

Colchester Institute

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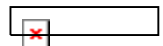
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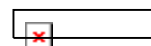
Basic information about the college



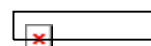
Name of college:	Colchester Institute
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Mr Danny Clough
Address of college:	Sheepen Road Colchester Essex CO3 3LL
Telephone number:	01206 518000
Fax number:	01206 763041

Chair of governors:	David Priest
Unique reference number:	106564
Name of reporting inspector:	Cathy Morgan
Dates of inspection:	31 March-4 April 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



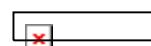
Colchester Institute is a college of further education (FE) and higher education (HE) located on two main sites in Colchester and Clacton. In January 2001, the corporation board considered the strategic direction of Colchester Institute, following a major curriculum review at the end of 2000. It was agreed that the focus of provision should be on vocational education and training and to cease providing full-time General Certificate of Education (GCE) and non-vocational courses. Full-time provision is now mainly vocational, concentrating on levels 1, 2 and 3. In most areas, however, provision is from level 1 to level 4. There is a substantial range of HE courses validated through the college partnership with Anglia Polytechnic University

The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time vocational provision at a range of levels in 13 of the 14 areas of learning funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The inspection covered 10 of these areas. The majority of full-time enrolments are students aged 16 to 18 following courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are currently 2,794 full-time students, 6,420 part-time students and 480 full-time equivalent staff.

The number of enrolments on courses has decreased over the last two years. The decline has particularly been in the enrolment of adult students. The balance of funded part-time provision has shifted towards work-based learning. There are currently 487 work-based learners, based mainly in the areas of construction, engineering and business. Flexible information and communications technology (ICT) training is available through the franchised provision offered by TBG Learning in Clacton and Colchester. The college is in the development year of Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for hospitality and food studies.

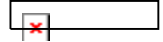
Colchester Institute works in partnership with other local providers in Colchester and Tendring and is a core member of the North Essex Learning Partnership. The close working relationship with the sixth form college demonstrates the partnership approach to increasing the post-16 participation rate. The proportion of 16 year olds staying on in full-time education is below the national average rate of 83% but is increasing, and is currently at 72%. The college also works closely with schools, Connexions and the youth service to provide alternative educational routes for youngsters who are disaffected. The rural district of Tendring, the location of the Clacton campus, is an education action zone.

How effective is the college?



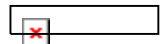
Colchester Institute is effective. It provides a wide range of vocational courses and is responsive and sensitive to the needs of the local community. Inspectors judged teaching and learning to be good in four of the thirteen areas of learning inspected, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in two. The quality of work-based learning was considered to be unsatisfactory in two of the three areas inspected. The college's main strengths and areas that need to be improved are listed below.

Key strengths



- most retention rates at, or above, national averages
- high standard of specialist resources
- productive local partnerships
- thorough pre-entry guidance and effective admissions processes
- good support for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good financial management.

What should be improved



- pass rates at levels 1 and 2
- standards of teaching and learning
- co-ordination and provision of literacy and numeracy support

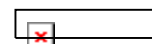
- consistency and rigour in the application of quality assurance arrangements

- management of work-based learning

- monitoring of equal opportunities trends in students' recruitment, retention, achievement and progression.

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

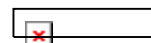


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	Good. Retention and pass rates have improved and are high on most courses. There are good links with employers and schools. Specialist plumbing is of a high standard. Work-based learning provision is poor.
Engineering	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates on most courses are low and declining. Work-based learning provision is poor. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching. There are good resources and effective links with employers. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
Business	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on administration and professional courses and retention rates are good on full-time courses. Retention and pass rates on work-based learning programmes are poor, but there is good development of occupational skills. Support for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation ICT course. There are good specialist resources and learning materials. Teachers provide effective support to individual students in practical lessons. There are few strategies to raise poor retention and pass rates.
Leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. Teaching is well planned. Effective links with employers provide students with good work experience placements and seasonal and full-time employment. There is poor integration of key skills. Pass rates on Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) travel and tourism are low.

Hospitality	Good. Retention and pass rates are good on AVCE course and programmes for chefs. There is much good teaching. There are purposeful and extensive contacts with both schools and employers. Students benefit from a wide range of high-quality enrichment opportunities.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Pass rates are high. Students' work is of a high standard. Staff and students adopt high standards of commercial practice. The small part-time provision adversely affects the progression opportunities for adult students.
Health, social care and public services	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on full-time courses but low on part-time National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses. Teaching is good on the GNVQ foundation course in health and social care. There are weaknesses in the management of NVQ courses. Good practice is insufficiently shared across the provision.
Visual arts	Good. Retention and pass rates are high for the diploma in foundation studies. There is much good teaching and a high standard of student work. Practical resources and workshops are good, but there is some inappropriate accommodation in the design area.
Performing arts, music and media	Satisfactory. Students' work is of a high standard in music, and specialist music resources are very good. There are high pass and retention rates on contemporary and popular music courses. Retention rates are low on the national diploma course in media. The teaching of media is insufficiently demanding.
Humanities	Satisfactory. The humanities provision includes a range of access courses, which are generally well taught and effectively managed. Students on these courses are well supported, produce high standards of work and achieve pass rates that are well above the national average. Management of the part-time General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced level (A-level) provision is unsatisfactory.
Literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages	Unsatisfactory. There is effective development of students' oral skills on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. There are good links between literacy and numeracy tutors and vocational staff. The monitoring of students' progress is ineffective. The teaching and co-ordination of literacy and numeracy provision are unsatisfactory.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Satisfactory. Retention and attendance rates and students' achievements are good. Teaching of individual students is good. Students benefit from the effective use of learning support assistants. There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their personal, practical, literacy and numeracy skills in a vocational setting.

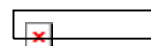
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and managers set a clear strategic direction for the college. The college mission, plans and objectives are understood and strongly supported by most of the staff. An outstanding feature of the college is the centre for hospitality and food studies, which is in the development year for CoVE status. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory in most curriculum areas. Communications are good with external partners and within

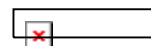
declined to well below the national average at levels 1 and 2. Overall retention rates are at, or above, national averages. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the college self-assessment report. Senior managers acknowledge that there is inconsistent implementation of the college quality assurance arrangements, limited use of student data for management purposes and inadequate use of equal opportunities data. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



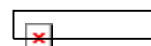
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college has developed a range of level 1, pre-16 and short-term occupational programmes to encourage participation by under-represented groups and to widen participation. There is good provision for students aged 16 to 18 and older with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support for students with hearing or visual impairment is particularly effective. Equality of opportunity is well promoted in all college activities. However, there is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities trends in students' recruitment, retention, achievement and progression. The college has revised and strengthened its race equality policy in line with the Disability Discrimination Act. Learners on work-based learning programmes have good equal opportunities promotion through regular progress reviews. The college aims to recruit more students from local areas identified as having high levels of social deprivation. There is appropriate access to most parts of the college for students with restricted mobility.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive satisfactory guidance and support. Pre-entry guidance is thorough. The admissions process and the induction of students are well organised and effective in helping students to adjust to studying in a large college. Many full-time students benefit from early initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs, but the specialist support that some students receive in lessons is insufficient to allow them to develop adequate basic skills. Students on level 1 courses receive valuable personal support from learning support assistants who work with their vocational teachers during lessons. The college has responded well to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. Good links between personal tutors and specialist staff in student services, such as counsellors and student finance, ensure that student referrals for specialist advice are dealt with promptly. Students receive effective advice and guidance on progression to employment or to HE. The amount and quality of tutorial support provided are not uniformly good. Individual tutorial support is generally good, but some group tutorials are less effective and students do not always value the experience. In some curriculum areas, students' progress is closely monitored, while in others, monitoring of students' progress on the different elements of their programme is insufficient. Monitoring the impact of guidance and support services on retention and pass rates is not well established.

Students' views of the college



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

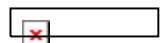
What students like about the college

- supportive teachers who treat students as adults
- good learning resources, library and computers
- reasonable cost of food
- being able to progress from one course to another at the college
- work placements and visits
- the help from learning support assistants
- the friendly atmosphere and relaxed environment.

What they feel could be improved

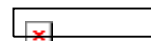
- the state of the canteen and the choice of food
- the cleanliness of the college
- limited sporting facilities
- teaching of key skills.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



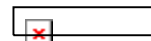
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	59	33	8
19+ and WBL*	60	35	5
Learning 16-18	57	35	8
19+ and WBL*	66	27	7

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. The number of enrolments on college courses has decreased over the last two years, from 24,494 in 2001/02 to 14,300 at the time of the inspection. While adult enrolments have declined generally, a large proportion of adult students are recruited to part-time courses in ICT.

2. There is a significant amount of work-based learning provision in construction, business and engineering. Almost all students on work-based programmes are foundation or advanced modern apprentices who are working towards NVQs and certification in key skills.

3. The college recognises that some of the centrally held data available to monitor students' retention rates have been unreliable. In-year retention figures were incorrect for most two-year programmes. This issue has been addressed and, generally, rectified.

4. College data suggest that retention rates in 2002 improved at levels 1 and 2 and declined slightly at level 3. Overall retention rates are above national averages. Pass rates in 2002 remain at the national average for level 3 courses. However, pass rates at levels 1 and 2 are poor, having declined to well below the national average. Pass rates are particularly poor for students aged 16 to 18 at level 2 and adult students at level 1.

5. The student attendance rate of 75%, during the inspection, was just under the national average. However, there is considerable variability in levels of attendance across the college. In visual arts, performing arts, music and media, and hairdressing and beauty therapy, students' attendance was excellent. However, in construction, ICT, humanities and literacy and numeracy, ESOL classes, attendance rates were poor.

6. In most areas of learning, students' work is of a high standard. Students' vocational skills are particularly good in construction, carpentry, joinery, welding, business, music, video production, visual arts, hospitality, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Students' conceptual and critical analysis skills are well developed in fine art and on access courses.

16 to 18 year olds

7. Retention rates for students on courses at all levels of study have been at, or above, national averages for the last three years. The retention rates on level 1 and level 2 programmes declined slightly in 2000/01, but have improved to above the national average by 4% and 8%, respectively. Retention rates are good on GNVQ foundation programmes.

8. The percentage of students aged 16 to 18 studying for qualifications at level 3 declined to 20% in 2002. Retention rates are above the national average and remain high at 85%. In 2001/02, the retention rate for short courses was high, at 92%. The retention rate on key skills programmes is low, having declined significantly to 76% in 2001/02.

9. Pass rates on most courses and levels declined to below the national average in 2001/02. The decline was particularly marked for students on GNVQ programmes. Some 28% of students aged 16 to 18 study for qualifications at level 1. Pass rates at this level declined to well below the national average in 2000/01 and, despite a slight improvement in 2001/02, remain 4% below the national average. At level 2, pass rates have declined to well below the national average over the last three years, to 58%. In 2001/02, the pass rates on level 3 courses improved significantly, from below the national average, to 79%. The pass rates on short courses are low, having declined dramatically to 61% in 2001/02. Pass rates for key skills qualifications are poor and have declined over the last three years, to just 6% in 2001/02.

10. In many areas, students are able to gain additional qualifications. For example, AVCE students in construction gain additional qualifications in computer-aided design. In ICT, GNVQ foundation level students are able to extend their skills by studying for a further qualification in computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and GNVQ intermediate students in ICT study an accredited course in key skills in information technology (IT) at advanced level 3.

