

Stanmore College

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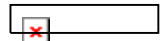
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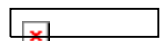
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Basic information about the college

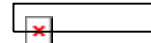


Name of college:	Stanmore College
Type of college:	Tertiary
Principal:	Russell Woodrow
Address of college:	Elm Park Stanmore Middlesex HA7 4BQ
Telephone number:	020 8420 7700
Fax number:	020 8420 6502
Chair of governors:	John Howard
Unique reference number:	130440
Name of reporting inspector:	Alan Hinchliffe HMI
Dates of inspection:	28 April - 2 May 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

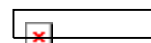


Stanmore College is a small tertiary college situated in the outer London Borough of Harrow. The college was established in 1987. In January 2000, the college was re-structured into Stanmore Sixth Form College and Stanmore Adult College, each with its own management structure. There is also a business development branch providing full-cost courses that operates as part of the adult college. Harrow, with a population of just over 200,000, is an affluent London borough with comparatively low unemployment. Harrow has a tertiary system of education. The borough contains one other tertiary college and a Roman Catholic sixth form college. Schools are organised into primary, middle, and high (12 to 16). During the year leading up to inspection, there has been a debate and consultation process on school reorganisation within the borough, the outcome of which may have implications for the shape of post-16 provision. Currently, around one-third of students aged 16 from Harrow schools continue their education and training outside the borough. Staying-on rates for school pupils are higher than the national average, at 85%. General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results for 2002 show that 59% of pupils educated in Harrow achieved 5 or more grades A* to C, significantly above the national average. The college is emphasising the existence of the new, distinct sixth form college as part of a strategy to increase recruitment from local high schools. The college recruits both from local schools and beyond Harrow, with students coming to the college from Brent, Barnet and Hertfordshire.

The college has around 800 full-time students, mostly aged 16 to 18, and around 6,000 part-time adult students. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is over 50%, broadly in line with the proportion found in Harrow schools but larger than in Harrow as a whole. In terms of full-time equivalent students, the balance between those aged 16 to 19 and adults is roughly even. Most students aged 16 to 18 are studying at advanced level. Adults study a wide range of short and long courses at all levels. There is no provision in engineering, construction, or hairdressing. Some 71% of the college's students are female.

The sixth form college and the adult college have distinct identities and different missions. The former's mission is 'to promote academic and personal success within a caring and supportive environment', the latter's 'to provide lifelong learning opportunities for the whole community in a welcoming and supportive environment'.

How effective is the college?



The quality of provision at the college is satisfactory or better. Pass rates on the majority of courses at the college have improved over the last three years and are now good overall. There has been a decline in the proportion of students who complete their courses over the same period. Inspectors judged provision to be good in business, management and professional studies, leisure and tourism, childcare, visual and performing arts and media, and English and modern foreign languages. Provision in science and mathematics, information and communications technology (ICT), humanities, and literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is satisfactory. The main strengths and areas for improvement are listed below.

Key strengths

- good support given by teachers to students

- the strategies to raise standards across the college
- good and improved pass rates on advanced level courses
- improvements in the quality of teaching
- responsiveness of the curriculum provision
- beneficial outcomes from restructuring
- clear vision of the future of the college.

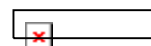
What should be improved

- the proportion of students who complete their courses
- attendance rates, particularly in the adult college
- key skills provision
- accommodation in some curriculum areas
- support for students for whom English is not their first language
- class sizes and space utilization

- the collection and use of management information.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

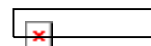


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Pass rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) and GCSE mathematics courses are now good for full-time students, but are low for part-time students. Retention rates on GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and GCSE courses are low. Much of the teaching on full-time GCE A-level courses is good, but the quality of teaching overall is inconsistent. There is good use of high-quality learning resources to support learning.
Business, administration, management and professional studies	Good. The business curriculum is well managed and there are high pass rates on a wide range of courses, although the percentage of high grades is low on GCE A2 and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) programmes. Retention rates are declining on many courses and are now below national averages on some. Much teaching is good and some is outstanding. Students benefit from careful monitoring that ensures that they make progress.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates have improved or been maintained at high levels, but retention rates have declined on full-time courses. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, although some is unsatisfactory. Resources to support teaching and learning are good, though some classrooms outside the college are unsatisfactory. Quality assurance procedures are insufficiently effective.
Leisure and tourism	Good. Pass rates for full-time students are high. On short courses, few students successfully complete the qualification. Good teaching and assessment practices, along with effective industrial links, help students to develop the skills and competencies needed to embark on careers in tourism or to progress to university. Learning support is not implemented effectively.
Childcare	Good. Pass and retention rates are very good on most courses. Teaching is good and students experience a wide range of stimulating learning activities. Staff have a broad range of expertise in early years settings. There are effective links with employers and providers of early years education, with a range of courses offered at community venues.

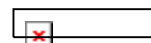
Visual, performing arts and media	Good. There are high pass rates and an effective and wide-ranging enrichment programme. Teaching is good. In many lessons, there is a strong focus on students' cultural diversity that enriches teaching and learning. Inadequacy of specialist equipment and accommodation resources across the provision limits learning and attainment. There is insufficient teaching of theory in art and design.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Pass rates are good and have improved significantly over the last three years, particularly in the social sciences. Teaching is satisfactory or better. Retention rates have improved but are still unsatisfactory for some GCE AS courses. The proportion of high grades achieved by students at GCE AS and A2 is low.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. Provision in English and modern foreign languages is good. There is much good teaching in both the sixth form and adult colleges. Pass rates are high on most sixth form college courses. There have been low retention rates on English courses and evening classes in modern foreign languages.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Teaching in the workplace and community is good and teachers make good use of authentic learning resources. The provision is responsive to local needs and students are supported well. Literacy and numeracy assessment for sixth form and ESOL students is not used adequately for planning individual learning. There is inadequate additional support for ESOL students.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Re-organisation of the college into a sixth form college and an adult college has established clearer identities for its provision for students of different ages and is designed to make the college more attractive to young people and their parents. The strategy of cutting some provision and raising entry criteria for some courses has resulted in financial deficits. Governors are clear about the strategic direction of the college but the full corporation is not sufficiently involved in strategic planning and in monitoring the overall performance of the college. Communication within the college is good and teachers are well informed about expectations and priorities. The management of curriculum areas is satisfactory or better. The college's self-assessment report is effective in identifying the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and in targeting areas for improvement. Quality assurance procedures are implemented effectively in most areas and students' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning have improved since the college's last inspection. The college is committed to providing equality of opportunity and is making good use of collaborative arrangements to broaden its curriculum and widen participation.

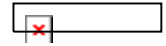
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college regularly reviews the needs of minority ethnic groups, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged groups in the local community. Strategies to increase participation from these groups have had a positive impact on the design of the curriculum. The college is responsive to local needs, for example, in

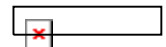
progress in meeting the obligations placed on it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act (SENDDA) 2001. Guides for parents and students, concerning SENDDA, are well written and readily available. The provision for full-time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The college's response to the needs of students with restricted mobility is good.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive much good guidance and support. There are good arrangements to provide potential students with information, advice and guidance about courses at the college. Students are well supported on their programmes by their teachers and tutors. There is a good programme of tutorial activities for students aged 16 to 18, with effective arrangements for the setting of individual learning targets and for reviewing progress. Arrangements for providing tutorial support for adult students are less consistent but are generally effective. There are good resources and help for students with regard to careers, higher education (HE) and other opportunities. Students also have access to support for personal and financial problems, and to a qualified counsellor. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported on their programmes by caring staff. Arrangements for additional learning support, including for students who are speakers of other languages, have not been fully effective in reaching all the students who need it.

