements and the standards reached on particular courses.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Overall retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 courses have risen over the four-year period, and in 2002 were above the national average for the previous year. On level 3 courses, the overall retention rates declined between 1999 and 2001, and were consistently below the national averages. In 2002, the college's data show that overall retention rates on level 3 courses improved significantly to just above the national average for the previous year. Retention rates on all key skills

qualifications have fallen, although they have remained above the national averages during a period of significant growth in enrolments to these courses.

3. On level 1 courses, pass rates have varied considerably over the period 1999 to 2001 and in 2001 were 21 percentage points below the national average. The college's data for 2002 show considerable improvement, with overall pass rates now close to the national average for the previous year. Pass rates on level 2 courses have been close to the national averages between 1999 and 2002. Although overall pass rates on level 3 courses were above the national average between 1999 and 2000 they have declined between 2001 and 2002, and in 2002 were close to the national average for the previous year. In 2002, overall pass rates on key skills courses were poor. Many students failed to take key skills tests and to complete their coursework.

4. Students' attainment in the majority of lessons in most curriculum areas is good or better, but is less than satisfactory in too many engineering theory lessons and in some construction theory lessons. Many students make significant progress during their lessons and on performing arts, media and business courses many achieve high standards of work. In construction, students on bricklaying and painting and decorating courses achieve well in their practical work. Students on hospitality and catering courses present and serve food well in the training restaurant. On courses in health and social care, those students who commence their courses with low prior attainment achieve well, and many gain the qualification for which they are studying. The progress made by some students on level 1 key skills numeracy courses is poor.

Adult learners

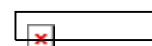
5. The majority of adult students enrol on short and long courses at levels 1 and 2. On level 1 courses, overall retention rates have been close to the national averages for most years in the four-year period 1999 to 2002. Overall retention rates at level 2 have risen considerably over the last four years, and were close to the national average in 2002. Between 1999 and 2002, overall retention rates at level 3 have risen in line with national averages and improved significantly in 2002. Overall, retention rates on short courses in 2002 were 94%.

6. Between 1999 and 2002, overall pass rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 have risen, and in 2002 were approximately four percentage points above the national averages for the previous year. On level 3 qualifications, pass rates have been consistently above the national averages by some six or more percentage points. Overall pass rates on short courses have fallen significantly from 92% in 1999, to 71% in 2002.

7. Adult students on electronic engineering courses apply fault diagnosis and circuit testing techniques competently. The standards of some students' coursework on ICT courses are high. In hospitality and catering, many students on the baking and sugar craft courses attain high standards of practical work. In 2002, many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the part-time cookery course achieved the award for which they were studying. In literacy and numeracy lessons, students make good progress in developing writing and number skills, and attain high standards in their coursework.

8. The completion rates of modern apprenticeship frameworks in the construction area are poor. Only 11 of 101 apprentices have successfully completed the framework in the time specified. Lack of key skills achievement prevents many work-based learners in construction from achieving the modern apprenticeship framework.

Quality of education and training



and learning was good or better in approximately 64% of these and less than satisfactory in approximately 6%. The best teaching is in lessons on courses at levels 2 and 3. Much teaching on performing arts and media courses is good or very good, and some is excellent. All teaching is satisfactory or better in lessons in health and social care, business courses and on programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A very high proportion of teaching in ICT, hospitality and catering and art and design is satisfactory or better. However, too much teaching in engineering is unsatisfactory or poor, and in a few lessons in construction and literacy and numeracy teaching is unsatisfactory. In construction and engineering, the weaker teaching takes place in some theory lessons. On literacy and numeracy programmes, inspectors identified weak teaching of numeracy.

10. In the most effective lessons, teachers planned their lessons well and took account of the different needs of students in their groups. Teachers used an effective range of teaching methods and learning activities to stimulate and capture the imagination of students. In many of these lessons, teachers made good use of demonstrations, ILT, work-related case studies, group discussions, question and answer techniques and high-quality learning materials to help students develop confidence and make good progress. In the poorer lessons, teaching was poorly planned and unimaginative, and failed to inspire students to make sufficient progress. In a few practical lessons in hospitality and catering, and engineering, teachers failed to pay sufficient attention to health and safety. In some key skills lessons, the topics being covered were not sufficiently related to vocational subjects and the teaching failed to motivate students.

11. Most full-time teachers hold recognised teaching qualifications and are suitably qualified in their subject areas, although in a few curriculum areas, some teachers lack recent industrial experience. Most part-time teachers are practising professionals within their subject areas and are able to enrich their teaching with up-to-date examples and applications. Some 50% of part-time teachers hold teaching qualifications. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by qualified and experienced learning support assistants. Managers are finding the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced teachers in construction, engineering and key skills to be particularly difficult. Staff development programmes are well planned and managed. Staff development activities have included events for all staff on teaching and equality of opportunity.

12. The college has significantly improved its accommodation on the main campus since the last inspection in February 1998. Recently constructed accommodation includes a well-resourced construction centre, an art and design centre, a three-dimensional design centre, additional sports and dance facilities and a gymnasium. Refectory facilities for students and staff have been improved. A bungalow on the main college campus has been converted to provide good facilities for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Crèche facilities are available at the main college site and at one of the one community 'learning villages'. Most areas of the college and its grounds are attractive and well maintained. Social areas for students are located within the refectory and cafeteria areas. There is a prayer room which students may use. The four 'learning villages' are located in the local community. The learning villages are well resourced with IT facilities and are open during the day and evening and at periods during weekends. The heating and ventilation in one teaching block on the main site are inadequate and some workrooms for teachers are overcrowded.

13. There are sufficient up-to date computers for students. On the main site, students are able to access IT facilities in the key skills centre, learning resource centre and the library. Many of the computers have access to the Internet. There is a comprehensive ILT strategy. Priorities include establishing a 'virtual learning environment' and course teams are further developing learning materials for the intranet. The library and learning resources centre are well used by students. Regular meetings are held between library staff and teachers on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses to ensure that the needs of minority ethnic students are met.

14. Students with restricted physical mobility are able to gain access to most areas of the main college site and the installation of automatic doors in many locations is near to completion. There is, however, no access for those with restricted mobility to one of the teaching blocks above ground level and to the television studio. One 'learning village' is not accessible by wheelchair users.

15. The arrangements for the assessment of students' work are satisfactory or better in most curriculum areas. Students are well informed about the assessment arrangements for their courses during induction. Students on full-time courses are issued with assessment plans. In most areas, methods of assessment are appropriate and meet the standards required by awarding bodies. Assessment is regular, thorough and fair on most courses. Lead internal verifiers in most curriculum areas ensure that internal verification standards are maintained and share good assessment practice during team meetings. Issues identified by external verifiers are addressed effectively in most areas. However, the internal verification of assessment on engineering courses offered at the main college site is insufficiently well planned. In construction, the feedback given to assessors by internal verifiers is insufficient, and assessment procedures for modern apprentices in the workplace are poor. In most areas, teachers mark students' work thoroughly and provide constructive comments to help them improve.

16. In September 2002, the college revised the procedures to monitor and record individual students' progress. The new procedures are implemented effectively in media and performing arts, health and social care, and art and design, but are less well implemented in engineering, construction, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and literacy and numeracy. In these areas, the learning goals set for individuals are often too imprecise and progress is poorly recorded. The actions noted by teachers to help students improve are often too cursory.

17. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses meeting the needs of the local community and employers. Much of the curriculum is vocational and attracts students from neighbouring boroughs. Most curriculum areas offer courses from level 1 to level 4. There is a good range of pre-entry, entry level and level 1 provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for speakers of other languages. There is a well-established partnership with the local motor vehicle manufacturer and a local college of FE in the development of the centre of engineering and manufacturing excellence, and productive links with employers in the construction industry. Up-to-date labour market information is used effectively for curriculum planning. There are good links with local community groups to meet the needs of the growing refugee population and IT courses are offered at the 'learning villages'.

18. The curriculum is educationally and socially inclusive, recognising the cultural and religious perspectives and needs of students. Cultural events and activities are held at the college regularly. Many enrichment activities are offered to students, although participation in these is low. The college is working successfully with partnership organisations to widen participation in FE by franchising courses to local training providers and by working with local schools to provide vocational courses for 14 to 16 year olds. There are a variety of marketing campaigns and initiatives including the production and dissemination of leaflets, posters, booklets, exhibitions and open days.

19. The college's policy on the key skills curriculum outlines a variety of methods for developing key skills and curriculum area managers are able to choose a method appropriate to their courses. Specialist key skills tutors are allocated to each curriculum area. However, the allocation of responsibility for assessment and monitoring of students' progress is unclear. Some key skills tutors are not always aware of which students should be in lessons; some curriculum area managers do not provide a comprehensive list of students to key skills tutors.