11. The progress of students relative to their prior attainment and potential is good in hospitality and construction. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good personal and independent living skills. Students on motor vehicle studies, however, make slow progress and fail to produce an acceptable standard of work.

12. Many students receive good support from learning support assistants in lessons, but there is no significant improvement in their standard of work. There are no mechanisms for evaluating the value of additional support in terms of its effects in improving students' learning.

13. There are 487 students on work-based learning programmes. Completion rates of advanced and modern apprenticeships are low and average just 35% across all frameworks. Retention rates are similarly poor. Students on work-based programmes in electrical installation make good use of evidence from their workplace towards their NVQ assessment. Students make satisfactory progress

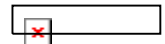
towards completing their qualifications in construction, however, in care, engineering and business, students' progress is slow.

Adult learners

14. Over the three years to 2000/01, retention rates for adults on most courses have been well above the national average. In 2001/02, retention rates for adults on courses at level 1 improved. At levels 2 and 3, retention rates declined slightly but remain around 8% above the national average for 2001.

15. All pass rates for adults have declined significantly over the three years to 2001/02. Some 39% of adult students are enrolled on level 1 courses. In 2001/02, only 53% achieved a qualification at this level. Pass rates at levels 2 and 3, and for short courses, are below the national average. Small numbers of adults follow GCSE and GCE AS and A-level courses. Retention rates are generally good; however, pass rates on these courses are poor. Many adults take a range of courses that do not lead to accredited qualifications. Many of these students improve their self-confidence and levels of literacy and numeracy.

Quality of education and training



16. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 191 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 59% of these, satisfactory in 34% and less than satisfactory in 7%. It was excellent or very good in only 27% of lessons. The proportion of teaching that was good or better is lower than the average for the sector for colleges of the same type. The quality of teaching varies considerably across the curriculum areas. In four areas, teaching was less than satisfactory in over 10% of lessons observed. In eight areas, no teaching was judged as less than satisfactory. Learning was good or better in 60% of lessons, satisfactory in 32% and unsatisfactory in 8%.

17. In the lessons observed by inspectors, there was a slightly higher proportion of good teaching at level 1. The unsatisfactory lessons are on courses for students aged 16 to 18 and spread across six curriculum areas. Students learn most effectively on courses at level 2. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement of key skills is poor across most vocational subjects.

18. The best teaching is in leisure and tourism, hospitality and visual arts. In the most effective lessons, the aims and objectives are shared with students and referred to during the lesson to ensure that learning is taking place. Teachers work productively with students of a wide range of abilities using question and answer techniques, demonstrations, discussion, and small group and individual work to promote learning. Clear explanations relate theory to practice and effective demonstrations improve students' learning. Teachers use commercial and real work examples to illustrate key points. Good use is made of teachers' and students' own experiences to reinforce learning. Teachers use up-to-date and relevant visual aids and specialist resources well to stimulate interest and motivate students to participate. Good use is made of information and learning technology (ILT) in these lessons. Teachers in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in health, social care and public services make effective use of the assessment of students' preferred learning styles in planning lessons. Students on courses in visual arts and hairdressing and beauty therapy are successful at working autonomously.

19. In the weaker lessons, the planning is poor and does not address the individual needs of all the students in the group. Teaching is often undemanding and does not challenge students to achieve more highly. Teachers do not adapt their learning materials and style to cater for the full ability range of the students in classes. They make insufficient checks on students' learning and progress during these lessons. Teachers do not relate the concepts they are teaching to students' own experiences, and fail to set tasks that encourage them to participate in the work. As a result, students quickly lose interest. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was seen in engineering and literacy and

numeracy, ESOL lessons. There is too little use of ILT in engineering lessons. The standard of students' work in GCE AS lessons is low, and some students display little active interest in, or commitment to, the subjects that they are studying.

20. Lateness of students disrupts the start of lessons in engineering. The provision of literacy and numeracy support in vocational lessons is unsuccessful. These lessons lack clear objectives and do not provide sufficient opportunities for students of all abilities to extend their literacy and numeracy skills. On-the-job and off-the-job training for work-based learning is good and there is frequent liaison between assessors and workplace supervisors in business.

21. On hospitality, leisure and tourism, hairdressing, beauty therapy, GNVQ foundation health and social care, and public services courses, effective use is made of external visits and the involvement of outside speakers to enhance students' learning. Teachers are well qualified and many have recent industrial and vocational experience. Inspectors of leisure and tourism, visual arts, performing arts, music and media, and hairdressing and beauty therapy highlight the positive impact of such vocational expertise on students' learning. Some 79% of full-time and 45% of part-time teachers have a recognised teaching qualification. Staff development is effective. Training is a high priority for the college and is part of a comprehensive strategy, which is effectively linked to the annual appraisal of all employees. ILT is a strategic staff training priority and the college makes good use of the full-time in-house trainer. Good training opportunities exist to enable staff to gain further teaching and other qualifications in areas such as basic and key skills. Staff responsible for work-based learning are occupationally competent.

22. The college has two main sites, at Colchester and Clacton, which house some excellent specialist resources. The college has addressed many of the weaknesses in accommodation identified at the time of the last inspection. Recent key investments in accommodation include the centre for hospitality and food studies, which is of excellent quality, lavishly equipped and provides the highest of industry-standard working conditions for students. Refurbishment of the Clacton campus has included improvements to the hairdressing and beauty salons. Four high-quality beauty salons and a new hairdressing salon are well patronised by the local community at both college sites and provide a wide range of industry-standard treatments in pleasant surroundings.

23. Staff in the learning centre are enthusiastic and helpful. There is a dedicated librarian for each area of learning. Engineering students make good use of this facility and that of the computer-aided design resources, which enable them to work independently on assignments. Central resources for music are comprehensive and include a large compact disc collection. Connexions advisers are also present in the library, providing a flexible 'drop-in' and appointment service for students.

24. There has been considerable investment in ILT across the college. Students have good access to computers on both college sites in addition to four new ILT centres. The college makes extensive use of an intranet and is developing the on-line 'virtual campus managed learning environment'.

25. Facilities for welding, plumbing and the arts are also of a high standard. These areas provide good specialist equipment, including facilities for students in music composition and graphic design. Other centralised resources include a media resource centre, which houses a wide range of multimedia resources including a fully equipped television studio. The lack of access to specialist media equipment from the cross-college media resource centre is seriously hindering students' progress on specialist media courses.

26. Accommodation for students in motor vehicle workshops, some construction lessons and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the Colchester campus is too small for the numbers of students. Access to some rooms in health and social care is difficult and causes interruption to some lessons. The learning resource centre is used to teach key skills. This is a large and busy area, which is unsuitable for the teaching of formal lessons.

27. The college accommodation strategy identifies the need to improve the quality of some accommodation that is in poor physical condition or unsuited to purpose. A recent audit of facilities for the disabled identified areas that present access problems for those with restricted mobility.

28. On most full-time courses, there are satisfactory arrangements for the initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy skills. Much of this assessment is carried out before students enrol, to ensure that additional learning support is arranged before the start of their programme. In some instances, the results of initial assessment are used to guide a student on to a more appropriate level of programme. Initial assessment is not undertaken by adult or part-time students.

29. Regular individual tutorials are used effectively to monitor the progress of full-time students. In some areas, the introduction of a twice-yearly progression board has improved the formal monitoring of students' progress. In ICT, however, adult students' progress is not being monitored or recorded effectively. Parents of most full-time students aged 16 to 18 receive informative termly written progress reports and are invited to an autumn parents' evening.

30. The quality of assessment practice varies across the college. In some curriculum areas, assignments are internally verified before being used and assessments are thorough. Students' assessed work is marked carefully by teachers, returned in good time and provides students with good written feedback to enable them to improve their performance. Teachers in hospitality make good use of formal tracking and recording systems. Foundation art and design students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good use of self-assessment; on leisure and tourism courses, good use is made of peer assessment by students of each other.

31. In a number of areas, however, the range of assessment methods is limited and procedures for assessments and internal verification are not standardised. Much of the written feedback students receive relates only to the quantity of work that must be produced before the next progress review. There is insufficient use of formal methods to provide feedback to students about how to improve their performance in some curriculum areas.

32. Progress reviews for work-based learners are used effectively to monitor health and safety and equal opportunity in the workplace. There is insufficient provision of work-based assessment. The use of target setting and the provision of written feedback to learners are ineffective. In health, social care and public services, and engineering, work-based learners make slow progress.

33. The college provides a broad range of vocational courses ranging from pre-entry level to advanced level in most curriculum areas. There is a substantial range of HE courses validated through the partnership with Anglia Polytechnic University. There is an extensive access to HE programme and an access to FE course, which provide well-designed pathways for adult students returning to education. The lack of evening and weekend courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy, however, diminishes the progression opportunities for part-time students.

34. The provision of GCSE English and mathematics courses is very limited. The college is not effectively addressing the needs of students who need a qualification in these subjects in order to progress to HE and employment in many occupational areas.

35. Links with employers are good in many curriculum areas and students benefit from well-organised work placements in health, social care and public services and leisure and tourism. Strong links with industry are being used effectively in some areas to provide occupational updating in the workplace for staff. Commercial links have been used effectively to provide sponsorship for equipment in construction.

36. There is good co-operation between the college, Colchester Sixth Form College, the University of Essex and the local adult and community colleges. This has led to some useful initiatives to expand opportunities in education and training in the community. For example, a shop in the centre of Colchester is used successfully to promote access to courses from all of the different providers.

37. The college is aware of the need to expand provision further in the Tendring district, where there are localities with high levels of social deprivation. Vocational courses are available in this area at the Clacton campus, for example, in ICT, hairdressing, beauty therapy and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college does not offer discrete literacy and numeracy courses for adults, as this provision is regarded as the preserve of the local adult and community colleges.

There is no routine initial assessment of the literacy and numeracy skills of part-time students on vocational courses.

38. There is insufficient development of students' key skills in many curriculum areas and attendance at key skills lessons is often poor. The college recognises these weaknesses and is modifying its approach to the teaching and assessment of key skills by integrating key skills into vocational areas. This is successful in some areas, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, where there is very good integration of IT key skills into students' vocational programmes. At the time of the inspection, very few students had been successful in gaining key skills qualifications, particularly in communication or application of number. The process of ensuring the quality and sufficiency of vocational key skills assignments is improving, though not all assignments are approved by a key skills specialist before being used.

39. Procedures for student admission are well organised and effective. Applicants benefit from good general advice on the range of options available. Staff provide informative specialist advice on the content of vocational courses. There is good liaison between central college admissions staff and course tutors. Good use is made of the detailed college induction policy, which provides a sound framework for staff to follow. Students' induction to both the college and to the requirements of particular courses is effective. There is strong promotion of vocational education to local schools and many curriculum areas provide successful short courses for school pupils. The college has recognised the need to improve the analysis of data on current and prospective students and a new marketing plan is being developed.

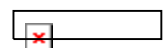
40. The college has adopted a new approach to supporting students who are identified as being at risk of leaving their courses early. A team of student achievement advisers work in an informal, but highly focused, way to provide support to these and other students.