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

- committed, helpful and supportive staff

- friendly and safe college

- good learning resource centre

- mature adult environment

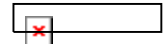
- enjoyable recreational activities

- good access to computers
- good assessment methods.

What they feel could be improved

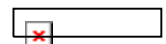
- poor refectory and social areas
- cold classrooms
- lack of student parking spaces
- support for ESOL speakers.

Other information

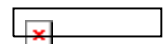


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

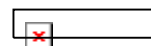


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	66	30	4
19+ and WBL*	60	34	6
Learning 16-18	60	36	4
19+ and WBL*	60	34	6

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Overall pass rates have risen significantly over the last three years, but this has been accompanied by a decline in retention rates, particularly on GCE AS and GCSE courses. Despite the fall in retention rates, the proportion of students starting courses who successfully complete their intended qualification has risen significantly over the last three years. During the period 1998/99 to 2001/02, aggregated pass rates on all courses at all levels have risen from a low base of 54% to 77%. Pass rates on many courses are now above national averages for similar colleges, and the improvement has been particularly noticeable on advanced level courses and short courses.
2. Retention rates up to 2001 were significantly above national averages across the college. By 2002, they had declined to around national averages overall. However, on GCE AS and GCSE courses, retention rates declined to 72% and 62%, respectively, in 2002, significantly below national averages.
3. The overall attendance rate at the lessons observed during inspection week was 74%, which is below the average of 78% recorded during all college inspections in 2001/02. This is unsatisfactory. Attendance rates were significantly lower for the adult college than for the sixth form college.
4. The standard of students' work is satisfactory overall. Inspectors judged students' attainment to be good or better in less than half of the sessions observed. In some curriculum areas, students make good progress. However, in others, many students' progress is too slow, and their written and oral work is not of a sufficiently high standard. Students make good progress when they are actively involved in their learning, and when teachers make them think and discuss. They develop good personal and learning skills, particularly through working collaboratively with peers. In childcare, students answer questions confidently and, through a good range of imaginative practical activities, acquire good vocational skills. They develop sound research skills that enable them to work independently. In performing arts, the quality of students' performances is often of a high standard. Students show both initiative and imagination in production work. In media studies, students are equally confident with both practical and theoretical work. Their oral and written work demonstrates good critical awareness of the complexities involved in interpreting media productions. Students in advanced level English classes develop good analytical skills that they use to good effect in deconstructing both language and literature. Many adult students on foundation level and ESOL courses make rapid progress, developing skills and competencies that enable them to participate more effectively in the community and the workplace.
5. The standard of students' work is less satisfactory on some courses. In art and design, students' written work is insufficiently evaluative or critical. Similarly, in many humanities subjects, although

students have a sound grasp of basic ideas, their written work is unsophisticated and fails to analyse material in sufficient depth. Where students are not engaged in lessons, for example, in some science and mathematics, and ICT classes, their progress is slow. On some courses, more able students are not achieving the standard of work of which they are capable.

16 to 18 year olds

6. Most students aged 16 to 18 are studying full-time courses at advanced level. Pass rates at this level have risen from 61% in 1998/99 to 86% in 2001/02, compared with a national average of 80%. In order to improve pass rates, the sixth form college raised its entrance criteria for GCE AS courses in 2001 to 6 grade Cs at GCSE, and expects students to achieve at least a grade D at GCE AS in order to progress to study at GCE A2. At intermediate level, pass rates were low in 2002, at 63% compared with a national average of 69%. At foundation level, pass rates were slightly above national averages in 2002. Retention rates at all levels have declined from a high base and are now at around national averages. Retention rates on GCE AS courses in 2001/02 were unsatisfactory. The college's determination to improve pass rates has had a negative effect on completion rates, especially on GCE AS courses and GCSE courses in mathematics and English.

7. Students make satisfactory progress in comparison with their prior attainment at GCSE. Analysis of value added data for advanced level students shows that they are achieving grades broadly in line with predictions based on previous examination results. At GCE AS and A2, the proportion of students achieving high grades is low. However, in comparison with students nationally on advanced level courses, the college recruits students with a weaker GCSE profile than average.

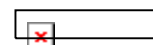
8. Students' achievements are good on advanced level English courses, in business studies, on childcare courses, in leisure and tourism and on most courses in performing arts and media. In these areas, many courses achieved a 100% pass rate in 2002. Pass rates are more variable on science and mathematics, humanities and ICT courses.

Adult learners

9. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of adults who successfully complete their qualifications at all levels. Pass rates for adults were particularly low until 2000, with most students failing to complete their courses successfully. At foundation and intermediate levels, pass rates in 2002 were above national averages. At advanced level, pass rates remain below national averages, although they have improved from 32% in 1999 to 65% in 2002. The success rate of adult students on access to HE courses has risen significantly and is now good. Many adults take short courses, particularly in ICT. Pass rates on such courses reached 90% in 2002, compared with 48% in 2000.

10. Although the proportion of adult students who complete their courses has declined, except at foundation level, retention rates remain above national averages overall.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 149 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 64% of these sessions, satisfactory in 31%, and unsatisfactory in 5%. Only four lessons were judged to be outstanding. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is significantly lower than at the last inspection of the college carried out by the former Further Education Funding Council in 1998, when 18% of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is best at advanced level, where inspectors saw no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching in English and modern foreign languages, leisure and tourism, visual and performing arts and media, and childcare was particularly good.

12. In the best lessons, teachers enthuse and motivate students by using appropriate teaching strategies to help students to learn. Students work purposefully and enjoy their learning. Across the college as a whole, teaching was more effective in practical lessons than in sessions focused on theory. On vocational courses, students learnt most effectively when they were expected to apply their knowledge to their vocational area. In childcare, learning activities are innovative and stimulate students' interest. For example, role play is used effectively to illustrate theories of learning in early years' settings. Students learn by doing and then reflecting upon the experience. In English, varied activities help students to make good progress in identifying linguistic and literary techniques. In an outstanding and enjoyable lesson analysing 18th Century poetry, students responded well to the expectation that their critiques should have real depth. Some inspirational teaching in performing arts led to every member of the group performing to the best of their ability. In humanities, the teaching of theoretical concepts is sound, and students' learning is systematically checked through questioning, tests and essays, which are marked quickly and constructively, helping students to improve.

13. Many teachers pitch their lessons well to the needs of particular groups and individuals. In performing arts, teachers use a detailed analysis of students' ability effectively to tailor lessons to meet the needs of students and to support the less able. Although most teachers are aware of the need to cater for varying abilities in lesson, teaching strategies to ensure that all students can learn effectively are under-developed in some areas. More able students do not always learn as much or as quickly as they are capable of. In some lessons, such students are not urged to think as deeply as they could.

14. In many satisfactory lessons, insufficient thought is given to ensuring that students take responsibility for their own learning and play an active part in the pedagogical process. Some lessons are dull, characterised by long teacher presentations that fail to engage or enthuse all students. Students find it hard to sustain their concentration, and progress in such lessons is often slow. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in GCSE lessons in science and mathematics, characterised by inappropriate activities that fail to sustain students' interest and motivation. In a minority of lessons, poor attendance or punctuality has an adverse effect on learning.

15. Most teachers and support staff are appropriately qualified or working towards a relevant qualification. However, the number of full-time and fractional teachers who hold a full teaching qualification is low, at 63%. In some vocational areas, for example in visual and performing arts and media, effective use is made of part-time teachers that currently work in the industry. Opportunities for staff to undertake training and development are mostly good. Increasingly there has been an emphasis in staff training on improving classroom teaching and the use of information technology (IT) in the classroom.