20. The support and guidance offered to students are good. Course leaflets and publicity materials are translated into languages that reflect the needs, interests and diversity of the local community. There are effective course induction arrangements. Induction programmes include residential team building exercises and dragon boat racing. Induction programmes and supporting activities are arranged by a multi-disciplinary team, which includes a youth worker who co-ordinates much of the activity. Those students starting late in the academic year or enrolled on work-based learning programmes are offered the same level of information and guidance about their courses and the college. The induction arrangements extend to work-based learners.

21. There is well-managed and co-ordinated learning support for students at the main site and at the community centres. All full-time students and some part-time students undertake a basic skills assessment test at the start of their courses. At the time of the inspection, some 260 students were receiving additional learning support as a result of these tests. Additional learning support is

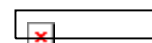
provided through formal special lessons, additional support provided during vocational lessons by learning support assistants, or by voluntary drop-in sessions offered at the key skills centre. Students who are reluctant to attend the formal lessons respond well to the less formal support provided during vocational lessons.

22. Students speak highly of the counselling services offered by the college. There is an active students' council and students' union and there are well-established surveys to seek the views of students about their courses and the facilities offered by the college. As a result of the surveys, improvements have been made to aspects of the accommodation and refectory facilities. Procedures for monitoring students' attendance and timeliness to lessons are effective in most areas. Attendance monitoring officers identify and follow up poor attendance thoroughly. Analyses undertaken by managers show that learning support, provision and attendance monitoring procedures have contributed to improvements in overall retention rates in many areas.

23. There is a comprehensive guidance manual for tutors which was revised in September 2002. The materials included in the manual provide guidance for tutors to help them identify the learning styles and prior learning and experience of individuals, procedures to review and record individuals' progress, and the core tutorial curriculum entitlement of students. However, implementation of the revised guidance by tutors varies considerably across curriculum areas. Most group tutorials are satisfactory, but a few are poorly planned and too much time is spent by tutors on activities unrelated to the tutorial programme or students' main course of study. During reviews of individual students' progress, some tutors fail to record students' prior achievement and do not include the outcomes of initial assessment. Learning goals and action planning are often insufficiently detailed.

24. Good advice and careers guidance are provided by the college in partnership with the Connexions service. Guidance is available at both the college main site and at community venues. Many students progress from one level to the next within the college and from level 3 courses to HE.

Leadership and management



25. Leadership and management are good. Over the period 1999 to 2002, the college has been successful in raising retention rates on many courses. Pass rates on many courses for adults have improved and are, overall, above the national averages. In 2002, overall pass rates on many courses for students aged 16 to 18 were close to the national averages. However, pass rates on short courses are low and poor on key skills courses. The college has achieved growth in enrolments of approximately 44% since incorporation and enrolment targets for the current year have been met.

26. There is a clear management structure and a well-communicated planning process. Governors and managers set a clear strategic direction for the college. The six strategic objectives emphasise the commitment of the college, expressed in its mission, to promote social inclusion and provide high-quality learning opportunities accessible to all. Staff at all levels have a shared understanding of these objectives which inform many management processes such as performance review and professional development. Communication within the college is effective. Information is disseminated by a variety of means including a weekly newsletter, the principal's briefing sheets and the college's intranet. Staff consider management to be open and accessible.

27. The college is meeting its strategic objective to work with business and community partners very effectively. There are strong local partnerships with the London borough of Barking and Dagenham, local schools, HE institutions and community-based organisations and training providers. Links with employers are good. The college works well with the local motor vehicle manufacturer and a local FE college in providing education and training for engineering modern apprentices. The development of a centre for engineering manufacturing excellence, due to be opened in September 2003, includes partnerships with the LSC, the London Development Agency, and the Thames

Gateway London Partnership.

28. The college's quality assurance framework is well established and self-assessment and course review processes are effective at identifying weaknesses and areas for improvement. In most areas, progress with action plans and against the targets set at different levels is monitored regularly. The college's franchise partners are subject to the same systems and procedures. The college's lesson observation scheme is rigorous. There was a close correlation between the teaching grades awarded by the college and those awarded by inspectors during the inspection. Students' satisfaction surveys also form part of the quality monitoring process and their outcomes are well communicated to students by means of posters around the college. Senior managers are planning to redress many of the weaknesses identified in engineering through the relocation of much of the engineering provision at the main site to the new Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence.

29. Appraisal of all staff is undertaken annually and is related to the strategic objectives. The staff development programme is comprehensive and staff are informed of opportunities by the staff development co-ordinators for the teaching faculties and business support areas. In addition, a comprehensive annual programme of internal staff development is offered and the effectiveness of these events is carefully evaluated. The college works closely with a teaching agency that supplies the college with a substantial number of part-time staff. Special induction procedures have recently been introduced for part-time teachers and there is the opportunity for them to undertake initial teacher training at the college.

30. Curriculum management in most areas is good. There is very effective curriculum management in performing arts and media, but despite comprehensive systems and procedures, curriculum management in engineering and construction work-based learning remains weak. In the better areas, there is evidence of high levels of staff commitment to continuous improvement. Rigorous self-assessment, regular meetings to review progress with action plans, a readiness to take up staff development opportunities, including industrial updating and attention to the views of partners and other related parties lead to actions which bring about such improvement. In areas with management weaknesses, staff are not committed to the processes sufficiently and do not make time to discuss the teaching and learning and other actions which will raise standards.

31. Equality and diversity are a recognised priority. Both the revised equal opportunities and race equality policies and action plans, which address the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendments) Act and Disability Discrimination Act, have been launched by means of training events. The policies are thorough and are being implemented effectively. Statistics regarding the retention and pass rates of minority ethnic groups are now available. However, the differences in performance of different groups have yet to be addressed. The college has developed imaginative ways of promoting equal opportunities and diversity. One such example was the 'Festival of World Culture week' during which a wide range of activities such as Japanese storytelling and African dancing took place. There are many attractive displays around the college that help convey key messages about diversity. There is a black staff focus group. Social inclusion is being addressed through a number of community projects including the learning villages and community not-for-profit franchise partners. Plans are currently being implemented to develop provision further in areas of deprivation. The performing arts section will be moving to a local theatre that is being redeveloped to provide a base for this curriculum area as well providing a cultural venue for the local community.

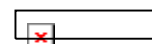
32. There is a successful accommodation strategy that has resulted in some major improvements to the teaching and learning and leisure accommodation at the college. The most notable of these is a new teaching block that provides teaching spaces for visual arts and construction as well as a fitness centre and café. Other improvements include a new car parking area and landscaping. Further enhancements to existing buildings and space are planned.

33. Governors are well informed on matters relating to the curriculum. Attendance at corporation meetings is satisfactory. Governors' training needs are identified and met through a range of flexible learning opportunities. At the annual residential event, in addition to receiving training and updates on key issues, they assess themselves against a set of recognised indicators and measure their progress. Clerking is efficient and agendas and papers are distributed well in advance of meetings.

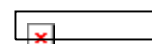
The links with curriculum areas have not been formalised but attendance at college events is good.

34. The college is in a sound financial position and in most years has met or exceeded its funding targets. There are new initiatives in place, such as the 'value for money' policy, to ensure that budget holders develop their cost consciousness and to help them refine their financial management skills. The quality of management information in the college is good, but there are insufficient links between the management information systems at the main college site and the community centres and some of the franchise providers. On the main site, management information is used regularly by curriculum managers to monitor progress against targets set for key performance indicators. Not all course leaders or teachers make use of these data. A new system of electronic registers has been introduced in five curriculum areas and is planned to be used in all areas by July 2003. Staff and resources are deployed effectively and there is careful monitoring of these. Overall, the college provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good pass rates on most construction craft NVQ courses
- high level of attainment in practical lessons
- good use of demonstrations in construction craft lessons
- good specialist resources.

Weaknesses

- declining pass rates in City and Guilds electrical installation part 1 course in 2002

- low retention rates on NVQ level 2 bricklaying and the national certificate course in building studies
- poor achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework
- unsatisfactory teaching in some theory lessons
- ineffective management of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

35. The college offers a broad range of construction craft courses. These include NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing, plastering and electrical installation. Technician and professional courses are also offered and include GNVQs, national certificates and diplomas, and the Chartered Institute of Building programmes.

Approximately 150 students aged 16 to 18 and 181 adult students are studying full time, and 151 students aged 16 to 18 and 760 adult students are enrolled on part-time courses. The college is also responsible for 39 foundation and modern apprentices. As part of their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) design and technology course, 72 pupils from five local schools attend the college every week for two and a half hours undertaking individual units of the construction craft certificate. In September 2002, the college was awarded funding to develop a CoVE in construction crafts and the built environment. The CoVE development plan includes extending the bricklaying workshops to improve the plastering facilities and recruitment.