41. The college tutorial policy entitles full-time students to four individual tutorials a year, but does not provide a college-wide curriculum for the pastoral support and personal development of students. The quality of guidance provided through tutorials is uneven. In some curriculum areas, such as access to HE and art and design, students benefit from good support from personal tutors and careful attention to their particular individual needs. However, in many areas, the monitoring of students' progress is unsystematic. There is insufficient monitoring of students' progress and a lack of rigour in action planning and target setting. Some tutors pay insufficient attention to students' progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and/or key skills.

42. Students benefit from a comprehensive range of support services at both the Colchester and Clacton campuses. These include counselling, financial assistance, general welfare advice and careers guidance. There are good links between these services and the students' union. Support for students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and disabilities, such as hearing and visual impairments, is very good. Students at entry level benefit from good personal support from learning support assistants.

43. The college policy seeks to integrate the provision of learning support, literacy, numeracy and key skills, so that each student receives tuition and support that meets their needs. There is insufficient monitoring to assess the effectiveness of this policy, which is not being implemented effectively. The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is inadequate. Many students receive insufficient support for literacy and numeracy at an appropriate level. The management of this support is divided between three areas of the college and students do not receive enough co-ordinated support to address their needs.

Leadership and management



the college set a clear strategic direction to develop a broader range of provision at access, foundation and level 1. The aims and mission statements were changed to reflect the vocational nature of the college. These are well understood by governors, staff, students and parents, and are effectively promoted by the senior management team.

45. Good progress has been made in addressing some of the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection. A range of initiatives aimed at improving rates of retention has been successfully employed. Over the last three years, the college has maintained retention rates that are close to, or above, the national average. Over this same period, however, the college has not sufficiently addressed declining pass rates. Since the last inspection, the performance of the college at levels 1 and 2 has declined. The pass rates of students on work-based learning programmes are unsatisfactory.

46. The college's strategic plan contains clear, overarching objectives related to fulfilling the college mission. The content of the college self-assessment report is generally clear, identifying actions required and those persons responsible. The self-assessment report and the strategic plan are used to some good effect by governors, senior managers and course teams to monitor, evaluate and improve student's performance. Under-performing courses are specifically identified and actions taken to bring about improvements. Some targets are insufficiently specific, however, and data is not used well to make judgements on students' performance. The format of reports for governors, and for college managers at all levels, does not provide a clear source of information on which to make management decisions about the quality of FE and work-based learning programmes. The annual report on students' achievement for all college students includes those on HE programmes. This masks the serious decline in pass rates on specific courses. This is compounded by the college's concentration on students' achievement of their primary qualification only. Students enrol on a variety of qualifications in order to enhance their vocational experience. There is ineffective monitoring and identification of students who are at risk of failing these qualifications across all curriculum areas. Pass rates on such courses are particularly low in leisure and tourism, and visual arts.

47. The management of individual curriculum areas varies in quality. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality, leisure and tourism, and visual arts, courses are well managed. In construction, the management of courses is good, but the co-ordination of work-based learning provision is weak. Early years care courses are well managed but NVQ programmes lack planning, good monitoring of students' progress and structured assessment planning. In humanities, there is good management of access courses but unsatisfactory management and co-ordination of GCSE and GCE AS and A2 provision. The management of the AVCE course in business is unsatisfactory, as is curriculum management and the management of work-based learning in engineering.

48. While good use is being made of advanced practitioners in curriculum development, particularly in visual arts, good practice is not sufficiently shared across curriculum areas, particularly in engineering, business, health, social care and public services and performing arts, media and music. Data on individual students' progress are not always available or accurate, and there is insufficient emphasis on improving the standards of teaching and learning.

49. The management of the provision for literacy and numeracy across the college is poor. The college strategic plan identifies the need to provide support for students' literacy, numeracy and key skills. Current provision, however, fails to provide students with adequate, coherent and comprehensive support. Arrangements for monitoring students' progress are not effective and the quality of the provision for literacy and numeracy is not monitored adequately across all curriculum areas.

50. The management of work-based learning across the college is improving but remains weak in construction and engineering. In response to the poor performance of work-based learners, a range of effective strategies has been introduced which is improving retention rates in some areas of learning. It is too early to evaluate the effect of these actions on completion rates. Co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training is satisfactory on business programmes but poor in engineering and construction. Progress reviews fail to set clear and demanding targets for students. Employers provide good opportunities for learners to develop skills at work, but the college has failed to fully

exploit these as assessment opportunities.

51. The quality assurance system has improved since the last inspection and is now well established. Students' and employers' views are collected systematically and some use is being made of this feedback in decision-making. The variable quality of the college performance data used for self-assessment has restricted the ability of curriculum teams to make clear judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and attainment. The self-assessment process is used effectively in hospitality and hairdressing and beauty therapy to improve the quality of teaching. The self-assessment reports from many curriculum areas, however, fail to identify weaknesses in the quality of teaching and in pass rates. There is a systematic cycle of classroom observation for all teachers. The lesson observation profile awarded at the time of the last inspection and that provided by internal self-assessment purposes were higher than that awarded by inspectors.

52. Arrangements and policies are in place to assure health and safety across the college. In construction, health and safety is given a high priority and risk assessments are effectively completed and displayed prominently in the workshops. Insufficient attention is given to these procedures and policies in engineering and hospitality. College arrangements to report poor punctuality and attendance are in place, but are not applied consistently across college faculties.

53. Staff have good access to, and engage in, a comprehensive range of staff development activities. The college plan for continuing professional development is clearly linked to the strategic plan and concentrates on improving the professional qualifications of teachers. The annual appraisal for all staff links individual development needs effectively to the college's strategic staff development needs.

54. There is good communication with external partners at all levels within the college. Staff and governors support the senior managers and the principal, who are seen as accessible and consultative. Staff are well informed about the issues facing the college through a monthly newsletter and regular presentations by the principal. Meetings involving a wide variety of staff are well planned and membership and terms of reference for these groups are clear. The college intranet is well developed and provides easy access to information on curriculum, equal opportunities and senior management team meetings.

55. Since the last inspection, the college has replaced and upgraded its management information system. The college recognises the need to improve managers' use of data for current and future planning. The monitoring of retention and achievement data is not thorough or effective. Statistical information relating to work-based training programmes is disorganised and inaccurate, and provides little opportunity for thorough analysis of the levels of retention and achievement of trainees.

56. The equal opportunities steering group, on which there is student representation, actively seeks to respond to equality and access issues identified through the self-assessment process. For example, the group has identified the need to undertake further work to ensure that all areas of the community are encouraged to participate in learning. However, no analysis of college data on gender and ethnicity has taken place to consider trends in course applications, recruitment, pass rates or retention rates.

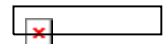
57. The response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act has been good. The action plan is clear and defines activities, actions and performance indicators. Staff training has been provided to outline the terms of this in relation to classroom teaching. The college has revised and strengthened its race equality policy in line with the Disability Discrimination Act. A clear action plan has been implemented. However, there is little evidence of the promotion of equal opportunities through the curriculum, except in the area of health, social care and public services and during work-based learner reviews.

58. The governing body has a clear view of the strategic direction and mission of the college. Governors are very knowledgeable about the college and they demonstrate considerable commitment to it. They bring a wide range of valuable experience to the benefit of the college. They

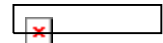
link closely with curriculum areas to gain a better understanding of the teaching and learning process. Governors are appropriately involved in determining the college's strategic direction. Governors on the college quality and standards committee, are unable to monitor accurately the college performance against national averages due to poor use of college data.

59. Financial management is good. The college remains in a strong financial position. Budgeting is careful and rigorous. The deployment of resources is effective and efficient. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses

- good teaching

- good progression rates into FE and employment

- high standard of students' work

- excellent range of specialist plumbing equipment.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of modern apprentices

- weak work-based learning reviews

- insufficient integration of key skills

- overcrowding in some workshops.

Scope of provision

60. The college offers full-time and part-time building craft courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. Professional, technician and site management courses are also offered. These courses are mainly during the day, with some evening provision. Courses for construction technicians include GNVQ and AVCE construction and the built environment. Enrolments have increased on craft courses, from 648 in 1998, to 1,317 in 2002, but remain relatively static on technician courses. At the time of the inspection, almost half of all students enrolled were aged 16 to 18. Most of these students are work-based learners. Most students study at foundation or intermediate level. Good links exist with schools and pupils are able to attend short introductory courses in building construction operations and NVQ level 1 in trowel occupations.

Achievement and standards

61. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses. There has been a significant improvement in the pass rate on the NVQ level 1 wood occupations course, from well below the national average in 2000, to 12% above it in 2002. Pass rates on the City and Guilds electrical installation and NVQ plumbing courses remain above national averages but are declining. Pass rates for the few students on the brickwork NVQ course at level 3 have declined significantly and were below the national average in 2002. Retention rates are high and improving on all but one course. The exception is the GNVQ advanced construction and built environment course which, although above the national average, has declined by almost 20% since 2000.

62. There is good progression of students from foundation level courses to NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 and from all courses into employment. There is a wide range of work placements providing good opportunities for work-based learners. Pass rates, however, are poor, with an average of only 30% of trainees achieving the full modern apprenticeship framework. The standard of students' work in all practical lessons is high. Some students in carpentry and joinery are able to produce accurate drawings to a particularly high standard early in their course. Some students on technician programmes gain additional qualifications. For example, AVCE students complete computer-aided design qualifications in addition to their main programme aim.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	25	27	15
		% retention	65	81	87
		% pass rate	13	38	85
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	17	26	18
		% retention	94	60	89

		% pass rate	*	80	88
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	108	64	78
		% retention	72	77	78
		% pass rate	95	89	75
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installation	2	No. of starts	44	50	32
		% retention	83	90	100
		% pass rate	95	68	59
GNVQ advanced construction and built environment	3	No. of starts	44	48	38
		% retention	95	79	76
		% pass rate	82	83	89

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

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

63. The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons is at least good. Over 70% of lessons were graded good or better. Teachers produce detailed lesson plans that are closely linked to informative schemes of work.

64. Most workshop activities are well planned and organised. Individual students work at a pace that suits them and, in many cases, they work well independently and are competent in selecting their own practical tasks. Students produce work of a high standard. Teachers use questioning techniques effectively to check students' understanding of practical processes. Health and safety are given a high priority and risk assessments are effectively completed and displayed prominently in the workshops.

65. The teaching of theory is very effective. The most successful lessons are well planned with clear objectives, which are shared with students. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate clear understanding of the range of students' ability and adopt appropriate, stimulating teaching methods that challenge and motivate all students.

66. Key skills have not been effectively integrated into students' programmes. In brickwork, students study key skills as part of their course but there is insufficient monitoring of progress. Pass rates for key skills are low. There is poor attendance in key skills lessons.

67. There is a good range of specialist equipment in all occupational areas. In the plumbing workshop, specialist equipment is of a particularly high standard and includes domestic and commercial boilers and hot water systems. Classroom accommodation for craft students is good, although the lack of dedicated teaching rooms makes it difficult for teachers to use specialist teaching resources effectively.

68. Some workshops are overcrowded and the lack of space for students to work inhibits their learning. All workshops are well supported by technicians, some of whom are studying for teaching qualifications.

69. Assessment of students is satisfactory and meets the requirements of examination boards. Students' progress, relative to their prior attainment, is good for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Students are well motivated in all workshops; teachers maintain their interest and help them to achieve good craft skills. Students on work-based programmes in electrical installation make good use of evidence from their workplace towards their NVQ assessment. Reviews of students' progress are infrequent and few qualification-related targets are set for students. Too few opportunities for

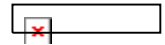
work-based assessment are planned with employers.