16. The general accommodation used by the college is satisfactory. The main site is compact, with a mixture of older and newer buildings. Most classrooms are of an appropriate standard. Some classrooms have lively wall displays. The students' canteen is satisfactory, but the common room, based in a small mobile hut, is inadequate. There is a clear and well-written accommodation strategy. The annual maintenance programme is effective and the site is generally graffiti and litter free. Some of the mobile huts used for teaching are modern and appropriate, but others are inadequate, for example, in childcare. The college has plans to replace the poorer huts with a new building. However, space utilisation is poor, calculated at 29% during a week in November 2002.

17. Specialist resources and equipment in most curriculum areas are satisfactory. However, in visual and performing arts and media, and in childcare, specialist accommodation is inadequate. Community learning centres are adequately equipped. The resources in the learning centre are good. The area is well designed, with 73 computer stations for students' use. There is an adequate range of book stock and periodicals. The college's IT network is well structured and has the capacity for expansion. Students have good access to the Internet and e-mail facilities. The college's intranet is underdeveloped and is not yet effective as a learning resource for all curriculum areas. The college has a detailed health and safety policy that is monitored. However, during the inspection, inspectors raised concerns in the areas of ICT and performing arts. The college has responded positively to the need to provide better facilities for students with physical disabilities. However, 14% of the main campus remains inaccessible for some students.

18. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good for students at the sixth form college. The college has clear guidelines for assessment that are regularly updated. Students receive detailed assignment schedules at the beginning of their programme with clear marking guidelines and timescales for completion. Assessment, internal verification and moderation procedures are thorough and meet the needs of students and awarding body requirements. Regular assessments of work are accurate and provide students with information about how well they are doing and how they can improve. Helpful reviews monitor students' progress against targets and predicted grades.

19. On business studies and performing arts courses, good use is made of the intranet to keep students informed of their progress towards meeting targets. On most courses, students' work is returned promptly and marked accurately with sufficient comment to enable students to make progress. However, childcare students are not always told how they can improve their work, and there is inconsistency in the approach to marking and annotation of students' work by English teachers. Assessment for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) childcare does not take place until half way through the course and students are not always sure of their levels of competence in the workplace. Regular and informative contact with parents and employers gives students, their parents or employers a clear picture of their performance.

20. Pre-course assessment for outreach programmes in the adult college is used effectively to plan appropriate programmes of work for literacy and numeracy students. However, assessment is not always used effectively to place ESOL students on the appropriate course. There is no systematic assessment or review process applied to monitor the progress of adult students on part-time courses in science and mathematics.

21. The college has developed a good range of provision. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of two distinct groups of learners: students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Two distinct curriculum offers are marketed separately as a sixth form college and an adult college. In the sixth form college, at advanced level, the provision offer is wide, with a good range of GCE AS and A2 and vocational programmes. The provision at intermediate level is satisfactory and includes five General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses. GCSE courses are only offered in English and mathematics to full-time students. At foundation level, there are three GNVQ courses. There are clear progression routes from foundation level to advanced level in business studies, ICT and leisure and tourism.

22. The sixth form college offers a good range of enrichment activities that supplement lessons. Enrichment activities include sporting activities, clubs and societies and additional qualifications, for example, courses in modern languages and music. Overall, the students' take-up of this entitlement is satisfactory. Students are required to follow a key skills programme. However, the approach taken by the college is unsatisfactory. Specialist teachers are used to teach discrete groups. Attendance is low and many students do not consider key skills to be worthwhile. In 2002/03, of the 825 students who opted to take a key skills qualification, only 55% had been retained by April 2003. Of these, only 35% are indicating an interest in taking the final test.

23. The college's actions to widen participation are good. The adult college offers a wide range of courses at its main campus. In addition, the college has developed a large number of local and regional partnerships that serve to extend the range and breadth of the provision to the wider community. Effective partnerships have led to the development of ICT community centres across Brent and Harrow. To meet local needs, basic skills training courses are provided in community locations. The provision of ESOL has been expanded. In addition, the college offers a good range of non-accredited courses funded by the local education authority.

24. The college has been responsive in meeting specific employers' needs, particularly in the areas of childcare, basic skills and management training. There are some well-established formal links between the college and employers. For example, the 'early years steering group' provides good support for work-based trainees. The college finds good-quality work placements for full-time students.

25. There are good arrangements to provide potential students with information, advice and guidance. Links with local 11 to 16 high schools include visits from college staff to contribute to

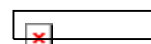
guidance programmes on post-16 education opportunities. The college also works with special schools to help students with special educational needs to make a successful transition to college. All full-time students in the sixth form college are interviewed, and both full and part-time students have access to advice and guidance as part of the enrolment process. Students are placed on the right programme for their needs. Entry criteria for courses for students aged 16 to 18 have been made more stringent in recent years in an attempt to raise pass rates and reduce drop-out. There are some early signs that this may have contributed to improving retention rates in the current year. However, the policy of not allowing students to enter GCSE examinations in English and mathematics if they do not complete coursework to a C grade standard is reducing completion rates in those subjects. The progression rate from GCE AS courses to A2 has also been adversely affected by the insistence that students must achieve a minimum of a grade D at GCE AS.

26. There is much good support for students in the college. There is a good library of careers, HE and other information available through student services, including computer and video resources. Careers advice and guidance are provided through the tutorial programme, and a Connexions adviser operates on site. All students on foundation courses receive individual careers interviews and other students may request one. Students also receive financial assistance through the college's hardship fund and can obtain other forms of advice and support, including the services of a qualified counsellor. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported on their programmes by caring staff. Special equipment is made available as well as additional support for learning and physical care. Help is available for students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, from qualified staff.

27. Arrangements for additional learning support have not been fully effective in the current year in reaching all the students who need it. The quality of literacy and numeracy teaching is good, and additional support is provided in lessons for all students on entry level and part-time literacy and numeracy courses. Additional support for basic skills is made available to students on some courses on a whole-group basis as part of their normal timetable. In-class support is also provided for some individual students. All full-time students in the sixth form college have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed on entry to the college. In 2002/03, a lack of staff with the appropriate qualifications hindered the effective operation of the resulting programme of support. Although most students identified did eventually receive some support, this has not been the case for all. Arrangements to provide additional support to students for whom English is a second language have not worked well, although there is a good programme leading to qualifications in English for those who wish to apply to HE. There is no formal system for reporting back to personal tutors the attendance and progress of students receiving support. There is no evaluation of the value added to students' achievements by learning support programmes. Students in the adult college who need support are offered it, but do not always wish to take it up.

28. Students are well supported by their teachers and tutors. College staff take trouble to know the individual needs of students and do their best to address them. This is much appreciated by students. There is a good programme of tutorial activities for students aged 16 to 18, including careers and HE advice and other relevant topics, with effective arrangements for setting individual learning targets and reviewing progress. There is an effective induction programme which introduces students to the college and informs them of their rights and responsibilities. Students appreciate the need for this but find three days of this activity rather long. They welcome the additional subject or course induction, which enables staff to assess students' skills and check they are placed on the correct course. In the adult college, there are varying arrangements for supporting adult students, depending on the length of the programme. These arrangements are effective. Adult students feel well supported and know where to obtain help if they need it.

Leadership and management



management to form Stanmore Sixth Form College and Stanmore Adult College as part of its strategy for raising standards and meeting the education and training needs of local people. The re-organisation has established clearer identities for the college's provision for students of different ages, and is designed to make the college more attractive to pupils from local high local schools. The management approach adopted for students aged 16 to 18 has been modelled on successful practice in sixth form colleges. The principal visits each full-time tutor group every year in order to listen and respond to students' views. Staff are committed to bringing about improvement and work together well in teams. Communication within the college is effective and teachers are well informed about expectations and priorities. Good use is made of the college intranet to disseminate information. In some areas, the complexities of managing curriculum areas across the two colleges through separate management teams have not been fully resolved.