Achievement and standards

36. There are good pass rates on NVQ programmes. For example, on the NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery course, the pass rates steadily improved from 74% to 90% between 1999 and 2002. On the NVQ level 3 bricklaying course, the pass rate was 100% in 2002, although there were only 16 students on this programme. In contrast, the pass rate declined considerably on the City and Guilds part 1 electrical installation from 53% in 2001, to 23% in 2002. Retention rates are generally satisfactory. However, the retention rates on the NVQ level 2 brick laying and national certificate in building studies courses have been consistently below the national average. The completion rates of modern apprenticeship frameworks are poor. Only 11 of 101 apprentices have successfully completed the framework in the time specified. Most students work well in lessons, particularly in the workshops, and practical work is generally of a good standard. In a bricklaying lesson, students were able to construct a semicircular arch to industrial standards. In a painting and decorating lesson, students produced high-quality marble panels. Students' written assignment work is of a satisfactory standard, although many students' portfolios are poorly organised. The few better portfolios contain assessment plans, graded assignments and clear evidence of the competences required.

37. Attendance at most lessons is satisfactory, although too many younger students' arrive late to lessons, disrupting the learning of others. In recent years, construction craft students have been successful in gaining regional and national awards.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds electrical installation part 1	1	No. of starts	38	35	42
		% retention	74	86	74
		% pass rate	43	53	23
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	105	113	100
		% retention	57	62	61
		% pass rate	42	90	86
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	60	69	56
		% retention	38	58	45
		% pass rate	47	75	85
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	72	71	78
		% retention	53	55	63
		% pass rate	74	89	90
NVQ carpentry and joinery	3	No. of starts	*	32	45
		% retention	*	75	93
		% pass rate	*	96	95
National certificate in building studies	3	No. of starts	44	39	57
		% retention	36	38	61
		% pass rate	80	100	72

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

*data unavailable

Quality of education and training

38. Teaching is good or better in most lessons, and students make good progress. However, in a small minority of theory lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teaching is carefully planned and supported by detailed schemes of work. In these lessons, teachers use a variety of activities to sustain students' interest and to extend their knowledge. Teachers provide learning materials that take account of the different abilities of students. Theoretical aspects are closely related to practical applications. Teachers check regularly to make sure that students understand the topic being covered. In some theory lessons, teachers make very good use of scaled construction models to consolidate students' learning. In one lesson, the teacher made good use of scaled models of traditional and modern roof construction to help students make progress. In another lesson, the teacher used bricks and floor joists to demonstrate effectively the ventilation for suspended floors. In the poorer lessons, the teaching was unimaginative and mundane. In these lessons, students made insufficient progress.

39. Teachers are adequately qualified in their subjects and most have recent industrial experience. There is lack of technician support in the electrical installation workshop. Practical facilities offered in the newly constructed accommodation are of a high standard. A few classrooms used for theory teaching are poorly ventilated. There are good handbooks and workbooks available for students to use.

40. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Workbooks are provided in which assignments and assessment criteria are outlined for every project. Students are aware of the assessment requirements and understand the industrial standards associated with their practical tasks. Assignments are of an appropriate standard and vocationally relevant. Students carry out practical

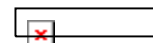
work competently and safely. Most teachers mark students work well and provide helpful written comments on how students may improve their work. A few teachers provide insufficient detail to help students make progress. Internal verification of assessment on some courses is inadequate. Insufficient feedback is provided to assessors, and often consists of no more than the signature of the internal verifier. Assessment of the work undertaken by modern apprentices in the workplace has been poor, but these weaknesses were being addressed at the time of the inspection.

41. Support and guidance for students are good. All students undertake diagnostic assessment at the beginning of their courses to identify additional learning support needs. Course induction programmes are well organised. Learning support workers provide effective support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities during lessons. The organisation of the key skills curriculum is satisfactory and tasks undertaken in key skills lessons are often related to construction examples.

Leadership and management

42. The management of the construction curriculum area is satisfactory. There are regular formal and informal meetings of staff. Staff performance and professional development are well managed. Appraisal is undertaken annually and staff development needs are identified. In recent years, teachers have been supported in studying for teaching and additional vocational qualifications. Quality assurance is adequate. Some course reviews are comprehensive, but others are insufficiently evaluative. Appropriate action is taken to redress the weaknesses identified. Inspectors agreed with many of the findings given in the self-assessment report. However, the management of work-based learning is ineffective. There is insufficient monitoring and assessment of evidence produced in the workplace by learners, although these issues are now being addressed. Links with employers are good, and curriculum managers meet with construction industry representatives frequently.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on the GNVQ advanced courses offered at the CoVE
- effective use of ILT in motor vehicle lessons
- good motor vehicle and electronics resources.

Weaknesses

- very poor pass rates on level 1 motor vehicle and engineering programmes

- unsatisfactory teaching and learning in too many lessons
- poor engineering workshop facilities on the main site
- inadequate attention to health and safety in engineering workshops on the main site
- many unsatisfactory aspects of curriculum management.

Scope of provision

43. The college offers a broad range of engineering courses that include mechanical and production engineering, electronic engineering, motor vehicle engineering and computer-aided drafting. Full-time courses are offered from foundation to advanced level in motor vehicle engineering and mechanical and production engineering. Courses offered in the evening include computer-aided drafting and electronics servicing. In partnership with a local FE college and an international motor vehicle manufacturing company, the college contributes to a CoVE in engineering and manufacturing located at the motor vehicle manufacturer's plant. Lessons taught by teachers from the college are provided at the centre for approximately 80 modern apprentices enrolled with the college on a block-release programme leading to the GNVQ advanced engineering qualification. Some 400 students are enrolled on engineering courses, of whom 181 students are aged 16 to 18. Most adults attend part-time day and evening courses.

Achievement and standards

44. Pass rates on some courses are very poor. In 2001, the pass rate on the level 1 motor vehicle repair and maintenance course was 20 percentage points below the national average, and, in 2000 and 2002, no students achieved the qualification. The pass rate on the motor vehicle progression award was only 8% in 2002. On the GNVQ foundation course, the pass rate was 27 percentage points below the national average in 2001, and no students achieved the qualification in 2002. The motor vehicle provision at level 1 has recently been redesigned to take account of the low literacy attainment of many students. Course retention rates vary considerably, and have been consistently low on the motor vehicle progression award course. However, at the CoVE in mechanical and production engineering, the retention and pass rates on the GNVQ advanced engineering course have been consistently high and well above the national average.

45. In practical lessons, most students produce work of a good standard, but often lack confidence and need much support from teachers. On the electronics servicing course, adult students competently apply fault diagnosis and circuit testing techniques. They are able to demonstrate a good understanding of the functions of individual electronic components and the associated circuit theory and are prepared well for their practical tests. Many students on the level 1 motor vehicle courses commence their courses with little prior attainment, but make good progress in practical lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
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City and Guilds motor vehicle repair and maintenance	1	No. of starts	*	34	37
		% retention	*	56	72
		% pass rate	*	39	0
City and Guilds electronics servicing	1	No. of starts	30	38	25
		% retention	77	72	75
		% pass rate	78	50	72
City and Guilds motor vehicle progression award	1	No. of starts	34	19	24
		% retention	56	44	59
		% pass rate	84	67	8
GNVQ foundation engineering	1	No. of starts	**	15	21
		% retention	**	80	42
		% pass rate	**	18	0
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	30	40	*
		% retention	83	83	*
		% pass rate	84	97	*
AVCE engineering	3	No. of starts	**	44	14
		% retention	**	79	100
		% pass rate	**	52	57
GNVQ advanced engineering	3	No. of starts	45	23	18
		% retention	96	87	94
		% pass rate	98	100	94

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

* course not running

** low number of starts

Quality of education and training

46. Too much teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Schemes of work and lesson plans are produced for each course, but these are often no more than a list of topics to be covered in each lesson. The teaching in many theory lessons is insufficiently imaginative to inspire and meet the needs of all students. Teaching and learning methods to meet the needs of students broad range of abilities and poorly developed literacy and numeracy skills of some students are rarely evident in lessons. Teachers often provide individual support to students during lessons, but this often leaves others waiting for prolonged periods. Often, there is not enough variety of activities to maintain the interest of students. In the best lessons, teachers deal with topics in a lively and enthusiastic manner. In some motor vehicle theory lessons, teachers use ILT and visual aids effectively to enliven lessons and help students make progress. In these lessons, students engage in lively discussion about the topic being covered.

47. Teachers are suitably qualified in their subjects, although some lack recent industrial experience. Accommodation is satisfactory. There is good specialist equipment in motor vehicle and electronic engineering. Computer programs are available to help students design and simulate electronic circuits. The local motor vehicle manufacturer has donated modern vehicles to the college. However, the facilities in the engineering workshop on the main site are outdated. There is an adequate stock of engineering books and journals in the study centre. At the time of the inspection, a major new facility for engineering was under construction on the site of the local motor vehicle manufacturer.