70. All students receive initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills during their induction to the college. Those needing additional learning support receive it during their vocational lessons.

Leadership and management

71. The construction area is well managed. There are regular course team meetings, which are used effectively in the self-assessment process. Target setting for student recruitment, retention and pass rates are well monitored through the course review process. Data are used by managers to assist with the analysis of programme performance and planning. The course handbook is widely used by staff for course planning and development. Staff appraisal is carried out on an annual basis. Inspectors agreed with the strengths of the provision identified in the self-assessment report but considered that weaknesses had been understated.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- broad range of provision

- good workshop facilities in engineering

- good learning resources to support independent study

- effective and productive relationships with industry and employers.

Weaknesses

- low and declining pass rates on many courses

- poor retention rates on NVQ and City and Guilds courses at level 2

- too much unsatisfactory teaching

- insufficient awareness of health and safety requirements

- poor-quality motor vehicle resources

- unsatisfactory achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks.

Scope of provision

72. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time engineering provision from level 1 to level 4. Courses are available in manufacturing, mechanical and electronic engineering, motor vehicle engineering, body repair and refinishing, welding and fabrication and computer-aided design. There are currently 425 students aged 16 to 18 and 405 adult learners studying for engineering qualifications. The college has 54 students on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship training programmes in engineering and motor vehicle studies. Work-based apprenticeship student numbers are increasing.

Achievement and standards

73. Pass rates on many courses are low and declining. Pass rates for the national certificate, AVCE double award and progression award have declined over the last three years and are now well below national averages. Pass rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks are unsatisfactory. Of the 24 foundation modern apprentices who started in 2001/02, 50% have already left the programme. Retention rates are low on the NVQ course at level 2 and are declining on the City and Guilds course at this level, where the rate is now 10% below the national average.

74. In many lessons, students are not punctual and attendance rates are poor. The standard of students' work is mostly satisfactory. In some lessons in welding and fabrication, work is of a high standard; for example, many students produced good welds in their training pieces. The standard of students' attainment is low in practical vehicle training lessons. Students make slow progress and fail to produce an acceptable standard of motor vehicle work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 6956 progression award	1	No. of starts	*	59	67
		% retention	*	69	84
		% pass rate	*	100	73
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	*	25	23
		% retention	*	64	70
		% pass rate	*	81	75
City and Guilds 6956 progression award	2	No. of starts	38	41	26
		% retention	92	85	65
		% pass rate	45	34	41

National certificate engineering	3	No. of starts	45	30	12
		% retention	**	**	58
		% pass rate	96	80	71
AVCE double award engineering	3	No. of starts	15	16	16
		% retention	89	87	75
		% pass rate	96	80	67

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

* course not running

** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

75. Most teaching is satisfactory and a small proportion is good or better. In one effective lesson on building electronic circuits, the teacher developed a stimulating and demanding assessment task for students. Students worked productively and developed accurate designs using clear instructions and explicit assessment criteria.

76. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching, and lessons are often dull and uninspiring. In many theory lessons, teaching methods are unimaginative and do not engage students in demanding tasks. Lesson plans pay insufficient attention to the needs and learning styles of individual students. Learning objectives, where identified, are not shared with students. There is too little use of ILT in lessons. Schemes of work include little variation in teaching, learning and assessment methods.

77. There is insufficient awareness of health and safety requirements in lessons. Students fail to observe basic health and safety requirements. Poor practices are unchallenged by staff. In one lesson, students were not required to wear protective clothing when undertaking hazardous tasks such as dry rubbing body filler and fibreglass panels.

78. Staff are suitably qualified and have appropriate industrial experience. Most hold or are working towards a teaching qualification. Teachers benefit from the effective staff development programme, which is linked to appraisal. Advanced practitioners have been identified, but there is little evidence of the sharing of good practice in teaching.

79. The engineering workshops and equipment are good and are maintained to a high standard. The welding facilities are very good and there is an excellent stock of consumables. Classrooms are basically furnished and fit for purpose. Demonstration rigs are used to good effect. Some computer rooms lack appropriate seating, blinds and relevant wall displays.

80. The motor vehicle workshops are too small when accommodating large groups of students. The main workshop has a dividing wall that makes it difficult for teachers to monitor students' behaviour and the progress they are making with tasks. Tools, rigs and vehicles are outdated and do not represent minimum industrial standards.

81. There is a good range of paper-based and ILT learning resources which are used well by students. Students make good use of the college library facilities, including a subject librarian for engineering who helps them with their studies.

82. Initial assessment is used effectively to identify the additional learning support needs of students. Students' work is assessed fairly and accurately in accordance with awarding body requirements. Internal verification is well planned and effective. Assessors on the AVCE and national certificate courses provide good feedback to students and pay particular attention to correcting errors in spelling, grammar and accuracy of calculations. This good practice is not consistently applied across the department. Some assessors fail to give evaluative feedback to enable students to improve their

work.

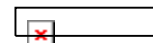
83. Training advisers make regular visits to employers to review the progress of modern apprentices. Employers are very supportive, are consulted and provided with review reports. However, there is a lack of rigour in action planning and the setting of challenging targets. The work-based assessment process is not well established. There is too little assessment in the workplace. Most assessment plans lack detail and do not include target dates for unit completion. Current practice to assess all NVQ units at the end of the course is ineffective.

84. Productive and effective relationships have been developed with local employers and industry. For example, equipment and consumables for welding and fabrication are provided by a local company. There is good communication with employers. The college produces an informative employer newsletter that outlines new developments, initiatives and information relevant to work-based training. Employers' and apprentice's views on training are sought through questionnaires. Students receive appropriate pastoral support and careers advice through group tutorials. Individual monthly tutorials enable students to receive good guidance and support.

Leadership and management

85. Leadership and management of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. Self-assessment is part of the quality assurance cycle, but the many weaknesses relating to declining retention and pass rates are understated. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are ineffective. The management of health and safety procedures is poor. There is a lack of accurate data to enable managers to make strategic quality improvement decisions. Staff appraisal is used to identify staff development needs. Management and co-ordination of work-based learning programmes are poor. Assessment planning, student monitoring and target setting are inadequate. The two departments responsible for work-based learning do not co-ordinate effectively to ensure that learners make progress.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on administration and professional courses
- good and improving retention rates on full-time courses
- well-developed occupational skills in college-based and work-based learning
- effective support for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate business course

- poor retention and pass rates for work-based learning

- unsatisfactory management of the AVCE course.

Scope of provision

86. The college offers a range of vocational courses from foundation to higher level in administration, accounting, business, management, marketing, secretarial skills and teacher training at both college sites. At the time of the inspection, 111 students aged 16 to 18 and 102 adult students were studying for business qualifications. Ten students aged 16 to 18 and 360 adult students are on part-time courses. Work-based learning programmes are offered in administration, accounting or management and 36 students are modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

87. Pass rates on professional courses are high. Association of Accounting Technician (AAT) courses have particularly good pass rates that are consistently well above the national average. In 2002, the pass rates on the certificate in marketing and the certificate in management courses were also very high. Pass rates on full-time business courses are in decline, particularly on the GNVQ intermediate course, and they are now well below the national average. Retention rates on most courses are good. However, on accounting courses, the trend in retention rates is downward. In-year retention rates on several courses this year are already below that of last year. Retention and pass rates on modern apprenticeships are poor. Current apprentices are making good progress towards achievement of the framework and retention rates are improving.

88. There is good development of occupational skills in college and work-based learning. Students and apprentices demonstrate good IT skills. Apprentices communicate effectively with clients and the level of responsibility and difficulty of job roles increase effectively in line with their level of learning programme. Students' portfolios are well presented and the content is of a high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Initial award in office studies	1	No. of starts	35	30	20
		% retention	83	80	90
		% pass rate	93	100	94
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	48	60	52
		% retention	87	85	69
		% pass rate	94	86	89
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	33	27	16
		% retention	61	78	81

		% pass rate	80	43	54
GNVQ advanced business / AVCE business studies *	3	No. of starts	48	46	51
		% retention	79	76	82
		% pass rate	91	90	76
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	106	71	71
		% retention	92	96	86
		% pass rate	58	44	93

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

* GNVQ advanced business course changed to AVCE business studies in 2002

Quality of education and training

89. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers are fully aware of the individual needs of students and devise a variety of tasks to draw upon students' individual strengths. In these lessons, teachers make good references to students' prior experience and interests. For example, in a GNVQ intermediate lesson, the teacher arranged for students studying personal finance to calculate the financial implications of their moving away from home. Students found the task interesting, were well motivated and made good progress during the lesson.

90. Too much teaching is just satisfactory, and a minority of lessons are unsatisfactory. These lessons are poorly planned and teachers make poor use of visual aids and fail to monitor students' learning and performance adequately. On work-based learning programmes, on-the-job training is good. Employers provide a good range of experience that often links with off-the-job training, but co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training is not always well planned.

91. Staff are well qualified. Classrooms are well equipped and well organised. There is good access to ILT resources for students across the college. Apprentices are well supported by experienced supervisors and suitable resources are available to aid learning in the workplace.

92. Full-time students have regular individual academic tutorials. These are generally well organised. Short-term targets are set for students but they do not always receive sufficient information on their progress towards achieving their qualification. Modern apprentices also have tutorials and quarterly reviews, alternating between college and the workplace, which are generally satisfactory. Targets are insufficiently detailed, however, and trainees are not given appropriate time-scales for completion. Assessment of work-based learning is satisfactory, but there is too little observation in the workplace. Plans to increase this are currently being implemented. Written feedback on portfolio assessment is brief but oral feedback is more regular and helpful

93. The college is successful in attracting students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These students are well integrated on business courses. Full-time learning support assistants provide good, sensitive assistance in lessons. While there is good in-class support for students with specific learning difficulties, too few students with weaknesses in literacy and numeracy receive regular and systematic support.

94. Most courses are well planned. The AVCE programme, however, does not meet the needs of the students effectively. There are few enrichment opportunities for students. Opportunity for work-based learning is restricted by academic year start dates. However, apprentices and employers all express satisfaction with the programmes.

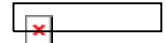
95. Initial information about courses is informative and clear. Modern apprentices receive good pre-course advice and guidance through effective links with schools and employers, course leaflets and the college web site. Induction arrangements are satisfactory on most courses. Group tutorials are

not systematically organised and many students do not receive sufficient guidance and support on applications to university and career progression.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Accounting, administrative and secretarial programmes are well organised. There are clear procedures in place to address a wide range of curriculum issues. In work-based learning, new methods of key skills teaching, clearer matching of job roles to apprenticeship programmes and a new continuous progress monitoring system have been implemented, and are beginning to have an effect on levels of retention and achievement. Targets are set and monitored and regular course reviews are held. Action plans are developed and monitored. However, the self-assessment process failed to address many of the weaknesses identified during the inspection. The grading of internal observations of teaching is over-generous. Significant weaknesses in the management of the AVCE programme have not been identified. There is a lack of effective use of data for planning. Good practice is not shared sufficiently, particularly in relation to teaching and learning and the provision of key skills.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on the GNVQ foundation ICT course

- effective support for individual students in practical lessons

- good specialist learning resources

- broad range of courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most courses

- poor retention on AVCE ICT course

- weak monitoring of the progress of part-time students

- o lack of rigour in course reviews.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers a broad range of courses in ICT that matches students' interests and current local employment needs. There are good progression opportunities for students from foundation to advanced level within the college. Full-time provision for around 144 students includes GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses in ICT and national diplomas for computing practitioners. The college offers flexibility to its part-time students by providing courses throughout the week and of varying duration. The introductory courses in CLAIT and European computer driving licence (ECDL) are provided at the two college sites and through the college's franchised provider. Part-time courses also include City and Guilds qualifications in systems support, web design and software development. During 2001/02, around 4,237 adult students enrolled at the two college sites and franchised centres.