30. Students' pass rates overall have improved from a low base since the last inspection and are at the national average for general further education (FE) and tertiary colleges. Improvements are most marked for students on advanced courses, which form the greater proportion of the college's provision for full-time students. Entry requirements for GCE A-level courses were raised in 2001, but retention rates declined to below the national average for all age groups the year prior to the inspection. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on full-time intermediate courses declined to below the national average in 2002, but pass rates for adults on full-time foundation level courses improved significantly. Pass rates for adults on short courses have improved markedly since the establishment of the adult college.

31. Leadership and management of curriculum areas are satisfactory or better. In the better managed areas, such as business administration, management and professional studies, the curriculum is well planned and actions to bring about improvements are effectively implemented. Similarly, in childcare, action planning arising from self-assessment sets out clear strategies for improvement, and the effectiveness of the actions taken is carefully monitored. Good and enthusiastic management has enlivened the provision in English and modern foreign languages. Particularly good attention is given to promoting equality of opportunity in visual and performing arts and media. In areas, such as humanities, where leadership and management are satisfactory, courses are well co-ordinated. However, there is a degree of informality about subject leadership which leads to limited accountability and a lack of standardisation in the way actions are taken. Managers were fairly new in post at the time of inspection in science and mathematics, and the impact of the actions they were taking had not been fully realised across both the sixth form and adult colleges. There is insufficient strategic leadership in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Data are not used consistently in leisure and tourism to evaluate provision and bring about improvement. Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall in ICT, quality assurance procedures are not having sufficient impact and the monitoring of the quality of the franchise provision is poor.

32. The college has clear procedures for quality assurance and managers in most areas implement them effectively. Senior managers carefully review the performance of courses, and action planning for bringing about improvements is often effective. Self-assessment procedures accurately identify the main strengths and weaknesses in curriculum areas but the overall college action plan produced following self-assessment is not aligned closely enough with the college strategic plan. A sub-committee of the corporation monitors the academic performance of the college carefully and the full corporation pays particular attention to examination results, but does not monitor agreed indicators of students' achievements systematically on a regular basis. Methodologies for predicting students' achievements on GCE A-level courses compared with their achievements at enrolment are used effectively by teachers and managers for monitoring students' progress and for setting targets to help individual students to improve their performance.

33. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is around the national average for general FE colleges. Lesson observation procedures have been established and good use has been made of external consultants to improve teaching and learning, but there is insufficient observation of lessons taught by part-time teachers. At the time of the inspection, the college was establishing additional posts to strengthen its strategy for raising the standards of teaching and learning. There is an appraisal system covering all teachers except those in their probationary year. The number of teachers appraised in 2001/02 was low, at 40%, but improved to over 80% in 2002/03. The process does not take sufficient account of a teacher's performance in the

classroom. Following appraisal, teachers are provided with development opportunities but they are not set clear improvement targets linked to the strategic priorities of the college. The development opportunities provided are of a general nature and are not specifically linked to college priorities, although college-wide training events are held on a termly basis.

34. The reliability of management information held centrally by the college has improved since the last inspection but data on some NVQ courses remain unreliable and in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, centrally held data do not provide robust information for decision making. Because students who have left courses are not always removed from the system, students' attendance rates generated through electronic registers are not reliable at all times during the year, particularly in the adult college.

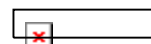
35. At 50%, the percentage of students from minority ethnic groups at the college is higher than that of the borough of Harrow. The college is committed to providing equality of opportunity and there is an awareness of and respect for cultural diversity across the college. The college monitors the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy but there is insufficient monitoring of the academic performance of students from different minority ethnic backgrounds. The college provides a good range of opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and effective support for students with disabilities across the full range of college courses. The college is responding well to obligations placed upon it by recent legislation on race relations and disability.

36. The college is making good use of collaborative arrangements to broaden its curriculum and widen participation. In partnership with Park High School, the college is leading the Harrow 14 to 19 Pathfinder project, which aims to raise the achievements of different groups of pupils and students. Since the establishment of the adult college, innovative use has been made of project funding and partnership arrangements to diversify the curriculum and widen the participation of adults in education and training through different initiatives such as working through voluntary organisations.

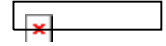
37. Governors and senior managers work well together and operate within a satisfactory framework for governance. The clerk to the corporation is a member of the college senior management team and governors receive impartial advice and guidance. The college has clear strategic aims and objectives. Governors attend annual residential training events where issues of strategic importance to the development of the college are reviewed, but all the governors are not sufficiently involved at all stages of the strategic planning process. Governors monitor the implementation of the strategic plan through reviewing the achievement of ten high level targets and associated indicators, but these are not directly linked to the aims and objectives set out in the strategic plan and do not give governors a full overview of the progress being made.

38. Managers carefully monitor costs and expenditure and new courses are only established when they are financially viable. Following the corporation's strategic decision to cut areas of provision and to raise entry requirements for enrolment on GCE A-level courses in order to raise standards and make the college more attractive to students and their parents, enrolments have declined. Governors are fully aware that the sixth form college is operating at a loss and the college has used its reserves to support its strategy of maintaining the breadth of provision and staffing structure of the sixth form college until student numbers recover. The strategy adopted has resulted in historic cost deficits for the two years prior to the inspection. Student numbers have not recovered, although applications were showing an improvement on the previous year at the time of the inspection. The college, however, has a history of fluctuating enrolments and underachievement of funding targets. The college deploys teachers effectively but the average number of students in classes and the utilisation of teaching space are low due to some small classes in the sixth form college. However, on the basis of the improvements in students' achievements since the college was re-structured, it provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on full-time GCE A-level and GCSE mathematics courses
- much good teaching on full-time GCE A-level courses
- good use of high quality learning resources to support teaching and learning
- effective tracking and monitoring of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on GCE AS and GCSE courses
- low pass rates on part-time GCE A-level courses
- inadequate attention to the differing needs of students.

Scope of provision

39. The college offers both full-time and part-time provision in sciences and mathematics. There are currently 214 enrolments on science courses and 186 on mathematics courses. Students are mainly full time and aged 16 to 18. The majority follow advanced level science courses in biology, chemistry, environmental science, mathematics or physics. The mathematics offer at advanced level includes modules in pure, applied and statistics. By selecting different combinations, students can work towards a GCE AS, advanced level or further mathematics qualification. There are 54 full-time students who are following either GCSE mathematics or a GCSE statistics course. Adult students are offered a range of science and mathematics part-time courses in the evenings. There are currently 150 adult enrolments on science or mathematics courses.

Achievement and standards

40. Pass rates on GCE AS and GCSE mathematics courses are good. In 2000 and 2001, the proportion of students passing GCE AS subjects was above the national average when compared with similar colleges. Pass rates on GCE AS biology, physics and mathematics courses were very good. On the GCSE mathematics course, pass rates have been higher than the national average for the last two years. However, pass rates on the GCSE statistics course, in 2002, were very poor, with only 5% of students gaining grade A* to C. Pass rates in 2002, for students aged 16 to 18 taking GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, were good. Most advanced level students in mathematics, and some in physics, gain grades higher than predicted by their average GCSE points score on entry. The pass rates for adults who take one-year GCE AS courses in biology and physics are poor. Retention rates are poor on GCE AS and GCSE courses. They have been well below the national average for similar colleges over the past three years. GCE A-level retention rates for full-time courses have improved and are now satisfactory or better.