The facility (the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence) is planned to provide new classrooms and new engineering and motor vehicle workshops. At the main college site, some students have a poor awareness of health and safety in the engineering workshop and do not always wear appropriate personal protective clothing. Some of the machine tools do not have trip-out switches to prevent machine operation when unguarded and are used without protective guards in place.

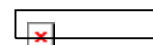
48. Assessment of students' work and the monitoring of students' progress vary considerably between the main site and the CoVE. The internal verification of assessment on courses offered at the main college site is insufficiently well planned. The recent very poor pass rates on some courses offered at the main site were due to students' coursework not complying with the awarding body's specifications. At the main college site, some teachers do not monitor and record students' progress sufficiently. Some students have little or no idea of their progress and are not informed of how they could improve. Teachers provide insufficient written comments on students' work to help them make progress. In contrast, assessment procedures and monitoring of students' progress are undertaken effectively at the CoVE.

49. Prior to enrolment, all full-time students are interviewed and undertake a basic skills test. There is insufficient communication between support teachers and engineering tutors and the test results are not always conveyed to the engineering tutors. Appropriate subsequent support is not always provided. In a few lessons, learning support teachers work well with engineering teachers to provide effective basic skills support. However, students' attendance at the literacy and numeracy workshop lessons is poor. Individual and group tutorial sessions are provided for full-time students, but these are not well documented and are often ineffective. During individual progress reviews, individual learning plans are not systematically reviewed or updated by tutors.

Leadership and management

50. Many aspects of the management of the engineering curriculum at the main site are unsatisfactory. Teachers pay insufficient attention to quality assurance. Action planning is poor. There are infrequent course team meetings and insufficient opportunity for engineering teachers to share good practice. Some management information is recorded inaccurately. The views of students are collected and analysed, but result in little action to address the key issues identified. Outcomes of staff appraisal have led to further staff training in teaching and learning, but have had little effect in providing industrial updating opportunities for some teachers. The college works closely with the local motor vehicle manufacturer and another local FE college at the CoVE. The management of the provision at the off-site centre is effective. There are effective links with local schools. A very popular 'Saturday Club' for Year 10 and Year 11 school pupils offers practical sessions in motor vehicle, mechanical and electronic engineering.

Business and administration



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- high standard of students' work

- much good teaching
- strong employment links
- well-managed curriculum area.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some accounting courses
- low retention rates on the GCE AS courses.

Scope of provision

51. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in business, administration, management, accounting and office technology. Courses include GCE AS/A-level courses, AVCE, GNVQ foundation and intermediate business courses, level 2 and level 3 administration courses, the certificate and diploma in legal administration, a variety of management courses, some of which are offered at employers' premises, accounting courses at NVQ levels 2 to 4, and short vocational courses. A new course in E-business, leading to a national certificate, has been introduced recently. Most full-time courses include relevant work experience. Over 600 students are enrolled on courses. Of these, 264 are studying full time and 362 are studying part time, during the day or evening. Over 200 students are aged 16 to 19, and most of these study full time.

Achievement and standards

52. Pass rates on many courses are high and above the national averages. For example, the pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate in business has been significantly above the national average for the past three years. In 2002, the pass rate on the AVCE business course was significantly higher than the national average. The pass rate on the stage two text processing course has been well above the national average over the last two years. Pass rates on the legal secretaries' courses are good. The pass rates on some other courses have improved. On the GNVQ foundation course, pass rates have improved from 63% in 2001 to 92% in 2002, well above the national average. Pass rates on some single subject and short administration courses are good. However, the pass rates on some evening accounting courses are low. Retention rates on most courses are satisfactory or better, but are less than satisfactory on some courses offered in the evening, and on some GCE AS courses. Many younger students who successfully complete their courses progress to higher-level courses. In 2002, 85% of students on the AVCE business course progressed to HE. Many students on the legal secretaries course progress to employment. However, progression rates from the GCE AS to the GCE A2 course are poor.

53. Many students achieve well on their courses and produce a high standard of work. Employers have commented positively about the high standards achieved by students on the legal secretaries courses. Students on the new E-business course demonstrate a high level of skill, knowledge and confidence in using complex computer applications in course assignment work. On the level 2

administration course, students show a mature understanding of consumer protection and are able to distinguish between civil and common law during discussions in lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	11	18	17
		% retention	36	89	76
		% pass rate	100	63	92
Legal secretaries certificate	2	No. of starts	69	33	44
		% retention	90	82	86
		% pass rate	58	89	87
NVQ accounting technician	2	No. of starts	53	66	51
		% retention	64	74	84
		% pass rate	67	76	58
Text processing stage 2	2	No. of starts	*	66	71
		% retention	*	88	86
		% pass rate	*	93	96
NVQ accounting technician	3	No. of starts	50	61	53
		% retention	78	77	90
		% pass rate	31	43	47
AVCE business	3	No. of starts	*	32	14
		% retention	*	27	93
		% pass rate	*	100	92
GCE AS business studies	3	No. of starts	*	22	19
		% retention	*	68	53
		% pass rate	*	85	80

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

54. Most lessons are well planned. Teachers use a rich and effective variety of teaching methods supported by good specialist resources to interest and motivate students during lessons. For example, in an AVCE business lesson, students made good progress in learning about the business principles and practices of branding by discussing a case study relating to a well-known sports shoe manufacturer. The lesson included video material featuring sports personalities and interviews with young people of a similar age and culture which maintained students' interest. The teacher used the video carefully, pausing regularly to draw students' attention to questions on the handout and adding to the video commentary with good explanations and further examples. Teachers provide learning activities which involve both theory and practice. In the best lessons, teachers stimulate students' interest by drawing on students' experiences, contemporary business issues and exploration of local topics. Students are encouraged to explore ideas and present their findings, and in doing so are able to develop their presentation and communications skills further. Most lessons involve constructive discussion and participation. Students contribute confidently and listen to each other's ideas.

55. Teachers are well qualified and experienced, and demonstrate good command of the subjects they teach and an appropriate understanding of students' needs. Most lessons are held in well-resourced classrooms which offer good access to IT equipment.

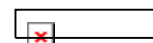
56. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Teachers are knowledgeable about the progress and attainment of most students. Advice and feedback to students about their progress are provided regularly and additional personal tutorials are offered to less able students by some tutors. Teachers make good use of homework and in-class assignments to ensure that students continue to make good progress. Marking of students' work is thorough and written feedback is comprehensive.

57. Students speak highly of the support provided by their teachers. At the start of their courses, full-time students undertake screening tests to identify additional learning support needs. Teachers take account of the different needs of students in their lesson planning, and learning support workers provide appropriate and effective support in some lessons on level 1 full-time courses. Progress reviews undertaken during personal tutorials are generally effective. Students have good access to staff for advice and support on learning and personal issues.

Leadership and management

58. The curriculum area is well managed. Managers and course co-ordinators are clear about their roles and responsibilities. There is an effective process for development planning which sets out clear priorities within the context of the college's strategic objectives. Targets are set and progress is reviewed effectively. Pass and retention rate issues are identified and appropriate actions are taken. Observation of teaching is carried out regularly and includes teachers' observation of each other, which helps to share good practice. Staff development is well planned and effective. Self-assessment and action planning are thorough. There are strong links between the college and employers. Most full-time students benefit from work experience that is well planned and organised. Teachers visit students at employers' premises and use the opportunity to gain insight to current business practice. Employers contribute to courses and students also visit relevant business organisations.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- above national average pass rates on GNVQ foundation and AVCE courses
- good teaching with very effective individual practical instruction
- good ICT resources
- wide range of courses

- good progression rates to higher-level courses.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rate on City and Guilds courses for adults
- weak links with IT employers.

Scope of provision

59. The college offers a broad range of ICT courses. Full-time courses include the GNVQ foundation and GNVQ intermediate, the AVCE and the national diploma course. Courses for part-time students include the national certificate, and a City and Guilds course specialising in computer systems support. Other part-time IT courses are offered at a number of locations in the community: at the four 'learning villages' and with six franchised partners. These courses include computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), the European computer driving licence (ECDL), desk-top publishing and web design courses. Enrolments to courses by adult students have increased significantly over the last few years. Approximately 230 students aged 16 to 18 and 2,650 adult students are enrolled on courses offered at the college's main site, the 'learning villages' and with franchised partners. Most students aged 16 to 18 study full time, and the majority of adults attend part time.