Achievement and standards

98. Pass rates on GNVQ foundation ICT courses are good and improving. In 2002, pass rates also improved on integrated business technology level 2 (IBT II) courses to 7% above the national average. Pass rates are poor on the GNVQ intermediate ICT course. All introductory CLAIT and the ECDL courses have pass rates below the national average. Retention rates for these part-time adult students are good. Retention rates are poor on the AVCE ICT course, although the current retention rate for first-year students on level 3 courses has improved, by around 20%, compared with a similar time in the last two years.

99. There are good opportunities for students to demonstrate high level IT skills. GNVQ foundation students are able to extend their skills by studying for a further qualification in CLAIT. GNVQ intermediate students are able to achieve an accredited qualification in key skills in IT at the advanced level. This involves students in the design of very imaginative, well-structured web sites and electronic presentations. Generally, however, key skills are not assessed within vocational assignments.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT (one year)	1	No. of starts	842	284	1,563
		% retention	82	92	92
		% pass rate	89	59	53
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	47	45	45
		% retention	68	87	73
		% pass rate	63	79	85
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	51	59	59
		% retention	63	85	78
		% pass rate	78	50	59
IBT	2	No. of starts	230	191	185
		% retention	93	82	89

		% pass rate	45	44	67
GNVQ advanced IT / AVCE ICT *	3	No. of starts	74	50	46
		% retention	**	**	39
		% pass rate	58	87	72

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

* GNVQ advanced IT course changed to AVCE ICT in 2002

** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

100. The majority of teaching is at least good. Teachers provide effective support for individual students in practical lessons. The best lessons are well planned. In these lessons, students are given well-designed learning materials and are set a variety of appropriate activities, which they find interesting and which motivate them to develop their IT skills. In one such lesson on network topologies, the teacher effectively used a role play exercise and simulations to demonstrate difficult technical concepts. Each student played the part of a workstation and had to respond appropriately in accordance with the protocol being simulated. These simulations not only served as a demonstration of the technology but encouraged team working and motivation amongst students. In a small minority of lessons, however, the standard of teaching is unsatisfactory. In one such lesson, the poor explanation of a new, complex concept led to students becoming confused and disinterested. The teacher failed to check the level of students' understanding throughout the lesson and this was detrimental to the quality of their learning.

101. Most of the teaching for part-time students is on an individual basis in a workshop environment. Teachers provide good support for students in these sessions but too little use is made of individual learning plans to record their progress. Students receive helpful verbal feedback from their teachers, but the formal monitoring and recording of the progress of part-time students is weak.

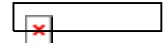
102. A wide range of specialist learning material, much of which is web-based, is stored on the college network, providing staff and students with good access from within the college or from home. Specialist software is of a high standard and enables students to develop high-level skills in the use of up-to-date programming languages and a range of operating systems. Teachers exploit these good resources successfully in designing interesting assignments that are relevant to current work practices in ICT.

103. Staff have successfully designed full-time courses to meet the needs of students. Learning support assistants are used effectively and are automatically timetabled into foundation and intermediate lessons.

Leadership and management

104. The management of ICT, including the franchised provision, is satisfactory. Communication is good between staff, and the staff newsletter, published by the team manager for part-time courses, is very informative. The franchised provider has been successful in attracting students who may not otherwise be involved in learning. Staff development is successful and has enabled teachers to update their specialist skills. There is good management of the GNVQ foundation course; these course team meetings are well documented and there is effective communication between staff and parents. Generally, however, not all staff are sufficiently involved in the quality assurance process. Course reviews lack rigour and target setting is not used effectively to improve the standard of teaching and learning. Insufficient attention has been given to raising poor retention and pass rates.

Leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on short courses at level 2
- good teaching
- strong links with industry and employers.

Weaknesses

- low pass rate on AVCE travel and tourism
- declining pass rate on GNVQ intermediate leisure course
- low retention rates on courses at level 3 and for coaching awards
- lack of integration of key skills.

Scope of provision

105. The college offers a range of leisure and recreation and travel and tourism programmes, including AVCE travel and tourism, AVCE leisure and recreation, and GNVQ intermediate leisure and travel. Students have access to a wide range of additional short courses, including the sport award in coaching, higher sports leaders award, coaching awards, and cabin crew qualifications.

Achievement and standards

106. Pass rates on short sport award courses at level 2 are high and more than 20% above national averages. The pass rate on the coaching award at level 1 is low and declining. The pass rate on AVCE leisure and tourism was outstanding, at 100%, in 2002. In the same year, however, the AVCE travel and tourism pass rate was poor and 20% below the national average. The pass rate on GNVQ intermediate leisure and travel has declined significantly, from outstanding in 2000, to well below the national average in 2002. Retention rates are low on level 3 courses. Although retention rates are

improving on the short courses, they remain below the national average on both sport award courses. Progression rates are good, and 90% of students on level 3 programmes progress to full-time employment.

107. The standard of students' written work is satisfactory and commensurate with the level of course being studied. Portfolios of students' work indicate that they have acquired an appropriate range of skills. Students' conceptual development is good, and most of them are able to make good use of knowledge gained from previous sessions.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Coaching award	1	No. of starts	14	18	19
		% retention	79	72	84
		% pass rate	**	100	81
GNVQ intermediate leisure and travel	2	No. of starts	31	51	45
		% retention	73	74	78
		% pass rate	100	68	63
First for sport award in coaching	2	No. of starts	14	18	19
		% retention	79	72	79
		% pass rate	36	92	93
British Sports Trust higher sports leaders award	2	No. of starts	14	18	19
		% retention	79	72	89
		% pass rate	73	92	88
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism / AVCE travel and tourism *	3	No. of starts	37	37	24
		% retention	81	81	64
		% pass rate	81	73	60

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

* GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism course changed to AVCE travel and tourism in 2002

** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

108. Teaching is good. In the most effective lessons, teaching is well planned and learning objectives are clear. In most lessons, teachers are well prepared to cater for the different learning needs and range of students' abilities. Lessons are challenging and enable the more articulate and confident students to demonstrate their growing confidence in themselves and their ability.

109. Teachers employ a variety of appropriate teaching methods and make good use of resources, such as the Internet, in lessons. Students' interest is stimulated and maintained through the use of interesting case studies, successful group work and relevant references to current practice in the leisure industry. In some lessons, students make good use of peer assessment.

110. Key skills are not routinely part of vocational courses. Key skills tasks are not sufficiently integrated into assignments.

111. The quality and standard of teaching accommodation is satisfactory, with most classrooms displaying examples of students' work. Rooms are light and airy, providing a stimulating environment

in which to work. Students have good access to ILT and are able to use these facilities effectively. On-site facilities for sport are limited, although good use is made of the nearby sports and leisure complex. All staff are appropriately qualified and have up-to-date, relevant vocational and industrial experience, which they share with students in their teaching.

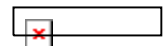
112. The scheduling of assessments on some courses is often not adhered to and results in unacceptable pressure on students to complete several assignments at once. Written feedback to students is well structured and detailed. Students receive helpful guidance with clear instructions for improving the quality of their work. Documentation used to monitor students' progress is well designed.

113. Students have the opportunity to broaden their experiences and enhance their personal development through a variety of educational visits and work experience. Students benefit from the strong links with industry and employers. These links have been a consistent source of seasonal and full-time employment opportunities for students. Through the strategic involvement of the 'employers forum', curriculum content has been successfully adapted to meet local employer needs. The active involvement of local employers in programmes of study has motivated students and adds to the overall credibility of leisure and recreation, and travel and tourism qualifications in the local community. There are regular visits from external speakers who share their business experience and reinforce their expectations of students in employment. Students receive good tutorial support from personal tutors.

Leadership and management

114. Courses are well managed. All staff participate in annual performance reviews and appraisals. Regular meetings take place to review the quality of courses and improve the students' experience. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process. The strategic action to employ new members of staff with current industrial experience has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. It is too early to determine the effect of this on pass and retention rates.

Hospitality



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on many courses

- much good teaching

- excellent specialist accommodation

- purposeful external links

- effective monitoring of students' progress
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on pastry courses
- inconsistent application of food safety procedures
- poor integration and achievement of key skills.

Scope of provision

115. The college is in the development year of CoVE status for hospitality. The centre provides a comprehensive range of full -time courses and an increasing number of part-time and work-based programmes. Almost 70% of students are enrolled on professional chefs' programmes for food preparation and cooking at levels 1 to 3. There are good progression routes, particularly into employment, for all students. The centre is expanding its links with schools and provides part-time courses leading to NVQ level 1 units for pupils aged 14 to 16. A range of food safety and hygiene short courses are offered from foundation to advanced levels. The centre works in partnership with the Employment Training Unit to provide work-based learning, currently for eight foundation modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

116. Retention and pass rates are good on many courses. Retention rates for catering and hospitality NVQs at all levels are good and pass rates are very good. Recent retention and pass rates on the AVCE programme are outstanding. Retention and pass rates on the first certificate in food safety are very good. There are declining retention rates for the pastry award at level 2 and pass rates in 2002 were particularly poor. Pass rates for key skills are very low. Students generally produce work of a high standard. The progress of students relative to their prior attainment and potential is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First certificate in food safety	1	No. of starts	162	238	277
		% retention	90	87	92
		% pass rate	97	77	78
NVQ catering and	2	No. of starts	107	96	84

hospitality - food preparation and cooking		% retention	74	59	81
		% pass rate	93	90	92
NVQ catering and hospitality - food preparation and cooking	3	No. of starts	8	28	29
		% retention	100	86	86
		% pass rate	80	91	100
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering / AVCE hospitality and catering *	3	No. of starts	28	10	17
		% retention	61	80	100
		% pass rate	80	63	100

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

* GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering course changed to AVCE hospitality and catering in 2002

Quality of education and training

117. The majority of teaching is at least good. Teaching centres on meeting the needs of individual students, and is particularly effective in practical NVQ lessons. Teachers prepare lessons using a variety of teaching methods to stimulate and motivate students. There is effective use of questioning and good reference to industrial practice and accurate costing implications. Demonstrations for students are of a very high standard and some teachers make good use of closed-circuit television displays and student participation, for example, in dough making techniques and fermentation control. Key skills lessons fail to motivate most students and there is a high level of absenteeism. These lessons are insufficiently linked to students' practical work. Pass rates for key skills for all students are poor, and only 25% of foundation modern apprentices complete their framework as a result.

118. Students and staff make effective use of the excellent specialist accommodation and the wide range of good learning resources available on the college intranet. Teaching and support staff work successfully as a team and technical support staff are effectively deployed. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and establish good working relationships with students.

119. The monitoring of individual students' progress is good. Students receive good academic and personal support through the programme of individual tutorials. Teachers provide clear and informative guidance to assist students in completing evidence diaries for NVQs. Teachers make good use of formal monitoring and recording systems to provide regular reviews of students' progress. Teachers routinely provide high-quality careers advice and organise visits, work-placements and employment for students. Extensive enrichment opportunities, both in the UK and abroad, enable students to expand their understanding of the industry and further investigate potential career pathways.