41. The standard of students' work is appropriate for the level at which they are studying. Science students' practical skills are well developed and they have a good understanding of safe working practices. Many mathematics students have a good understanding of graphical techniques. Students are beginning to effectively use the Internet to find source materials for coursework and homework assignments. A high proportion of students who complete an advanced level course progress to HE, many to a science-related or mathematics-related course.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	208	92	100
		% retention	69	74	61
		% pass rate	20	51	54
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	*	22	27
		% retention	*	82	48
		% pass rate	*	78	85
GCE A-level mathematics (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	45	38	20
		% retention	42	84	90
		% pass rate	63	41	94
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	75	63
		% retention	*	82	56
		% pass rate	*	50	83
GCE A-level biology (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	33	23	10
		% retention	45	52	90
		% pass rate	18	42	89
GCE A-level chemistry (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	29	16	15
		% retention	48	44	93
		% pass rate	93	71	93

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

42. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. The better teaching is on GCE AS courses. Teachers have produced an excellent range of course handbooks, module workbooks and revision guides to support learning. In the better lessons, teachers effectively use a wide range of resources. For example, in one very good GCSE mathematics lesson, the teacher made effective use of a computer-linked data projector to demonstrate the use of software to create graphs and solve equations. In a physics lesson, a computer simulation was used to illustrate the air traffic controller's role in managing the movement of aircraft. This effectively reinforced students' understanding of relative velocity. The teaching of practical science is very effective. Laboratory sessions are well managed and teachers place a strong emphasis on safe working practices. For example, students in a chemistry lesson undertook a health and safety risk assessment before performing an experiment to determine the enthalpy change of a chemical reaction.

43. Some teaching is unimaginative. In some mathematics lessons, students spend too much time watching teachers calculate examples on the whiteboard before completing set worksheets. In a few science theory lessons, students' participation is limited to listening and copying notes. Some unsatisfactory teaching in GCSE lessons was attributable to poor planning and organisation. Teachers have a good awareness of their students' different abilities. However, few teachers have used this to develop appropriate teaching methods to meet individual students' needs.

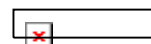
44. In general, resources used for the teaching of science are good. The science and mathematics team has benefited from the college's recent investment in information and learning technology (ILT) and the emphasis on improving teaching and learning to produce high-quality learning resources. In some lessons, teachers require students to use IT during practical work or theory sessions. A number of good CD-ROMs are available to students in the physics laboratory and the science resource centre. However, not all teachers make effective use of IT, particularly on advanced level mathematics courses. Wall displays in teaching rooms are colourful and relate to the subject being taught. However, some of the older laboratories are old-fashioned in appearance.

45. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress are good. Homework is set regularly, marked carefully and returned promptly. The assessment of coursework is rigorous and fair. Students receive helpful feedback on their work and are shown how they can improve. Full-time students on advanced level courses are set a minimum target grade at the start of their course. Progress towards these targets is assessed regularly. Tutorial sessions are effectively used to review individual students' progress. Students find the process motivating. Students receive good support from their subject teachers and personal tutors. However, students whose first language is not English do not receive sufficient help during lessons. Most teachers, although well qualified in their own subject, do not have the skills to support ESOL students. A few teachers provide extra lessons for students with language barriers.

Leadership and management

46. Overall, the management of science and mathematics is satisfactory. The curriculum managers for science and mathematics are new, but are demonstrating good leadership qualities. They work closely together to ensure that students who are studying both science and mathematics courses are well supported. Staff meetings for full-time teachers take place regularly, but part-time teachers are often unable to attend. There is rigorous analysis of full-time students' performance. A regular cycle of lesson observations has been introduced but is not yet fully effective in improving the quality of teaching. The management of part-time evening provision is unsatisfactory. Procedures for assuring the quality of the provision are not sufficiently thorough.

Business administration, management and professional studies



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- much good teaching

- valuable work experience for students on GNVQ, AVCE and Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) courses

- effective assessment and monitoring of students' performance

- wide range of provision meeting local needs

- good teamwork and course management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on many courses

- low proportion of students gaining high grades on GCE A-level and AVCE programmes

- insufficient support for students with language barriers.

Scope of provision

47. The college provides full-time GNVQ intermediate, AVCE, GCE AS and A-level courses for students aged 16 to 18 in business and accounting. There are 132 students currently on these programmes. A good range of full-time courses is also offered in administrative and office skills. These include a specialist ILEX course for legal secretaries, which has 23 students. A wide range of part-time adult education courses is offered in administrative, secretarial, management and professional studies. Professional studies courses include marketing, accounting, management, mortgage lending and teacher training. In total, there are 258 students on these programmes. A further 134 students attend management courses that take place on employers' premises and 181 adults are following word processing courses in outreach centres.

Achievement and standards

48. Pass rates are good, particularly on full-time courses. On GCE AS and A-level business, GCE AS accounting, AVCE, GNVQ intermediate business and the ILEX diploma courses, the pass rates have remained above the national average for the last two years. In 2002, the pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate and on three advanced level courses was 100%. However, the proportion of students achieving high grades on advanced level courses is below the national average. For example, in 2002, less than 16% of students achieved high grades on GCE AS and A-level courses and no students achieved high grades on the AVCE programme. Pass rates on courses taken by adults vary considerably, and some are below national averages. However, the certificate and diploma in marketing courses both achieved a 100% pass rate in 2002.

49. In 2002, retention rates on several courses declined and have now fallen to below national averages, for example, on the AVCE, the GNVQ intermediate business and the NVQ level 2 administration courses. Retention rates on the current AVCE programme are unsatisfactory.

50. Students produce a good standard of work and make good progress. In lessons, students demonstrate a commitment to their studies and show a keen interest. Students support each other and are keen to participate in discussion and debate. They are confident to raise queries or ask for clarification when necessary. The quality of students' written work is in line with expectations. Many students can apply their knowledge successfully to real vocational contexts.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Word processing (one year)	1	No. of starts	103	24	23
		% retention	84	96	83
		% pass rate	48	70	89
ILEX certificate	2	No. of starts	33	25	24
		% retention	88	96	79
		% pass rate	100	88	95
GNVQ intermediate business studies	2	No. of starts	17	20	24
		% retention	65	85	83
		% pass rate	91	100	100
GCE A-level business studies (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	63	62	27
		% retention	71	65	96
		% pass rate	80	88	100
GCE AS business studies	3	No. of starts	*	47	71
		% retention	*	91	82
		% pass rate	*	81	83
GNVQ business studies (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	22	17	21
		% retention	95	71	57
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

51. There is much good teaching and some is outstanding. In the better lessons, teachers effectively use their own and students' experience to illuminate learning with up-to-date business examples. Lessons are well planned and closely follow good schemes of work. Teaching is mostly well managed and key learning points are effectively reinforced. In a particularly successful GNVQ foundation business lesson, role play was used to illustrate common problems with communication. Using a type of Chinese whispers, messages were passed from one student to another. The last student then produced a garbled report. The tutor used this experience very effectively to illustrate the main learning points. In other lessons, students enjoy their activities and substantial learning takes place. Valuable work experience is built into GNVQ, AVCE and ILEX courses. These placements provide students with an invaluable and relevant insight into the world of work.

52. The monitoring and assessment of students' work are highly effective. On full-time programmes, very good use is made of individual subject learning plans to set targets and track students' progress. However, these are not used for adult students. Teachers' feedback to students on assignments is constructive and work is returned promptly. Part-time students make extensive use of their work experience, for example, in projects and examination answers. Parents, and employers of sponsored students, are regularly informed of their progress.

53. Staff are well qualified and experienced. However, some have had insufficient commercial updating and some have yet to achieve formal qualifications at degree level. Students have access to good ICT equipment for personal use outside formal lessons. The workshop used for much teaching of computerised accounts and some ILEX sessions is cramped. It provides insufficient space for effective teaching and learning to take place.