Achievement and standards

60. Pass rates are satisfactory on most full-time courses and have risen over the last three years; they were above the national averages in 2002. The pass rate on the GNVQ foundation IT and the GNVQ advanced/AVCE IT courses have been above the national averages for the last two years. Retention rates on the CLAIT and Integrated business technology (IBT) courses have been consistently above the national averages for the past four years. Other courses have retention rates that fluctuate between poor and satisfactory. The retention rates of adult students on City and Guilds courses are poor. Some 60% of full-time students progress from one level of course to the next. In 2001/02, 75% of full-time students on level 3 courses progressed to HE. The standard of work achieved by most students is good. Students show a good understanding of basic concepts and can use the college's computer system with confidence. Most students are well motivated and supportive of each other. Many portfolios of IT work are at least satisfactory and some are of a high standard. Some students are confident in demonstrating the results of their computer research to others. For example, in one lesson, students were analysing short presentations given by members of the class to see how they could be improved. As the lesson progressed, the standard of each presentation improved.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
OCR CLAIT (short course)	1	No. of starts	1,837	1,886	1,077
		% retention	94	97	96
		% pass rate	52	70	57

City and Guilds IT certificate programme (short course)	1	No. of starts	381	189	107
		% retention	28	13	63
		% pass rate	69	70	100
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	17	21	15
		% retention	41	68	87
		% pass rate	57	77	75
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	29	40	38
		% retention	66	89	97
		% pass rate	42	74	69
National certificate IT applications	3	No. of starts	31	27	25
		% retention	55	56	52
		% pass rate	88	80	100
National diploma computer studies	3	No. of starts	23	24	27
		% retention	40	38	81
		% pass rate	88	100	94
AVCE (GNVQ advanced 2000, 2001)	3	No. of starts	41	27	12
		% retention	63	56	100
		% pass rate	88	71	92

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

Quality of education and training

61. Much teaching is good or better. Many lessons are carefully planned. Explanations given by teachers are consistently clear and concise. Teachers skilfully use question and answer techniques to extend learning and to check students' understanding. Effective use is made of data projectors and smart boards to enliven teaching and learning. Many students find lessons stimulating. Assignments set in lessons motivate students and they participate well in discussions, work well independently and are encouraged by teachers to evaluate their own work. There is a high standard of individual instruction to help all students make good progress. Teachers handle programming errors in students' work with care and sensitivity. They question each student's findings and praise good work. In a few lessons, learning is often hindered by the lack of an ICT learning assistant. For example, in a level 1 lesson with 13 students, 8 were studying different units of the course. The students were at several levels of attainment and many were kept waiting for assistance whilst the teacher helped other individuals.

62. Teachers are adequately qualified and are knowledgeable about their subjects, but few have recent relevant industrial and commercial experience. The IT facilities for students are good and plentiful. In contrast, teachers often have to share machines to receive and send e-mails, prepare lessons, mark students' work and update the intranet. There is a well-planned replacement cycle for computers. Computers used for demonstration and practice in the computer servicing laboratories are up to date. In the multimedia room, facilities for storage of large data files have been installed and modern scanners and colour printers are available. IT teaching resources are good, with many data projectors, smart boards and a students' intranet where course notes and exercises can be accessed. Delays in repairing or replacing faulty equipment are often experienced when the services of 'college-wide' technicians are required. There is a well-resourced library and the learning resource centre is well used by students.

63. Assessment procedures are good and students experience a variety of assessment methods. Teachers provide clear judgements and guidance on students' assignments to help them improve.

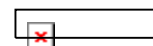
Weaknesses identified by external verifiers are rectified swiftly. The monitoring and recording of students' progress is satisfactory. Internal verification of assessment is rigorous on most courses.

64. Support arrangements are adequate. Students are effectively assessed and offered guidance during course admission to determine the course most suitable for them. Induction is satisfactory and group assignments help to develop teamwork skills. Tutorials are satisfactory and cover a wide range of social issues in addition to IT. Pastoral care is sound and there is satisfactory practical support and guidance on coursework. Good advice and guidance is given to students on progression routes to HE and careers in the IT industry. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good learning support during their lessons.

Leadership and management

65. The management of the provision is good. Quality assurance procedures are generally implemented effectively across the main site, learning villages and franchised providers. Meetings are held regularly between curriculum managers and staff. Inspectors agreed with many of the findings in the self-assessment report, though some of the actions designed to improve students' attendance and lateness at lessons are slow in having an impact. Well-structured annual staff appraisals encourage teachers to attend courses to maintain their technical expertise. Good practice is shared effectively amongst teachers at the college's main site. Links with the IT industry are insufficiently developed. Specialists from the industry are not routinely invited to the college to contribute to teaching and curriculum development. There is no provision for work placement for full-time students.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on NVQ level 3 food preparation and cooking course
- high standards of students' practical skills
- much good teaching in practical lessons
- very good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on the NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking course

- insufficient attention to health, safety and food hygiene in a minority of lessons
- poor tutorial practices
- inappropriate assessment on NVQ food preparation and cooking courses.

Scope of provision

66. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time provision in bakery, cake decorating, sugar craft and hospitality and catering. NVQ courses are available in food and drink service at level 1, food preparation and cooking at levels 1, 2 and 3. Courses in food safety, national licensees certificate, cake decorating, sugar craft, and basic and advanced pastry courses are also offered. Some 43 students aged 16 to 18 and 19 adult students are enrolled on full-time courses. There are 15 students aged 16 to 18 and approximately 490 adult students enrolled on part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

67. The pass rates on the one-year NVQ level 3 food preparation and cooking course have been consistently outstanding at 100% for the last three years. The pass rates on the NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking levels course have risen over the last three years to well above the national averages, but retention rates in 2000 and 2002 were below the national averages. The retention and pass rates of students aged 16 to 18 are similar to those of adult students. In addition to their main qualifications, the majority of students are able to study for additional awards; students on catering and bakery courses are able to study for a basic level certificate in food safety. After completing their courses, most students gain relevant employment in the industry or progress to higher-level qualifications within the curriculum area.

68. Students demonstrate a high standard of technical skills in the kitchens. For example, many students show excellent knife skills and use them well when cutting vegetables. They work well together as a team and display good social skills when dealing with customers in the restaurant by displaying good manners, patience and good humour. Students attain high standards in baking, sugar craft, patisserie, food preparation and cooking. The food produced by them is well presented and efficiently served. The panel cakes produced by students studying sugar craft are of a very high standard. Students' portfolios are well maintained, include suitable evidence and are completed accurately.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Creative skills certificate: sugar craft	1	No. of starts	33	68	46
		% retention	76	79	80
		% pass rate	84	83	86
NVQ craft baking (one year)	2	No. of starts	*	13	45
		% retention	*	85	90
		% pass rate	*	100	91

NVQ food preparation and cooking (two year)	2	No. of starts	39	47	39
		% retention	51	83	67
		% pass rate	80	87	100
NVQ food preparation and cooking (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	12	15
		% retention	*	91	86
		% pass rate	*	100	100
National licensees certificate (short course)	3	No. of starts	189	405	521
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	80	72	100

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

* low number of starters

Quality of education and training

69. Much teaching is satisfactory or better. In most practical lessons, teachers structure and plan these lessons well. Students have well-defined roles in the bakery, the production kitchens and in the restaurant. The restaurant is open to the college's staff and students. Teachers make use of high-quality learning materials for theory and practical subjects. Materials are well prepared and presented. Effective use is made of computers to enhance learning. Teachers link theory to practical examples from industry and the work undertaken in the college. During practical lessons, the teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure that students are supported effectively and the work is co-ordinated. In most practical lessons, teachers use questions effectively to check students' understanding and progress.

70. In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to fully engage all students and do not use learning materials to best effect. During some lessons in the kitchens, students do not work under appropriate commercial pressure and arrangements in the production kitchen fail to mirror industrial practice. In these lessons, too many students prepare an insufficient variety of meals. Key skills are taught in a vocational context, but opportunities to enable students to further develop these skills in practical lessons are few. In a minority of cookery lessons, teachers failed to pay sufficient attention to health, safety and food hygiene; some students wore jewellery or inappropriate footwear.

71. All teachers are well qualified in their subjects. Recently, some teachers have been supported by the college to update their industrial experience. The resources available to students include two training kitchens, two bakery kitchens, a production kitchen and a restaurant. The kitchens have a good variety of specialist equipment. Most equipment is in good working order, although some items are dated. The general teaching room is well resourced and includes computers and a smartboard. There is a comprehensive range of books held in the library. Students have access to computers and the Internet to aid research. An effective variety of visits is organised for students and these include visits to include markets and exhibitions. Students on the NVQ level 2 course attend a two-week work placement. A variety of enrichment opportunities are available to full-time students, including opportunities to study for additional qualifications, such as cake decorating.

72. Some practical assessment on NVQ courses is unrealistic as students are assessed in inappropriate situations. All assessments are by observation and questioning. Alternative methods of assessment such as using witness statements are not used. The internal verification of NVQ assessment practice is satisfactory. Sampling plans for internal verification sampling plans are available, but these do not include all aspects of assessment. Internal verifiers sample units of each student's portfolio. Assessor observations also take place and are recorded.