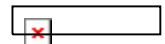
120. Purposeful links with external partners, including employers and local schools, has led to the recent 25% increase in student recruitment. The development of CoVE status this year has generated increased levels of interest from employers and there is a growing network of employers in hospitality who work effectively with the centre. There are excellent links with staff from local schools, including a programme of presentations to schools and visits by pupils to the centre. This has resulted in increased recruitment and growing provision of part-time NVQ level 1 courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 years.

121. Staff and students are not consistent in the interpretation and application of food safety policy in the food production areas. There is poor practice in carrying out procedures relating to hand washing, hair protection and prohibitive and obstructive material. There is insufficient monitoring of working practice and food safety standards.

Leadership and management

122. Curriculum management is good. The self-assessment process is effective in identifying the significant issues and in securing improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching. There is a well-established and productive system of meetings and rigorous course reviews. Staff development opportunities effectively meet the needs of individuals and also successfully address the needs of the centre. Equality of opportunity is not adequately promoted within the centre, and there is too little reinforcement of equal opportunity issues beyond the students' induction programme.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- good teaching

- high standard of students' work

- good specialist resources

- strong leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rate for the salon hygiene certificate

- insufficient integration of key skills

- few progression opportunities for part-time students.

Scope of provision

123. Full-time and part-time courses are available in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Most students are full time and aged 16 to 18. Complementary therapy courses are available as an option for full-time beauty therapy students. Most of the 95 part-time students are adults. There are only a small number of work-based learners. There is no part-time provision in either hairdressing or complementary or beauty therapy in the evenings or at weekends. There is little part-time provision for students during the week. This provides insufficient progression opportunities for part-time students.

Achievement and standards

124. There are high pass rates on most courses. Pass rates for the body massage certificate have been outstanding, at 100%, for the last two years. There is a slight decline on some courses, but almost all pass rates remain well above national averages. The exception is the salon hygiene certificate, where pass rates fell dramatically in 2002, to 36%.

125. Retention rates are around the national average for all courses. Retention rates for work-based learners are poor. Students are always punctual for lessons. There is effective monitoring of students' attendance, which is very good.

126. The standard of students' work is very high. The commercial operation of the college salons and the well-established client base enables students to attain high levels of practical skills and produce work to a professional standard. All students adopt a high standard of professional conduct and appearance in the salon environment, which replicates the best of industrial standards.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	2	No. of starts	50	74	77
		% retention	88	*	86
		% pass rate	100	91	92
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	2	No. of starts	42	54	21
		% retention	71	70	86
		% pass rate	91	97	89
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	32	57	45
		% retention	88	*	82
		% pass rate	82	100	88
Salon hygiene (hairdressing) certificate	2	No. of starts	42	38	52
		% retention	62	92	81
		% pass rate	92	100	36
NVQ beauty therapy (two year)	2	No. of starts	**	50	28
		% retention	**	78	82
		% pass rate	**	100	86
Body massage certificate	3	No. of starts	112	47	38
		% retention	88	66	74
		% pass rate	87	100	100

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

* data unreliable

** course not running

Quality of education and training

127. Most teaching is at least good. Students make very good progress towards achieving high levels of commercial and professional competence. Teachers plan lessons effectively to take account of the learning needs of individual students. Students make good progress during lessons and achieve high levels of attainment. Good attention is paid to the results of the initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy skills in both theory and practical lessons.

128. Effective planning by the course team has established a standardised format for the use of whiteboards during lessons, to accommodate the high proportion of hair and beauty students with a preference for visual learning. All teachers effectively record the aims and objectives of the lesson, tasks, client allocation, booking times and break rotation on the whiteboard at the start of lessons. Students are successful at working on their own and rarely require clarification of tasks during lessons.

129. There is very good integration of IT key skills into students' vocational programmes but this is not the case with the key skills of communication and application of number. There is inadequate use of appropriate learning material and poor assessment planning in key skills lessons.

130. Students undertake diagnostic testing as part of the interview and selection process. This is successful in ensuring that students are placed on the right course. There is effective provision of learning support during practical and theory lessons. The learning support assistant holds relevant vocational qualifications and this enhances the quality of support given to individual students. In one lesson, for example, the learning support assistant was able to demonstrate the importance of developing good literacy skills using client record cards, which are necessary to provide safe and appropriate treatments.

131. Staff are well qualified and have extensive and recent industrial experience. The mix of full-time and part-time staff helps to integrate educational and current commercial practices effectively. Technical and administrative support are good. The client base is good and is being further developed to meet the learning and assessment requirements of students. Specialist accommodation is modern and is of the highest of industrial standards.

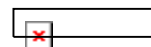
132. The assessment process for vocational NVQs is thorough. Internal and external verifier records confirm high standards and valid assessment processes. The students are active in the assessment and portfolio building process. Students receive good support in planning for assessment, which is a regular feature of practical lessons. Students receive informative monthly tutorial interviews at which their progress is reviewed.

133. The enrichment programme is extensive and provides a good opportunity for students to gain a wider perspective of the industry. The programme is a mix of short bespoke courses, visits, industry-sponsored events and competitions.

Leadership and management

134. The area is very well led and managed. The structure of the department is effective and the lines of accountability are clear. There is a rigorous approach to quality assurance. The emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning leads to staff and students demonstrating high professional and commercial standards. Curriculum planning is effective and leads to the adoption of standardised procedures and progressive staff development activities. Regular course reviews are undertaken and targets for improvement are agreed by all staff. Management information is not used effectively in the self-assessment process.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on full-time courses
- good teaching on GNVQ foundation health and social care course
- effective management of early years courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ courses
- weak management of NVQ provision
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

135. The college offers courses from foundation to degree level. Courses comprise foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in health and social care and intermediate and advanced levels in child care and education, and public services. The AVCE has recently been replaced by national diplomas in caring and health studies. Part-time courses include the advanced diploma in child care and education, the professional certificate in caring services, the introduction to counselling certificate, NVQs in care at levels 2 and 3, promoting independence, caring for young people and oral healthcare. In addition, the college offers a small modern apprenticeship programme in care at levels 2 and 3.

Achievement and standards

136. Pass rates on full-time courses are high. All pass rates on early years and health and social care courses are excellent and consistently above the national average. The advanced diploma in child care and education has outstanding pass rates, at 100% for the last three years. There are good opportunities and high rates of progression, particularly for students on health and social care courses. Pass rates on NVQ courses are low. The pass rates for the NVQ level 2 in care is

consistently well below the national average. The pass rate on the NVQ level 3 in care has declined, to just 12% in 2002, and no students have passed oral health care NVQ courses in the last two years. No student has gained an advanced level apprenticeship in care since 2000. Some retention rates have declined over the last three years and the diploma in child care and education is now below the national average. Many current NVQ students are making slow progress towards achieving their qualification. They have had too few assessments in the workplace and some of the written evidence in their portfolios is not regularly assessed.

137. Students' written work is of a high standard. The standard of student behaviour is good on the public services courses. In a few lessons, student attendance is poor. Punctuality is good for most lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	12	14	17
		% retention	100	93	82
		% pass rate	42	100	100
Introduction to counselling	1	No. of starts	**	48	65
		% retention	**	92	88
		% pass rate	**	91	81
Certificate in child care and education	2	No. of starts	15	20	24
		% retention	73	75	75
		% pass rate	73	93	94
GNVQ health and social care / AVCE health and social care *	3	No. of starts	61	59	54
		% retention	62	69	39
		% pass rate	94	100	100
Diploma in child care and education	3	No. of starts	63	50	50
		% retention	89	75	70
		% pass rate	100	100	94

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

* GNVQ health and social care changed to AVCE health and social care in 2002

** course not running

Quality of education and training

138. Most teaching is satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers provide good support to individual students. The most effective lessons are well structured and learning objectives are clear to students. Teachers make good use of resources and incorporate good links between theory and practical tasks. Teaching is particularly effective on the GNVQ foundation health and social care course. Teachers on this course are skilled in responding to the variety of students' needs. A range of methods is used to motivate and interest students. Good use is made of the Internet for students' research. Students work well collaboratively and are confident in giving presentations to others. In one GNVQ foundation lesson, the teacher used a combination of techniques for visual and auditory students that enabled them to develop good listening skills. Several adaptations to the lesson plan were implemented and students successfully completed some demanding tasks.

139. In a minority of lessons, planning is poor. Teachers provide too little opportunity for students to

demonstrate or increase their understanding, skills and achievement. Teachers' management of these lessons is ineffective, group discussion frequently wanders away from the key points and the more able students often become disinterested because the work is not demanding enough.

140. Classrooms for early years students display interesting examples of students' work, but many other classrooms are drab. A satisfactory range of up-to-date learning materials and resources are available for creative studies. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, although access to some rooms is difficult and causes some lessons to be interrupted. The learning centre is used to teach key skills. This is a large and busy area that is unsuitable for the teaching of formal lessons.

141. Assessment practice is satisfactory on most courses. Students' work is fairly marked against criteria and clear feedback from teachers informs students about how to improve. The assessment on NVQ courses is weak. Infrequent workplace observations and late assessment of written work means that students do not successfully complete units of their course. Students do not receive sufficient help in planning and preparing for assessment. The internal verification process does not identify weaknesses in assessment procedures.

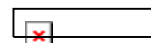
142. The curriculum area is responsive to the needs of the community. Many of the NVQ programmes have been developed to meet the needs of local employers such as the NHS, dental practices and residential and care homes. Students experience an appropriate range of work placements. Educational visits on the GNVQ foundation and public services courses enable students to explore successfully a range of work in health and social care and various public services.

143. Students' progress is well monitored through individual tutorials on all full-time programmes. Tutors provide sensitive support for students and make referrals to other college services, where appropriate. There is good support from learning support assistants in lessons. However, there is insufficient support to enable some students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. There is no formal system for the support assistants to report on the progress of students to their course tutors. Progress in learning support is not included in the students' progress review process.

Leadership and management

144. The organisation and management of health and social care courses is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in the management of the area. Early years courses are well managed. There is effective communication between staff. Work placements are well organised and well monitored. Course reviews are thorough but, in places, are insufficiently evaluative. Management of the NVQ provision is weak. Weaknesses in assessment practice on NVQ courses are not clearly identified and acted upon. There are no specific strategies to address the slow progress of students and the consistently poor pass rates. Insufficient use is made of data in setting targets for retention and pass rates. The course review and self-assessment processes lack rigour, and departments do not sufficiently share good practice.

Visual arts



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for the diploma in foundation studies

- much good teaching

- high standard of students' work
- effective sharing of good practice
- creative use of specialists resources and workshops.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on national diploma in design and level 2 courses
- declining retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and graphic communications courses
- inappropriate accommodation in the design area.

Scope of provision

145. The college offers a range of full-time courses in visual arts with good progression opportunities from level 1 to level 4. Most of the courses are full time and include GNVQ foundation and first diploma in art and design, national diplomas in graphic design (digital media) and fine arts and a diploma in foundation studies. Nine units of the national diploma in fine arts are also offered as part-time study over one year for mature students as an alternative entry route to the diploma in foundation studies. Further part-time provision includes a certificate in graphic communications for print industry workers. In total, 357 students study visual arts, of which 94 are adults, and overall 58 study part time.