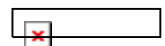
54. The college provides a wide range of programmes that meet local needs. There is good progression from GNVQ foundation to advanced level business courses. Most adult students who start on an office skills programme move on to more difficult courses. Many management and professional courses are taught on employers' premises as well as at the college.

55. Full-time students have their basic skills and key skills assessed at the start of their course. However, students who are identified as needing support do not always receive it. Students who have English as a second or other language do not receive adequate support to help them to cope with specialist vocational language. Many are unwilling to use the central support services and there is a lack of appropriately trained teachers in the business team. These students do not fully participate in class discussions, have difficulty interpreting examination questions and cannot cope with the language used in office skills subjects. However, students speak highly of the general support provided by teachers and are enjoying their courses.

Leadership and management

56. Course management and team working are good. Students' performance is carefully analysed. Changes in the provision have led to improvements. Failing courses have been removed, where appropriate. Classroom observation has been used to raise standards and support individual teachers. Where there is unsatisfactory teaching or specific concerns about a course, prompt action is taken. There is a strong emphasis on raising standards. Teachers work effectively together as a team. There is constant attention to detail, including the careful monitoring of individual students' performance. Clear targets are set to improve the provision and widen the range of courses.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- very good pass rates on GNVQ, AVCE and GCE AS ICT courses

- effective use of teachers' up-to-date technical expertise

- good use of assessment and target setting to motivate students

- effective widening of participation.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on many courses

- slow progress of students in some lessons

- unsatisfactory teaching accommodation in two community venues

- insufficient action to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

57. The college offers a good range of ICT and computing courses. The full-time provision for students aged 16 to 18 provides good opportunities for progression from foundation through to advanced level. Courses include GCE AS and A-level computing and ICT, Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in computer studies, and foundation and intermediate level GNVQ. There are 203 students on full-time courses.

58. The adult provision includes an extensive range of part-time day and evening ICT courses and a full-time access to HE course. Beginners can choose between three-hour taster sessions or courses of up to thirteen weeks. Courses include general computing, word-processing and use of the Internet. At the more advanced levels, courses include web design, programming, Internet technology, computer applications and computerised book-keeping. In addition, entry and foundation level courses are offered at locations in the community. Approximately 2,160 adults had enrolled on part-time courses by April of the academic year 2002/03. Over half of the part-time enrolments were at community locations.

Achievement and standards

59. Pass rates are high on most full-time courses, but retention rates have declined and are unsatisfactory on some courses. For example, whilst the pass rates on the AVCE course, which was the advanced GNVQ prior to 2002, are excellent, retention rates have fallen over the last three years from 74% to 54%. Pass rates on the GCE AS ICT course and on the GCE A2 computing course were well above national averages in 2002, at 100% and 94%, respectively. However, retention and pass rates for the GCE AS computing course fell to below the national averages. Few students on advanced level courses achieve high grades. Pass rates in key skills in IT in 2001 were very poor, at only 6%.

60. Overall, retention and pass rates for part-time adult students are satisfactory. Although poor on the European computer driving licence (ECDL) course, they are good on other computing courses. For instance, pass and retention rates on both the diploma in web design and the certificate in computer applications were above national averages in 2002.

61. Most students show interest and enthusiasm for their subjects. They develop good practical IT skills. Students on the full-time AVCE course have a good understanding of technical language. They can accurately describe the process of building a computer and installing software. Some students make rapid progress. For example, in one group, most students were able to program in Visual Basic after only two terms. However, many students are insufficiently unaware of commercial practices. For example, the planning and documenting of programs is often poor. In a significant minority of lessons, students' progress is slow and their attainment weak. Attendance is poor in some lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) (short)	1	No. of starts	58	27	155
		% retention	100	81	90
		% pass rate	52	41	65
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	18	24	37
		% retention	94	100	78
		% pass rate	65	67	90
Cambridge IT certificate in computer applications	3	No. of starts	*	143	105
		% retention	*	77	80
		% pass rate	*	63	77
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	*	37	43
		% retention	*	95	67
		% pass rate	*	91	66
GNVQ advanced ICT (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	23	20	24
		% retention	74	65	54
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	*	42	56
		% retention	*	90	82
		% pass rate	*	71	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

62. Most teaching is good or better, but there is some unsatisfactory teaching. At the beginning of the better lessons, teachers explain the lesson objectives and outline the skills students are expected to develop. For example, in one lesson, a teacher effectively explained and demonstrated the different ways of creating and formatting text. By the end of the lesson, most adults were able to produce their own attractive slides. A feature of some lessons is the skilful use of a mixture of whole-class and group activities to maintain students' interest. For example, in a GCE AS lesson, the teacher reviewed exam techniques. Effective questioning helped students to establish the key facts and the groups' responses were used to produce a model answer. At another stage in the lesson, students worked enthusiastically and collaboratively. As a result of the task, to contrast bitmap images with vector images in an advertising brochure, each group produced a set of facts that led to a well-worked solution.

63. The poorer lessons are characterised by ineffective planning and vague objectives. Some teachers fail to assess what students learn. Other lessons are dull, with insufficient opportunities for students to contribute. In some lessons, there is an inadequate range of materials to maintain students' interest and they become bored and restless. More able students are not always made to think and many fail to develop to their full potential. In some lessons, the pace of the lesson is too slow and too little is achieved.

64. Most teachers have good up-to-date technical knowledge. Some part-time teachers are employed within the ICT industry and many full-time teachers have higher degrees in computing. Many teachers use their experience effectively to enliven teaching. Teaching materials are good and are updated every year. Teachers effectively share learning materials with other members of their team. Students have good access to computers. Teaching accommodation at the main campus is good. Some rooms have excellent screen projection equipment that enables teachers to include video clips in their presentations. However, some of the accommodation used in community locations is unsatisfactory. For example, in some classrooms, students work in cramped conditions and are constantly interrupted by people walking through the teaching room.

65. Full-time students' progress is monitored carefully. The teachers of advanced level students effectively use prior achievement at GCSE and the results of an initial assessment to set individual targets for performance. Progress against the agreed targets is regularly reviewed. The procedure is effective in motivating students. Students' work is frequently assessed and teachers give clear feedback on how to improve written work.

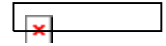
66. The college offers ICT provision in several community locations as well as the main campus. Most part-time courses are targeted at underachieving students with little formal education or those unfamiliar with computers. Strategies to widen participation have been successful. Courses are well designed. There are clear progression routes from taster and foundation level courses to advanced level.

67. Students value the support of their teachers. Tutorial activities and general college support services adequately meet the needs of full-time students. However, there are inadequate arrangements to ensure that students in need of additional learning support receive it.

Leadership and management

68. Overall the management of ICT is satisfactory. Individual course teams work effectively together. The self-assessment report was comprehensive and inspectors agreed with most of the identified strengths and weaknesses. There are good procedures to contact absent students, but they are not always applied systematically. Course managers pay insufficient attention to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Arrangements for checking the quality of teaching at community venues are inadequate. Some managers do not adequately monitor the performance of inexperienced and unqualified teachers.

Leisure and Tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on full-time courses
- high retention rates
- imaginative and engaging teaching and learning
- good industrial links that promote learning
- highly effective assessment practices
- good range of additional qualifications for full-time students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on short courses
- ineffective implementation of learning support
- slow progress made by students in some longer lessons.

Scope of provision

69. This small department provides around 130 students with appropriate full-time and short courses for young people and adults who wish to work in leisure and tourism. Full-time courses, which represent around 60% of the provision, currently include AVCE travel and tourism and GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism. Short courses are offered in a range of qualifications designed to

help students to find jobs in the travel industry, particularly with travel agents and in the airline sector. These courses are taken by adults, and by full-time students aged 16 to 18 as additional qualifications.