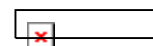
73. Induction and tutorial programmes include introductions to health and safety, food safety, equality of opportunity, careers and other employment topics. Students' attainment in basic skills is

assessed during induction, though the results of assessment are not always recorded in the individual students' records. Accreditation of prior learning and experience in the subject for which the student has enrolled is rarely given. Tutorial procedures are not always fully implemented. For example, students' progress is discussed during personal tutorials, but the weaknesses identified are not always acted upon. Those at risk of not completing their courses successfully are set targets for improvement and are provided with additional support. The introduction of the electronic registration system enables students' attendance and punctuality to be closely monitored and absence and lateness are followed up quickly.

Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Targets for retention and pass rates are set for each course, although some targets are insufficiently challenging. Staff meetings are held regularly and appropriate action is taken to remedy issues which arise. All staff work together well as a team. Staff appraisals are effective and ensure that continuous professional development takes place. Lesson observations take place regularly and are recorded in staff appraisals. All staff are involved in self-assessment, but it is insufficiently rigorous and fails to identify some weaknesses in provision. The college's quality assurance procedures are not fully implemented in some areas. Managers do not always ensure that the kitchens and restaurant provide a realistic working environment for students.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on counselling and certificate in childcare and education courses
- good progression rates to higher level courses and employment
- effective links between theory and practical work
- good teaching and learning on courses for adults
- high levels of personal support on all courses.

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ICT in lessons to improve learning

- insufficient extension work in lessons for students aged 16 to 18
- inappropriate accommodation in some areas.

Scope of provision

75. There is a range of courses for full-time students in childcare and health and social care. Part-time courses in counselling, early years care and education, childminding, registered managers, first-aid, playwork, access to health and nursing, care and learning disabilities are offered. Approximately 200 students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on full-time courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. Courses include the AVCE and Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate and diploma. There are also a small number of adults enrolled on these courses. There are 320 adult students enrolled on courses in the introduction, certificate and diploma in counselling, CACHE diploma, childminding, playwork, registered managers and access to health and nursing courses. NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4 are available as flexible programmes for people employed in the care sector. In addition, the college franchises provision to a private provider where 192 students are enrolled on NVQ courses in care and early years care and education. There is a good range of work placements for students on childcare and health and social care courses.

Achievement and standards

76. Pass rates on full-time and part-time courses are high and the standard of work produced in lessons by adult students is good. In 2002, the pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate health and social care courses were high. On the level 3 counselling course, pass rates have been consistently outstanding for the last three years. However, pass rates on the NVQ level 3 course in care were below the national average in 2002. All students on the same course offered by the major franchised provider gained the award. The retention rates on many courses have improved over the last three years. In 2002, the retention rates on most courses were close to or above the national averages. Many students progress to higher-level courses and employment. Most students can relate theory to practice effectively, using examples drawn from experiences during work placement or employment. Those students who commence their courses with low prior attainment achieve well, and many gain the qualification for which they are studying.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	15	20	17
		% retention	73	70	88
		% pass rate	64	46	93
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	21	18	27
		% retention	71	61	67
		% pass rate	80	45	83
CACHE	2	No. of starts	58	48	69
		% retention	62	73	75
		% pass rate	75	91	88

Certificate in counselling	2	No. of starts	22	19	14
		% retention	64	84	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	52	64	30
		% retention	62	73	100
		% pass rate	90	85	93
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	*	50	65
		% retention	*	96	86
		% pass rate	*	85	60

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

77. Teaching is satisfactory or better and is good in lessons for adults. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives and build on previous learning that is confirmed at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers encourage students to apply the theory being covered to work experiences. Adult students are highly motivated and mutually supportive. In lessons for adult students, teachers use a suitable range of teaching methods, including student presentations, discussions and practical activities. However, the teaching and learning methods in lessons for students aged 16 to 18 are insufficiently varied to meet the needs of the more able students. Tasks set during these lessons are not demanding enough for all students. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT to enliven teaching and learning. Students with additional learning needs are well supported during lessons. On health and social care and childcare courses, work placement programmes are well planned and enable students to make good progress. For example, one student on work placement at a school attends curriculum-planning meetings with the teachers.

78. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced in their subjects. Some recently appointed teachers bring with them up-to-date experience of the industry. A few other teachers have recently spent one week in schools and care homes to update their vocational expertise. Counselling teachers are all practitioners. Some accommodation is inappropriate. Some rooms are too small for the number of students in the group, and counselling courses take place in large classrooms where several groups have to work in the same room whilst discussing personal issues. While there is good access to computers in the learning centre, there are inadequate computer facilities available in classrooms.

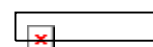
79. Arrangements for assessment are effective. There is a thorough internal verification system to ensure standards of assessment are appropriate. There are effective procedures for monitoring students' progress. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly and provide supportive summaries on how they may improve their performance. Spelling and punctuation errors are carefully corrected. Assignments set for key skills are well linked to vocational subjects.

80. Students receive high levels of personal support from teachers. Tutorial provision for full-time and part-time students is good. Tutorial records are well maintained by tutors, and students may be referred to the college's learning support centre or to external agencies, as appropriate. Careers advice and guidance is effective, and during the 'careers week' employers and university admissions tutors visit the college to advise students of progression opportunities. All students undertake initial assessment at the start of their courses, but not all those identified as in need of support attend the voluntary 'drop-in' learning sessions.

Leadership and management

81. The curriculum area is well managed. Comprehensive quality assurance procedures are well implemented and are contributing to improvements in standards. Teams meet regularly and lines of communications are clear. The self-assessment process is thorough. Some of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report had been partially addressed by the time of the inspection. Lesson observations are undertaken regularly by managers. Management of the franchised provision is effective. Equality of opportunity is promoted well during lessons and work placements. The curriculum area has a range of effective external links. These include the Early Years Development Partnership and with local hospitals and universities. The major franchised provider offers courses to students who are reluctant or unable to study at the main college site. The college has responded well to local demand and has introduced childminding courses and a certificate in learning disabilities in conjunction with the Northeast London Health Authority.

Performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on most courses
- high standard of practical work in performing arts and photography
- much good and some excellent teaching
- extensive enrichment opportunities
- very effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor ventilation in some classrooms.

Scope of provision

82. The college offers a broad range of courses in performing arts and media. Performing arts courses include the first diploma, the national diploma which provides options in drama or dance, GCE A-level drama and theatre studies, and a part-time course in street dance. Media studies courses include the GNVQ intermediate in media, the national diploma in photography, national

diplomas in multimedia and media with pathways in audio, moving image and information, and the GCE AS/A-level film studies courses. Approximately 200 students aged 16 to 18 and 30 adult students are enrolled on full-time courses. There are 116 students, predominantly adults, enrolled on part-time evening courses, with the City and Guilds photography course being the most popular.

Achievement and standards

83. Pass rates are outstanding on many courses and retention rates are good across almost all courses. The pass rates on the national diploma courses in performing arts and media have been consistently well above the national average for the last three years. In 2002, the pass rates on the GCE AS and A2 film studies and GCE AS drama and theatre studies courses were outstanding at 100%. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate media and the first diploma in performing arts courses are outstanding. The retention rates on many courses have been significantly above national averages. In 2002, the retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate media and the national diploma in photography courses were 100%. Students have developed an impressive repertoire of techniques on the national diploma in photography course and are producing original and experimental work. On courses at levels 2 and 3 in dance, music and drama, students' enthusiasm and commitment help them to work with confidence and to respond successfully to challenging tasks set by their teachers. On the GNVQ intermediate media course, teachers' high expectations encourage students to produce work of a high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	*	*	17
		% retention	*	*	76
		% pass rate	*	*	100
GNVQ intermediate media, communication and production	2	No. of starts	*	18	15
		% retention	*	72	100
		% pass rate	*	92	80
GCE AS film studies	3	No. of starts	*	15	14
		% retention	*	100	64
		% pass rate	*	87	100
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	45	49	44
		% retention	69	76	84
		% pass rate	100	97	97
National diploma in media	3	No. of starts	20	21	21
		% retention	63	76	71
		% pass rate	100	100	93
National diploma in design (multimedia)	3	No. of starts	*	*	17
		% retention	*	*	82
		% pass rate	*	*	71

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

84. Much teaching is very good or excellent and the remainder is good. Teachers use detailed schemes of work, which clearly focus on learning activities. Lesson plans routinely consider how learning will be checked and how learning methods will take account of the skills and preferred learning styles of individual students. Lessons are well organised and include learning activities which maintain students' interest and motivation. Many examples of excellent work in groups and pairs were observed during the inspection. During the practical lessons on performing arts courses, teachers maintained a demanding pace of work to which the students responded positively. Students enjoy their lessons and teachers always react positively to their contributions. In dance and music lessons, students tackled quite complex sequences and songs and made excellent progress in a short period of time. Students in lessons on photography were clearly inspired by the range of techniques their teachers were able to suggest to them.