Achievement and standards

146. The retention rate on the full-time diploma in foundation studies is high. Pass rates on this course continue to improve and were excellent in 2002, at 99%. The pass rate for the national diploma in design has declined to just below the national average. This course has been replaced and pass rates for the new national diploma in fine arts in 2002 were high. Retention rates and pass rates are declining on the GNVQ intermediate course. Students are required to complete additional courses at level 2, for example, in desktop publishing and printing and graphic communication. Pass rates are particularly low on these courses.

147. Students produce work of a high standard. GNVQ foundation students demonstrate good understanding of difficult concepts. There is a high standard of critical thinking in fine art. A group of graphics students developing alternative formats for a book demonstrated exciting layout and typography skills. Students use a range of digital processes well to generate and manipulate images.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	28	16	27
		% retention	32	69	67
		% pass rate	100	73	50
Desktop publishing	2	No. of starts	95	45	39
		% retention	69	91	92
		% pass rate	70	27	33
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	23	17	19
		% retention	75	71	63
		% pass rate	100	83	83
National diploma in fine arts	3	No. of starts	*	*	58
		% retention	*	*	67
		% pass rate	*	*	94
Diploma in foundation studies	3	No. of starts	123	141	140
		% retention	92	89	90
		% pass rate	96	98	99

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

148. The majority of teaching is at least good. In the most effective lessons, teachers successfully manage students in dynamic, inclusive discussions about their work and ideas. In one lesson, complex concepts about identity were clearly explained by a student to a small group. Most lessons are enjoyable and engaging for students. Many students are articulate, well prepared for their lessons and competent independent students. Students maintain purposeful and productive activities with little intervention from staff. There is careful lesson planning and effective communication between teachers. This often enables large groups of students to be effectively subdivided into small groups, which improves the quality of student interaction.

149. In less effective lessons, inadequate reference is made to learning objectives. Younger and less able students are often unclear about the purpose of the lesson and of their tasks. Teachers fail to ensure that students' learning is consolidated.

150. Most studios are good and many students have a personal workspace or base room. In one building, there are vibrant and exciting displays of students' work in progress, providing an engaging and stimulating environment in which to study. There is a good range of specialist workshops and practical facilities. In printmaking, students explore a variety of techniques to develop ideas in fine art and design. Good use is made of professional software applications in the computer suites and students produce work that demonstrates good combination of illustration, typography and moving images. Photography is used effectively to create images and to record students' work and ideas in progress.

151. Students' work is displayed in many communal spaces in the college and effective use is made of the Hay Gallery to display student and professional artwork. Some studio space in the design area, however, is noisy and poorly lit, and too many bare walls create an uninspiring learning

environment. Staff are knowledgeable, experienced and well respected by students. Many teachers are active practitioners in their vocational area and, in the best lessons, this experience is exploited well to make students' learning more interesting and demanding.

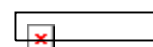
152. There is good guidance for students prior to starting their course and productive relationships with local schools. Applicants are carefully interviewed and good use is made of the portfolio of their work to determine their most suitable course. Tutorial support is well integrated with vocational courses. The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is not well co-ordinated, although effective use is made of learning support assistants for students with identified needs. Advice on study options and on progression is comprehensive, particularly for students moving from level 3 to level 4 courses. Teachers have good knowledge of HE provision and students receive valuable guidance in preparing applications and in developing interview techniques. Progression rates to HE are good.

153. Assessment of students' work is accurate and confirmed by the external verification process. Teachers use assessment well to encourage students to make critical analysis of their own practical work. This is particularly strong in fine art and foundation studies. Work is marked carefully and students respond well to assessment feedback. Some graphic design briefs do not make adequate reference to the assessment criteria needed to help students complete their work successfully. Monitoring of students' progress is effective for GNVQ foundation students. On the foundation studies course, good use is made by teachers of interim grades to indicate specific targets for students to achieve in their final major project. This approach is not used across all courses. The recent introduction of student progression boards is proving effective in monitoring and improving students' achievement.

Leadership and management

154. Leadership and management are effective. There is a new management structure within the area and responsibilities are now clearly defined. Much good practice is evident in teaching, learning and in the organisation of the curriculum and resources to the benefit of students. Advanced practitioners inform curriculum development and evaluate standards of teaching and learning. Successful characteristics of the management and teaching of the diploma in foundation studies are being extended to other courses, and some students from different courses work well alongside one another. Successful policies and practices need to be implemented more widely and monitored more thoroughly across the curriculum area.

Performing arts, music and media



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates in Open College Network (OCN) music and GCE AS theatre and dramatic arts courses

- high standard of students' work in music

- good specialist resources for music

- effective assessment procedures.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on national diploma in media and music technology courses
- insufficiently demanding teaching in media
- lack of access to specialist equipment for media students.

Scope of provision

155. The college offers a range of full-time vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 in media production (moving image), music practice, music technology, popular music, drama and performing arts. It also offers access to music courses in popular music stages 1, 2 and 3. Students are also able to study GCE AS music technology and GCE AS music. There are 145 full-time students and 21% of these are adults. A small number of part-time students are over 19. Colchester Area Music School is available at the college on Saturday mornings, and attracts over 100 young people aged 8 to 18 years. There are three band rehearsal rooms at studios in the town.

Achievement and standards

156. Pass and retention rates are high on the OCN contemporary and popular music course at level 2. Pass rates for GCE AS theatre and dramatic arts are improving and reached 95% in 2002. Retention rates are poor on the national diploma in media course and have declined dramatically on the national diploma in music technology course. The standard of students' work in music is very high. Students can compose and arrange music for an ensemble, organise performers and conduct groups effectively. Music students have developed an extensive vocabulary of terms and are able to employ this, and their knowledge of composition techniques, to analyse the work of others. There is a high standard of musicianship and one first-year national diploma student won a prestigious award for musical composition in 2003.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Business Technology Education Council first diploma performing arts	2	No. of starts	21	22	18
		% retention	67	**	72
		% pass rate	100	100	85
OCN contemporary and popular musics	2	No. of starts	20	20	17
		% retention	75	55	94
		% pass rate	73	100	88
OCN contemporary and	3	No. of starts	40	42	43

popular musics		% retention	80	70	**
		% pass rate	72	86	82
GCE AS theatre and dramatic arts	3	No. of starts	*	28	23
		% retention	*	**	96
		% pass rate	*	85	95
National diploma in performing arts / drama	3	No. of starts	40	31	28
		% retention	61	**	79
		% pass rate	100	92	89
National diploma in music technology	3	No. of starts	25	27	24
		% retention	92	81	37
		% pass rate	80	100	85
National diploma in media	3	No. of starts	21	25	22
		% retention	57	**	52
		% pass rate	100	100	73

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

* course not available

** data unreliable

Quality of education and training

157. Teachers plan lessons well and there are good schemes of work for most courses. There is very good teaching of theory and practical skills in music. Individual instrumental tuition is of a very high standard. Teaching of theory in performing arts is good. In one lesson, the teacher organised a productive discussion about physical theatre amongst students, which related successfully to a recent visit by a theatre company. The students made good use of well-designed documents to analyse audience reaction, key aural and visual events, costume and set, as well as the long-term impact of the performance.

158. Much of the theory teaching on media courses is dull. In these lessons, students are given undemanding tasks to complete. Discussions of other practitioners work, for example, are superficial and rarely involve in-depth analysis of meaning, motivation, aesthetics or cultural context. In a lesson that involved a photographic slide presentation, students' discussion was not effectively directed by the teacher. The content did not extend beyond the basic matters of types of cameras used and the light meter settings. The lack of access to specialist media equipment from the cross-college media resource centre is seriously hindering students' progress on these courses.

159. Teachers are very well qualified and many have recent or current experience as professional practitioners. There are good opportunities for students to join jazz and choir ensembles and orchestras. There are very good resources for music, exemplified by the provision of a large number of practice cubicles, most of which are equipped with either an upright or a grand piano. Tuition is available from 30 peripatetic teachers in woodwind, string, brass and percussion.

160. Course assessment documentation is completed efficiently and thoroughly. Assignments are well designed, internally verified and include differentiated assessment criteria. Students' work is marked fairly and returned promptly. Teachers provide students with informative and helpful feedback, paying particular attention to improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Separate feedback sheets are used effectively for assessing students' practical and writing skills in performing arts.

161. Initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy skills is carried out at the time of induction and in-class support is provided for those students who need it. The use of information about students' literacy and numeracy skills in vocational lesson planning is not well established.

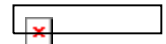
162. The Colchester Institute centre for music and performance hosts 15 professional events, plus other student events and mini festivals throughout the year, adding enrichment opportunities to students' programmes.

163. Individual tutorials are held regularly. Tutors concentrate successfully on improving students' performance. Students receive good advice about progression to employment and HE.

Leadership and management

164. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Initiatives to improve retention rates are having a positive impact. The self-assessment process is thorough and targets for improvement are accurately identified. Attendance rates are above average and most teachers deal effectively with the minority of students who are not punctual. Appraisal processes and the identification and provision of staff development activities are effective. Courses in performing arts, music and media are provided by two areas of the college and there is insufficient sharing of good practice across departments.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- very high pass rate for access to HE courses

- much good teaching on access courses

- broad range of access provision

- effective support and guidance for access students

- strong leadership of the access provision.

Weaknesses

- very low pass rates on GCE AS law and psychology courses

- o poor attendance rates for humanities lessons

- o inadequate resourcing of access to HE provision

- o unsatisfactory management and co-ordination of GCSE and GCE AS and A2 provision.

Scope of provision

165. There is a broad range of access provision, which has been considerably extended to improve its range and flexibility. In addition to the one-year full-time access to HE option, there are also a variety of other access-related courses providing flexible pathways into FE and HE. These include access to FE, access planning, and part-time, one-year or two-year, access to HE options. In 2002, a total of 169 students enrolled on this range of provision of whom 58 were full time. The humanities provision also includes GCSE English, GCE AS and A2 English language and literature, and GCE AS law and psychology. A combined total of 132 students enrolled for these part-time, day or evening classes in September 2002. Most humanities students are aged 19 or above.

Achievement and standards

166. The pass rate on the access to HE course has improved steadily over the last three years and in 2002 it exceeded the national average by 8%. The standard of students' work on these courses is very high. Students on these programmes successfully develop their critical thinking abilities and engage in a high level of analysis and research. There are very poor pass rates on GCE AS law and psychology courses. The standard of students' work in GCE AS lessons is low and some students display little active interest in, or commitment to, the subjects they are studying.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	94	36	20
		% retention	*	100	55
		% pass rate	53	42	73
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	69	54	64
		% retention	80	81	83
		% pass rate	84	86	94
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	**	31	23
		% retention	**	97	96
		% pass rate	**	36	41
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	**	47	18
		% retention	**	94	94
		% pass rate	**	44	41

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

* data unreliable

** course not running

Quality of education and training

167. Much of the teaching on access courses is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan carefully and question students effectively about their learning. There was evidence of the successful development of students' individual research and presentation skills in several lessons. In a communication lesson, for example, students explored concepts of cultural value and 'dumbing down' through a challenging and sophisticated debate, using examples as diverse as Michelangelo's *David* and Tracy Emin's *My Bed*. Teaching on GCE AS and A2 courses is generally satisfactory, but was unsatisfactory in a minority of lessons where students were inattentive and teachers failed to engage them in the learning tasks set.

168. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources in many lessons, including well-devised and imaginative written material. The accommodation, however, is scattered throughout different parts of the college and most teaching takes place in rooms that lack subject-related displays to assist students' learning. The lack of a base room for the large and growing cohort of mature access students prevents them from working collaboratively.

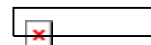
169. The progress of individual students on access programmes is closely and actively monitored through an effective system of academic tutorials. These are enhanced by a pilot scheme of termly progress boards at which the progress of every student is individually monitored. There is very good practice in the assessment of students' work in some access modules, but this is not the case across the programme as a whole. There is an internal verification system in place for the access courses, but there is no method for moderating standards on the GCSE and GCE AS courses.

170. Access students receive very good support in the college. There is an extensive range of additional support is for individuals with specific needs, and high-quality advice on careers and entrance to HE available. Guidance and support for part-time students on GCE AS and A-level courses are insufficient.

Leadership and management

171. There are serious weaknesses in the management of this area. Leadership and management of the access provision in the college are strong. The teaching team and the student cohort both identify positively with the provision and display active commitment to the value and effectiveness of the courses. There is clear evidence of quality improvement. The increasing flexibility of the access provision is further evidence of a positive management emphasis on inclusiveness and widening participation. The management of the part-time GCSE, and GCE AS and A-level provision, however, is unsatisfactory. The performance of students on these courses is poor and there are no effective arrangements for quality assurance. There are no systems for ensuring consistency in the assessment of students' work, and there is poor practice with regard to initial guidance and progression.

Literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- effective development of students' oral skills on ESOL courses

- good links between literacy and numeracy tutors and vocational staff.

Weaknesses

- too much unsatisfactory teaching

- insufficient development of students' literacy and numeracy skills

- ineffective monitoring of students' progress

- unsatisfactory co-ordination of literacy and numeracy support.

Scope of provision

172. The college does not offer separate special courses in literacy and numeracy. Literacy and numeracy are taught by staff from the college key skills unit. Literacy and numeracy provision is organised as an integral part of entry level and vocational courses and as additional learning support. The college offers ESOL courses at three levels, which are taught in a newly created ESOL section at the Colchester campus. Currently, there are 21 students on ESOL courses. Learning support for students on other courses is also available, and all full-time students undertake a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills at the start of their course. At the time of the inspection, 1,981 students were receiving additional learning support.

Achievement and standards

173. There is no formal data held on retention and pass rates of students on separate specialist literacy and numeracy and ESOL qualifications. At the time of the inspection, 23 students were entered for the new national literacy qualification and 8 students for the numeracy qualification. In ESOL, students make good progress in acquiring oral survival language skills and many are entered for a spoken test.

174. Across all aspects of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision, the identification of students' learning needs and targets are unsystematic and poorly documented. The standards of work on the majority of key skills courses are satisfactory. Many students appreciate the literacy and numeracy support in vocational contexts but there is no significant improvement in their standard of work. There are no mechanisms for evaluating the effect of this additional support in improving students' achievements.

Quality of education and training

175. Literacy and numeracy staff work alongside teachers in vocational areas to provide support for

individual students. There are good links between literacy and numeracy tutors and vocational staff, which provide good opportunities for the integration of literacy and numeracy skills into vocational key skills programmes. For example, students on a basic construction craft occupations course learn to measure and calculate volume using bricks and breeze blocks. There is effective team teaching by the vocational and literacy and numeracy tutors in some lessons.

176. The planning of literacy and numeracy teaching in vocational key skills lessons is poor. There is insufficient time available for tutors to address the individual needs of students in relation to developing their literacy and numeracy skills. There is much unsatisfactory teaching. In too many lessons, the focus is on completion of key skills tasks to the detriment of students' literacy and numeracy development. The key skills assignments are not sufficiently differentiated to take account of the literacy and numeracy skills required by students. For example, students are set the task of writing a letter when they have not acquired skills in sentence construction. Teachers do not make sufficient checks during lessons to find out if students understand the work and learning. There are very few examples of students being involved in evaluating or recording what they have learned.

177. In some ESOL lessons, teachers successfully use interactive methods to develop students' oral language skills using a variety of whole-group activities or work in pairs. Over-reliance on textbooks in the majority of lessons, however, prevents students from fully developing their reading and writing skills. Students do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their writing and extend their English vocabulary.

178. Assessment practices are weak. Students' individual learning plans have recently been introduced but are not used consistently. Students are not actively involved in setting targets and are unaware of the skills development required for their literacy and numeracy development. The monitoring and reviewing of students' progress are not systematic and are generally unsatisfactory. The learning support assistants work hard to adapt and simplify vocational learning material to help students. It is not always clear, however, whether their role is to help students to complete their primary learning goal by assisting them in the completion of assignments, or to help them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

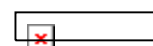
179. There are adequate learning resources to develop literacy, numeracy and language skills including self-teaching packs for students in the college learning centres. Effective use is made of the language development network resources to develop literacy and language skills in vocational contexts. In ESOL, many of the resources are aimed at students with English as a foreign language (EFL). The team are reviewing these and developing appropriate materials to reflect the cultural diversity and needs of students. Many tutors have attended college briefing sessions relating to the integration of literacy, numeracy and key skills. Some staff have attended the core curriculum training. However, too few staff are qualified to national standards.

180. Students receive good personal support from tutors, which they value. The initial screening programme identifies the additional learning needs of most students but does not cover all students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses and, consequently, the literacy and numeracy support needs of this group are not always identified.

Leadership and management

181. The co-ordination of learning support across the college is unsatisfactory. The roles and responsibilities of literacy and numeracy and key skills tutors are unclear. There are serious weaknesses in the quality assurance procedures, resulting in a failure to monitor the quality of cross-college support for literacy and numeracy.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- good attendance, retention and pass rates

- good teaching of individual students

- effective use of learning support assistants.

Weaknesses

- insufficient provision for students in vocational settings

- unsuitable teaching accommodation at the Colchester campus

- lack of rigour in target setting.

Scope of provision

182. The college offers a suitable range of study opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are separate specialist full-time and part-time courses enabling students with various learning difficulties and/or disabilities to improve their self-confidence, increase independence, improve literacy and numeracy, and develop practical skills. There are currently 576 students on such courses across the college, including 97 full-time students and 243 part-time students on separate specialist courses.

183. There is insufficient provision to enable students to develop specialist occupational skills. Apart from a small amount of hairdressing, construction and motor vehicle work, students on the specialist programmes do not have the opportunity to develop their practical, learning, literacy and numeracy skills in vocational settings. This limits the progression opportunities for some students.

184. Through local partnerships, the college provides useful opportunities for adults with sensory and/or physical disabilities to use IT with adaptations and specialist software. This successfully enables them to improve the quality of their lives and to take part in education. The college also provides a small number of suitable part-time courses for adults with acquired brain injury.

Achievement and standards

185. Students' achievements are good. Retention and pass rates are above national averages. Current in-year retention rates are high and the level of students' attendance in lessons is good. In

most lessons, the standard of students' work is good or better. Students carry out a variety of tasks well in different settings and talk confidently about their work. They work safely in practical areas and are able to explain key health and safety features. In an ICT lesson, students were working above the level that would be expected of them. Each was able to make amendments to spreadsheet calculations and to identify accurately the mistakes they had made. Items made in pottery lessons are of a high standard.

Quality of education and training

186. The majority of teaching on separate specialist courses is good. In many lessons, students are well motivated. In the most effective lessons, teachers take account of the needs of individuals, set individual learning objectives and use appropriate methods successfully to improve students' independent learning and living skills. In such lessons, students are clear about what they have to do from the beginning of the lesson and are fully involved in self-evaluation of their progress. Students generally make positive contributions to discussions and, in one lesson, they participated confidently by carefully writing required words on the whiteboard.

187. Students benefit from the individual support they receive from staff. Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively together to support students and to maintain high levels of motivation. In a minority of lessons, teachers and learning support assistants intervene too quickly to help students, which prevents them from completing tasks for themselves. The adult basic skills core curriculum is being integrated with courses, but it is better developed in some lessons than in others. There are good opportunities to develop students' literacy and/or numeracy skills in practical activities and good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills on all courses.

188. Most resources are satisfactory and include a multi-skills workshop, pottery room, computers and appropriate software. Teachers make good use of specialist resources such as the cookery facilities for developing students' independent living skills. Teachers are appropriately qualified or are undertaking teaching qualifications. Learning support assistants are used effectively in lessons and provide a high ratio of staff to students. All key staff are trained in the basic skills core curriculum and have undertaken informative training in particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities, such as autism. Accommodation at the Colchester campus is often used to teach more than one group of students at a time. This leads to extraneous noise and constant movement through the area, which is detrimental to the quality of teaching and students' learning.

189. Students receive an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, which is used well by teachers. There is insufficient initial assessment of students' wider skills. Targets set in each student's individual learning plan are not always sufficiently precise to be helpful, either to teachers or students. Written feedback on students' assignments is insufficiently detailed to help students to improve the quality of their work.

190. The pre-foundation programme effectively meets the needs of a wide range of students, both aged 16 to 18 and those over 19 who are not yet ready to go on to level 1 courses and those who need preparation for employment or the development of independent learning skills.

191. Students receive informative pre-course guidance and support and many avail themselves of the opportunity to attend college to sample a course before enrolment. Students receive valuable guidance and support from their personal tutors throughout their programme.

Leadership and management

192. Management of the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. All staff have an annual review through an appraisal or a development interview at which individual targets for improvement are set. Meetings take place regularly and are informative. There is a well-defined team structure and good communication and teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. Data on retention rates and students' achievement are unreliable and there is insufficient checking of the discrepancies between central and locally held data.

Part D: College data

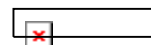
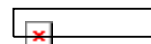


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2001/02



Level	16-18	19+
1	26	31
2	43	13
3	24	8
4/5	0	2
Other	7	46
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	782	1,138	8
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	288	443	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	356	379	3
Business administration, management and professional	830	2,042	12
Information and communications technology	1,247	7,042	35
Retailing, customer service and transportation	2	15	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	886	221	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	418	146	2
Health, social care and public services	575	8,643	5
Visual and performing arts and media	609	265	4

Humanities	121	226	1
English, languages and communication	977	231	5
Foundation programmes	1,183	2,526	16
Total	8,274	23,317	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

* figures have been rounded and hence may not total 100%

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	1,138	1,265	1,244	840	2,109	2,272
	Retention rate (%)	84	84	82	88	88	84
	National average (%)	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	97	75	54	98	90	52
	National average (%)	59	65	68	60	66	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,361	2,590	1,786	1,854	1,673	1,159
	Retention rate (%)	87	81	79	88	87	88
	National average (%)	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	91	77	67	93	79	72
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,683	1,649	1,690	1,631	1,622	1,483
	Retention rate (%)	82	83	88	86	86	89
	National average (%)	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	88	78	67	87	83	69
	National average (%)	72	74	76	62	66	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	96	19	6	530	361	236
	Retention rate (%)	91	89	100	89	93	96
	National average (%)	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate (%)	79	70	83	84	68	66
	National average (%)	64	66	55	56	56	53

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 1997/8-1998/9: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

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

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)	60	33	7	80
Level 2 (intermediate)	61	36	3	64
Level 1 (foundation)	65	26	9	23
Other sessions	46	42	12	24
Totals	59	34	7	191

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