Achievement and standards

70. Pass and retention rates for students on full-time courses are good. Pass rates have been consistently above national averages over the last three years, and all students who completed the AVCE in leisure and tourism in 2002 were successful. Retention rates on the foundation and intermediate courses in leisure and tourism are also good, although retention rates were low on the AVCE course ending in 2002. On short courses, retention rates are good but pass rates are low. Some students find employment before taking the examination.

71. The standard of students' work is consistently good. Lessons and practical activities are set at the appropriate level for the course and the vocational focus of practical activities is good. Students' understanding is often reinforced by skilful questioning techniques, which ensure that students analyse and interpret new information. These are then further developed in practical projects, such as the creation of technically correct airline tickets and marketing pamphlets or the role playing of customer care incidents. In all cases, students are encouraged to achieve high standards and to manage their time carefully. This establishes good study skills and personal work disciplines.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Air fares and ticketing (short)	2	No. of starts	75	53	17
		% retention	87	87	94
		% pass rate	51	80	63
Certificate in travel and tourism (short)	2	No. of starts	21	16	20
		% retention	86	63	90
		% pass rate	33	10	22
Galileo travel consultant (short)	2	No. of starts	57	47	31
		% retention	93	77	100
		% pass rate	2	11	29
GNVQ leisure and tourism (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	27	18	16
		% retention	70	89	63
		% pass rate	89	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

72. The best lessons are well planned and include a good mix of presentation and reinforcement activity to ensure that students are challenged to understand, analyse and use new information. Most teachers are adept at supporting individual students' learning needs. Students acquire appropriate skills and competencies that prepare them well for work or university. Case studies and practical exercises are used effectively to simulate the travel industry. For example, in one lesson, students learnt how to calculate the lowest special fares for complex itineraries through a well-designed practical activity that brought airline ticketing to life. In an outstanding lesson exploring the effectiveness of promotional materials in the travel industry, an excellent question and answer session followed an inspirational presentation from the teacher. The teacher was successful in drawing evaluative and analytical responses from students. The standard of students' contributions was excellent.

73. Key skills are often effectively integrated into lessons and assignments. For example, in one lesson, a video was skilfully used to enable students to understand the importance of communication in establishing good customer relations. In another session, role play was used effectively to illustrate the importance of communication in sales techniques.

74. In less successful lessons, the pace is slower, fewer opportunities are provided to reinforce learning and teachers are less effective in maintaining students' interest. For example, in one two-hour session on hotel facilities, the lack of variety in the teaching made it difficult for the teacher to hold students' interest throughout the lesson. Overall, students' progress is slower in longer sessions.

75. Internal assessment is carried out consistently and accurately. Comments from staff on coursework are helpful and informative. Advice is given on how improvements can be made. Students are well prepared for assignments and receive assessment criteria in advance. Students' progress is reviewed regularly and priorities for improvement are agreed with the teacher.

76. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. They make good use of previous industrial experience in designing activities for lessons. Teaching accommodation, which includes light, airy and well furnished teaching rooms, a sports hall and a small fitness room, is satisfactory. There is effective use of ILT in teaching and learning. Students are expected to word process assignments and are often directed to undertake Internet research via a well-designed subject web site on the college intranet. This enables students to access links to travel companies, airports and other leisure businesses.

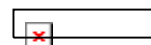
77. Students participate in a varied range of recreational activities in an enrichment programme that is organised by two full-time, qualified staff. Relationships with local employers are good, and students undertake work experience within the industry. Some students secure employment through their work placements.

78. Students receive good support and value their tutorials. Well-structured individual learning plans are established, which lay out a programme for the year. These are reviewed regularly and interim performance targets are negotiated and agreed with students. Expectations of students with regard to work, attendance and punctuality are made clear and students who do not meet their commitments are challenged. However, support for individual students with additional learning needs is not always effectively implemented. Communication between the curriculum area and the central college team providing learning support is weak.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum management is sound, as evidenced by thorough lesson planning, the consistent setting and marking of assessments, and the consistency and effectiveness of student support. Teaching observations take place regularly and are effective in motivating teachers to review their practices in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. All full-time staff contribute to an annual self-assessment report, which has begun to clearly address weaknesses in provision. However, strategies to improve the quality of provision are insufficiently rigorous. Managers do not use information available to them to set clear targets for improvement.

Childcare



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

Strengths

- very good pass and retention rates on most courses

- good teaching and learning

- good standards of students' work

- wide range of programmes that effectively meet community and employer needs.

Weaknesses

- inadequate accommodation

- poor assessment practices on NVQ childcare courses.

Scope of provision

80. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses from foundation level to advanced level in childcare. At the time of the inspection, 89 full-time and 793 part-time students were enrolled on childcare courses. The range of courses includes the certificate and the diploma in childcare and education at intermediate and advanced levels, respectively, and the NVQ in early years care and education at the same levels. A small number of students study the diploma in nursery nursing. The provision also includes professional development units in special educational needs, advanced baby practice, introduction to pre-school practice and play work. Additional short programmes are offered in paediatric first aid and childminding. Students who are already in employment have a good range of opportunities to gain qualifications and update their professional development.

Achievement and standards

81. There has been a significant improvement in pass rates over the last three years. Pass and retention rates are now very good on most courses and, in some cases, are significantly above national averages. In 2001/02 there were 100% pass rates for the certificate in childcare and education and the national diploma in nursery nursing. Of 38 students commencing the introduction to pre-school practice course in 2001, 33 completed it successfully. Pass rates on the intermediate NVQ early years' care and education course have been inconsistent, ranging from 48% in 2001, to 82% in 2002. Data provided by the college on success rates for the NVQ in early years care and education at level 3 are unreliable.

82. Students produce good standards of work in their portfolios. They demonstrate good knowledge in lessons by answering questions confidently, drawing on their work experience effectively to illustrate their understanding. Students design good-quality learning materials to use on their work placements. When producing work for assignments, they demonstrate good research and analytical skills, and are able to evaluate their own learning. The standard of students' work in practical

activities in early years' settings is also good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Introduction to pre-school practice (one year)	2	No. of starts	41	63	38
		% retention	85	90	92
		% pass rate	*	87	94
Certificate in childcare and education (one year)	2	No. of starts	26	20	18
		% retention	96	85	83
		% pass rate	84	88	100
NVQ in early years care and education (one year)	2	No. of starts	27	27	24
		% retention	85	100	92
		% pass rate	70	48	82
Diploma in childcare and education (two year)	3	No. of starts	**	***	16
		% retention	**	***	88
		% pass rate	**	***	86
Diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	29	15	15
		% retention	93	*	93
		% pass rate	48	*	100
NVQ early years care and education (one year)	3	No. of starts	26	45	77
		% retention	77	*	*
		% pass rate	80	*	*

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

* data unreliable

** course did not run

*** less than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

83. Most teaching is good, and no unsatisfactory teaching and learning were observed. Teachers use an effective range of teaching styles and a good range of activities to promote learning. In the best lessons, imaginative exercises are used to make students think and to encourage debate. For example, in a very good lesson on literacy development, students simulated a literacy hour in a school and through discussion explored the issues involved in children's acquisition of literacy skills. In another session, role play was used imaginatively to reinforce students' knowledge and understanding of theories of learning.

84. In many lessons, good-quality resources are used skilfully to stimulate students' interest and help them to make rapid progress. For example, in a revision lesson on diet and nutrition for foundation level students, stimulus material included games on nutrition, concept maps on vitamins, and different-sized teddy bears with different nutritional needs. In most lessons, students draw on their experiences at work effectively to further their understanding. Teachers emphasise well the practical application of skills and theories in early years settings.