85. Many staff have up-to-date professional experience which students benefit from and value, but, there remain some staff without teaching qualifications who are not currently working towards them. Students on multimedia courses are able to use an unusually rich mix of professional standard equipment. Specialist photography equipment and a spacious television studio enhance learning opportunities. All students have easy access to computers. There are two new dance studios with sprung floors and high ceilings. Accommodation is generally spacious, attractive and flexible, but lack of adequate ventilation renders some classrooms oppressively hot and not conducive for learning.

86. External verifiers' reports are consistently positive about all assessment processes. Students are clear about the assessment briefs they have been given and the criteria by which their work will be graded. Students' progress is regularly reviewed by personal tutors and mutually agreed targets are set. Teachers provide detailed and constructive written comments on students' written work, although strategies for improvement could be expressed more concisely. In 2002, some students struggled to meet assessment deadlines and teachers now plan assessment deadlines carefully at the start of the year to avoid creating pressure points.

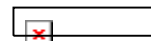
87. Students are well supported during their courses. All full-time students are allocated a one-hour tutorial session each week. Teachers and learning resource staff make themselves available to students outside of timetabled lessons to provide additional support. Attendance and punctuality of students on performing arts courses are excellent. An effective strategy is employed which requires students to sign a contract that sets out the requirements expected of them when they are participating in a show.

88. Students are able to progress within performing arts and media from level 2 through to level 4 courses. Over 60% of level 3 students progress to related HE or to employment. There are many visits arranged for students to theatres, galleries and exhibitions. In 2002, achievement of key skills was poor, but key skills lessons are now integrated within the vocational courses and students are making better progress. Printing courses are offered to Year 10 and 11 pupils from local schools as part of the increased flexibility project.

Leadership and management

89. The curriculum area is well managed. Communication is good at all levels. There are regular, documented section and course team meetings. Progress with action plans is carefully scrutinised during these meetings. Students' representatives attend course meetings and raise concerns that are addressed constructively. Thorough course reviews contribute to the self-assessment process, and the self-assessment report is robust, well evidenced and self-critical. Detailed schemes of work and clear, relevant handbooks are produced for all courses. New teachers participate in well-organised induction programmes. Curriculum managers teach across their areas, helping them to be aware of the concerns of teachers and students.

Art and design



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

Strengths

- good teaching of practical skills
- good specialist resources
- good progression from levels 1 to 4
- very effective guidance and support.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on some courses
- low attainment in key skills
- inappropriate accommodation for group discussion work in some lessons.

Scope of provision

90. The college offers a range of art and design courses which include the GNVQ foundation and intermediate art and design courses, the national diplomas in graphic design, fine art and three-dimensional design, the AVCE in art and design and GCE AS/A-level art studies courses. Also, higher-level courses are offered and provide opportunities for students to progress from level 1 to level 4 within the college. There is little part-time provision for adults. Some 150 students aged 16 to 18 and 14 adults are enrolled on full-time courses and approximately 30 adult students are enrolled on evening and short courses.

Achievement and standards

91. Retention and pass rates are poor on many courses. The retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course have been consistently well below the national averages. In 2002, the pass rate on GCE A2 art studies qualification was low 67%. Action has been taken to improve retention rates overall, and data supplied by the college for the year of the inspection show that retention rates are improving significantly. Attendance at lessons is satisfactory, and most students arrive to lessons punctually. Many students who successfully complete their courses progress from level 2 to level 3

courses at the college, and the majority of level 3 students who complete their courses successfully progress to HE courses. Students attain high standards in using a range of media and techniques. Much emphasis is placed on good layout and presentation. Students on design courses are taught to use thumbnail sketches to develop ideas and some students produce exciting examples of typographic design using digital animation techniques. On the three-dimensional design course, students demonstrate a high standard of craft skill, particularly in model making and use of advanced digital modelling computer software. All full-time students are entered for key skills qualifications, but the learning materials for these programmes are insufficiently linked to the main areas of study. As a consequence, many students fail to see the relevance of the qualifications and attainment is often low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	30	27	33
		% retention	67	63	64
		% pass rate	65	35	52
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	74	78	66
		% retention	72	63	88
		% pass rate	81	94	80
GCE A-level/A2 art studies (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	93	78	100
		% retention	44	43	75
		% pass rate	76	94	67
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	17	23	*
		% retention	53	70	*
		% pass rate	100	94	*
Diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	12	13	10
		% retention	58	85	70
		% pass rate	86	82	71
AVCE in art and design	3	No. of starts	*	17	17
		% retention	*	82	81
		% pass rate	*	71	62

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

92. Teaching and learning are good in the majority of lessons. Teachers take account of the needs of the wide ability range of students and encourage and develop the confidence of the less able students. During lessons, most students are attentive and enjoy their lessons. Lessons are generally well organised, with effective lesson planning and use of resources. In the best lessons, teachers test students' understanding and reinforce their learning through careful and skilful questioning. In a lesson on graphic design, the teacher skilfully extended students' understanding of complex visual imagery through a combination of challenging dialogue, visual aids and role-play. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers failed to set sufficiently demanding and aspirational standards for some students. Lessons are accommodated in open-plan areas that are shared with other groups. Although this helps to create a lively learning environment, there is no quiet area where teachers

and students can effectively engage in focused group discussion. There were many instances when noise from other groups disrupted teaching and learning. Learning is enriched through regular, well-planned visits to galleries and museums and some students gain realistic experience through working on 'live' projects.

93. Teachers are well qualified in their specialist subjects and many have industrial experience. Most teachers have, or are working towards, a teaching qualification. Many teachers continue to engage in their own creative practice. The college has a new purpose built art centre and all courses are accommodated in close proximity. This helps to create an environment in which creative activity is easily seen and good practice shared. Students are able to use well-lit studios and have good access to a range of specialist facilities that include a well-equipped craft workshop and computers with industrial standard software and Internet access. Facilities for printmaking and ceramics are less well developed. Materials held in the library and learning centre provide valuable support for project work. The range of books and periodicals are adequate for the needs of the programmes, but there are insufficient copies of popular key publications.

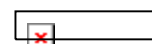
94. Assessment procedures are effective. Students understand what is expected of them and are given helpful advice on ways to improve their performance. Teachers provide students with comprehensive written and verbal feedback, which helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and plan future actions. Students are encouraged to engage in regular self-assessment and to monitor their own progress. Internal verification of assessment is undertaken, but there is scope to share and standardise good assessment practice within the curriculum area.

95. Guidance and support are good. Measures are in place to ensure that students have sufficient information and advice to make informed choices about courses and career opportunities. At the beginning of their courses, students undertake tests to establish attainment in numeracy and literacy. The support provided for those students identified as having additional learning needs is effective. Learning support tutors work closely with teachers. For example, during one lesson, four support staff worked very effectively with the teacher to create a stimulating lesson in which a mixture of GNVQ foundation and intermediate art and design students discussed contemporary sculpture. The support staff played a very significant role in developing students' vocabulary and confidence to help them express complex ideas and feelings. All full-time students receive regular tutorial support and many speak highly about the academic guidance and pastoral care provided by the college.

Leadership and management

96. The area is well managed. Courses are well organised, lessons are carefully planned and resources are well deployed. The area has recently undergone a number of significant changes that include the recent appointment of a new curriculum manager, a move from poor and scattered accommodation into a purpose-built art centre and the introduction of a range of new qualifications. Following several consecutive years of poor retention and pass rates on some courses, measures have been put in place to improve students' performance. Comprehensive management information is being used effectively to monitor courses. The systematic setting of performance targets is contributing to improvements. Teachers work well in teams and communication is good. Regular lesson observations are helping to raise the standard of teaching. Tutorial and assessment procedures are not fully implemented by all staff and this weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report and is being addressed. A socially inclusive ethos is well established within the curriculum area. Multicultural and disability topics are often included in course projects and group discussion work.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- much good activity-based learning
- very good progression for most students
- high level of individual support
- wide range of programmes to suit individual needs
- well-planned and appropriate accommodation.

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning and recording of individuals' progress
- some poor learning materials.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers a wide range of youth and adult programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Disabilities include visual and hearing impairment, autism, a range of syndromes and cerebral palsy. Some students come from socially disadvantaged areas and are not living at home. Some adults from a residential home attend part time. Some 56 students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on the full-time bridging programme. The programme offers young people the opportunity to develop their social and communication skills while enabling progression to mainstream FE or training. The course offers three pathways according to students' abilities and aspirations and includes specific vocational training and relevant work experience. Thirty-six adult students are enrolled on a range of part-time basic work and life skills courses. Forty-two students attend the level 1 and level 2 British sign language evening courses. Many students are able to work towards accredited awards in care, cookery, bakery, retail, horticulture, and literacy and numeracy.

Achievement and standards

98. Retention rates on all courses in the curriculum area are good. In 2001/02, the retention rate on the part-time cookery programme for adult students was 88% and all students completing the course achieved the award. In the same year, 94% of students following various routes on the bridging course completed their course of study. All students completing the bridging course achieved a literacy and/or numeracy award and a cookery qualification. Students taking part in various vocational options were able to work towards an accredited qualification in that area of learning. Pass rates on the British sign language courses were low, at 41%. Many students completing the

bridging programme progress to vocational courses within the college. Some adult students progress to other courses or provision provided by the social services.

Quality of education and training

99. There is much good activity-based learning. The best lessons are well planned and the learning materials are designed to suit the ability of each student. Teachers ensure that students are sufficiently confident to take a full part in lessons. They are supportive and encouraging, but ensure that lessons move at a pace that will help each student achieves their full potential. For example, in one lesson, students were able to understand the use of simple electrical components and subsequently draw circuit diagrams showing where they may be used. Teachers question effectively to test students' understanding. There is a good mix of group and individual learning during lessons. Some students have the opportunity to take part in vocational training as part of their programmes. These lessons take part in workshops with specialist tutors and students are able to use a good range of facilities. Additionally, some learning takes place in community settings. For example, adult students attended a commercial garden where they potted plants for future sale. In the weaker lessons, students were unaware of the objectives of the lessons and how the lessons related to the awards for which they were studying. In a minority of lessons, the learning materials provided by teachers fail to cater for the wide range of abilities within the group. There is insufficient use of pictorial information and signs for students whose reading ability is low. Some worksheets lack the visual impact of those that are well prepared and colourful in their presentation.

100. All teachers are adequately qualified. The accommodation used by the curriculum area is good. Specialist teaching rooms are located prominently within the college and reinforce the college's aims of social and educational inclusion. They are well equipped and include a craft workshop, standard classrooms and a computer suite that contains a wall-mounted computer screen. Students also have the use of a bungalow that contains all the equipment necessary for life skills training. There is also a small garden and greenhouse which is used by students. However, in the specialist rooms there are few displays of students' work to celebrate achievement.

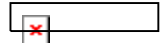
101. Assessment is satisfactory. Assessments take place regularly, are well planned and students are made aware of the process. Assessment of students' work is thorough, and well recorded. Internal verification processes are satisfactory. However, teachers often fail to sufficiently review and record students' progress against realistic goals.

102. There is a high level of individual support for students and, in some cases, during their transition to other programmes. In many lessons, learning support assistants work well with teachers. Teachers make themselves available outside of time tabled lessons and help students overcome a range of barriers to learning. There are good links to external organisations and teachers are often able to direct students to where assistance can be found both within the college and elsewhere. There is effective specialist support for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including signers for the deaf and support for the visually impaired. In some lessons, students are supported by key workers, including those from social services or residential care homes.

Leadership and management

103. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are good. Managers, teachers and learning support assistants demonstrate a high level of commitment to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Regular, well-documented team meetings are held. There are annual review meetings of students' progress that are attended by parents and relevant support agency representatives. Self-assessment is undertaken rigorously and inspectors concurred with many of the findings given in the self-assessment report. The curriculum is carefully designed to enable students to take part in a wide range of different learning opportunities, including numeracy, literacy, craft, cookery, drama and ICT.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good attainment on adult literacy and numeracy and 16 to 18 entry courses
- good teaching on the 16 to 18 entry skills courses
- effective support in literacy and numeracy
- good use of accommodation and resources in the key skills centre.

Weaknesses

- poor aspects of number teaching in a significant proportion of foundation key skills lessons
- insufficient use of initial assessment outcomes in guiding the foundation key skills learning programmes of students
- inadequate target setting and review in the 'drop-in' support sessions.

Scope of provision

104. The college is continuing to develop part-time literacy and numeracy courses for adults. The programme is in its second year and some 30 adult students are enrolled on courses. The entry level course for students aged 16 to 18 is a life skills course and includes entry level literacy and numeracy for young people who have failed to realise their true potential at school for a variety of personal, economic or social reasons. Approximately 24 students are enrolled on this course. Additionally, key skills courses in application of number and communication at level 1 and 2 are offered to students enrolled on vocational programmes. Basic skills support for students enrolled on other courses include one-to-one support, in-class support and separate 'booster' lessons.

Achievement and standards

105. Adult students on the part-time literacy and numeracy courses achieve well. Written and oral work shows good attainment. Their work is of a consistently high standard. Students' work files demonstrate good development of skills. Many students improve significantly the accuracy, style and vocabulary of their writing and the accuracy and complexity of their numeracy skills. Attendance on these courses is high. However, in 2001/02, adult students were not entered for any externally accredited qualifications. Students' attainment and achievement on the 16 to 18 entry level course are good. The course successfully reintroduces previously disaffected young people back into mainstream education. The standards of students' behaviour, attitude and personal organisation are very good. Retention rates on this course are good, and in 2001/02 the average attendance to lessons was approximately 76%. Progression is very good: 57% of students completing their courses in 2001/02 progressed to other courses at the college. However, some students on level 1 application of number key skills courses make insufficient progress during lessons.

Quality of education and training

106. Most teaching is satisfactory or good, although in a minority of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. There are clear and detailed schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum. The most effective lessons are well planned. In these lessons, teachers use a good range of methods to encourage and motivate students to learn. The methods include whole class teaching, group discussion and effective questioning techniques to stimulate students' involvement and to test their understanding. In some lessons, teachers use a variety of carefully structured activities that are graded in difficulty and students are suitably directed to the appropriate tasks. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers fail to challenge the more able students and learning materials and teaching methods do not meet the needs of all students. In numeracy key skills lessons, opportunities to set the tasks in a vocational setting are missed by teachers in too many instances.

107. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and many have attended training courses in teaching basic skills. Also, most teachers have completed the 'skills for life' training course. Resources in numeracy and literacy are good. The key skills centre is a valuable resource and provides a focus for key and basic skills at the college. The centre is welcoming, and accessible. Students are well supported. It is well equipped with computers. The centre is used flexibly by the team; about half the key skills and literacy and numeracy lessons take place in the centre. Students speak highly of the support provided by the staff in the centre.

108. All full-time students at the college undertake the basic skills initial assessment tests at the beginning of their courses. The test results are not consistently used to inform the learning programmes of individual students. For students enrolled on key skills courses, the outcomes of initial assessment are used effectively to identify and provide support for the weakest students. However, there is little diagnosis of the needs of all students so that their learning programmes can be structured more closely to meet their needs.

109. The formative assessment of students' work in literacy and numeracy is good. Students' work is accurately assessed and carefully annotated. Teachers provide helpful and constructive comments. However, the assessment and monitoring of students' progress are unsatisfactory in the drop-in support sessions. Teachers fail to record students' progress sufficiently and where learning goals are set, they are often imprecise. Dates for further reviews are not agreed. In other areas of literacy and numeracy provision, reviews of students' progress are not carried out systematically by teachers, and learning plans for individual students often lack clear targets and actions for improvement.

Leadership and management

110. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Quality assurance is thorough and inspectors agreed with many of strengths and weaknesses stated in the self-assessment report. Actions for improvement have been developed, but these are only just beginning to be implemented. Procedures to monitor and record students' progress are not fully applied by all teachers across the area.

Part D: College data

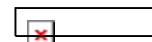
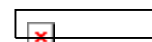


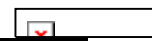
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	33	36
2	39	30
3	14	15
4/5	0	2
Other	14	17
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	805	401	5
Land-based provision	12	159	1
Construction	408	735	5
Engineering, technology and manufacture	269	466	3
Business administration, management and professional	740	1,724	10
Information and communications technology	1,205	7,207	35
Retailing, customer service and transportation	17	4	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	628	1,008	7
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	1	321	1
Health, social care and public services	418	643	4
Visual and performing arts and media	589	348	4
Humanities	360	162	2

English, languages and communication	964	403	6
Foundation programmes	2,374	1,676	17
Total	8,790	15,257	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	1,183	1,092	1,555	1,184	1,014	1,420
	Retention rate %	83	78	85	77	66	74
	National average %	78	79	*	77	80	*
	Pass rate %	68	44	61	60	76	73
	National average %	63	65	*	66	69	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,138	1,396	1,675	1,604	1,446	1,506
	Retention rate %	71	75	78	56	73	75
	National average %	74	74	*	77	78	*
	Pass rate %	65	68	62	63	74	70
	National average %	67	67	*	65	65	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	840	1,224	1,055	860	1,125	1,013
	Retention rate %	66	63	78	78	79	84
	National average %	75	74	*	78	77	*
	Pass rate %	84	74	71	79	74	72
	National average %	68	69	*	64	66	*
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	16	**	42	203	158	357
	Retention rate %	13	**	81	57	76	75
	National average %	77	*	*	84	83	*
	Pass rate %	100	**	84	72	33	68
	National average %	68	*	*	51	48	*

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

*data not available

** too few students to provide a valid calculation

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 2000 to 2002: College data

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)	72	20	8	61
Level 2 (intermediate)	63	32	5	41
Level 1 (foundation)	47	45	8	36
Other sessions	67	29	4	24
Totals	64	30	6	162

Notes

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