85. Teachers have good awareness of students' individual learning needs. They work hard to

provide learning materials that cater both for differences in ability and specific learning support needs. Learning styles are acknowledged and teachers continually give opportunities to students to experience and select their preferred learning style, particularly when revising topics for examinations.

86. Assessment of students' work is well planned and assignment briefs for underpinning knowledge are well thought out. Students show good awareness of the standards they need to reach. They are given realistic and appropriate targets and learning goals. However, it is not always clear from the feedback given to students exactly what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Tracking and monitoring of assessment are good on most courses. However, on the NVQ programmes, assessment is not taking place continually throughout their programme. As a result, students are not always sure of their levels of competence in the workplace.

87. Teachers are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience. Their professional knowledge and first hand experience are used well to give students up-to-date knowledge of standards and roles within a wide variety of early years settings. There is a good range of textbooks and journals in the learning resource centre. Some accommodation is inadequate. Teaching takes place in pre-fabricated buildings that are in a bad state of repair, poor decorative order, poorly furnished and not of an adequate size for some practical work. There is no facility for students to work with IT as an integral part of their lessons. Display areas for students' work are limited.

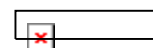
88. Courses are flexible in their delivery and timing to enable mature students and those with families or in employment equal access to ongoing training and development. Programmes are responsive to local employers and agencies with responsibilities for early years' settings. Some courses take place in community venues to improve access for students.

89. Teachers provide good support for students, both pastoral and academic. Students speak highly of the accessibility of teachers and of teachers' willingness to help them with draft assignments and project work before final deadlines. The provision of additional learning support is inconsistent. Some students who would benefit from specialist in-class support are not receiving it.

Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management are good. Action planning arising from self-assessment processes contains clear strategies for improvement that are monitored carefully. Staff are encouraged to put forward ideas for improvement. Good links with external agencies are made to ensure that knowledge of early years developments and strategies is up to date. Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted through all aspects of the curriculum.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- good teaching

- high pass rates

- strong focus on students' cultural diversity in teaching and learning
- wide-ranging and effective enrichment programme.

Weaknesses

- inadequate specialist equipment and accommodation
- insufficient teaching of theory in art and design.

Scope of provision

91. The college offers a diverse range of courses in visual arts, performing arts and media. There were around 400 enrolments at the time of inspection, mostly full-time students aged 16 to 18. GCE AS and A2 courses are offered in art and design, fine art, 3D design, textiles, media studies, photography, theatre studies, dance and music technology. GNVQs at intermediate level are available in art and design, and media studies, and there is an AVCE art and design course. In performing arts, there is both a first diploma and a national diploma. There is also a national diploma in media studies course. A selection of courses is available on a part-time basis in the evening for adults.

Achievement and standards

92. Pass rates are high. For the last two years, all students who completed the national diploma in performing arts and the intermediate GNVQ in art and design were successful. Pass rates in 2002 were also above national averages on the GCE AS media studies course, the first diploma in performing arts, the AVCE in art and design and the intermediate GNVQ in media. In GCE AS and A2 theatre studies and media studies, analysis of students' achievements shows that on average they are attaining grades higher than those predicted by their performance at GCSE.

93. The proportion of students who complete their course has declined to below national averages for GCE AS media studies, AVCE art and design, and the first diploma in performing arts. On other courses, retention rates have risen and are now above national averages.

94. In most classes, students participate with confidence, demonstrating the acquisition of good learning skills. Advanced level students in art and design discuss developing studio work with confidence, and portfolios show competent use of media and techniques. However, written work shows less evaluation and critical analysis. Media studies students are able to engage in critical analysis and evaluation of the media industry in addition to demonstrating good practical production skills. Performing arts students display dance, performance and theatre skills of a high standard and produce thoughtful written work. In one dance class, students were choreographing an imaginative short dance sequence based on a poem by W H Auden. Second-year performing arts students have shown initiative in forming their own production company.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	19	22	19
		% retention	83	68	63
		% pass rate	100	100	92
GCE A-level art (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	37	25	18
		% retention	68	68	94
		% pass rate	76	88	88
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	*	35	40
		% retention	*	74	68
		% pass rate	*	96	96
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	42	34	**
		% retention	76	68	**
		% pass rate	97	100	**
GNVQ advanced art and design (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	17	17	18
		% retention	59	82	72
		% pass rate	80	86	92

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

* course did not run

** less than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

95. Most teaching is good or better, with some very good and outstanding teaching. In the best lessons, imaginative techniques are used to engage all students and to cater for differing abilities. In one excellent session, a dynamic rehearsal of Brecht's *Resistible rise of Arturo Ui* was punctuated by lively exchanges involving all students. In a media studies lesson, a student editor was holding an effective production meeting for a college newspaper that the group was producing. A particular strength of the teaching is the integration of material that recognises and celebrates the cultural diversity of students. For example, in a media studies lesson, the portrayal of ethnic minorities in the press was sensitively discussed. On art and design, and performing arts courses, students' assignments frequently reflect multicultural themes.

96. Schemes of work and lesson plans are carefully devised and pay attention to students' individual needs. For example, on performing arts courses there is detailed analysis of students' ability and corresponding lesson plans to support the less able students. Dance lessons are tailored to ensure that students progress according to their potential. On art and design courses, individual discussions of students' work are tailored to the needs and ability of each student.

97. In a few weaker sessions, teachers are less successful in ensuring all students are actively involved. As a result, some students lose interest in the lesson. In a small minority of lessons, poor punctuality and attendance hindered progress. There is insufficient emphasis on the teaching of theory on art and design courses. As a consequence, students have a weak historical overview of the subject, and some written work lacks critical and evaluative analysis.

98. Accommodation and resources do not meet current industry standards. The performing arts rehearsal and dance space has no sprung floor. There is no easy access to showers, changing rooms or drinking water. Lessons are disrupted by noise from the adjoining canteen. Some classrooms used for theory lessons are too cramped. Much specialist equipment for art and design,

media studies, photography and music is inadequate. There are insufficient technicians to support the increasing range of activities, particularly on art and design courses.

99. A variety of assessment methods are used, including performances, presentations, critiques, film and written work. Assignment sheets give full details of work required, but it is not always made clear to students what they need to do to achieve different grades. A helpful written evaluation sheet accompanies returned work. On performing arts courses, the college intranet is used effectively to track students' assignments.

100. The enrichment programme is valued by students and includes visits to museums, galleries and theatres in the UK and Europe. Project work is undertaken during these visits and integrated into assignments. Performing arts students are touring their final production to three British schools in the Netherlands in May. The excitement generated by being a travelling theatre company has inspired students to work with even more enthusiasm.

101. Links with local schools are good. School pupils are invited to open evenings and media 'showcase' events, and an art competition is being run in conjunction with local schools. Some college students do work placements at one of the schools. There is some staffing exchange between local schools and the college in art and design and performing arts.

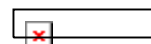
102. Students are given good support. Tutorial provision is effective and helps students both academically and pastorally. Good working relationships between staff and students mean that much informal support is given. Support for students with physical disabilities is exemplary. For example, a wheelchair user was able to complete a performing arts course last year through gestural activities and choreographing other students.

Leadership and management

103. Leadership and management at course level are good. There is good communication in staff teams and this ensures effective course delivery. Quality assurance processes have led to improvements in students' achievements. Course reviews clearly identify weaknesses and there are plans in place to address these. However, there is no overall action plan that is regularly monitored. The promotion of equal opportunities is particularly strong.

104.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on the majority of courses

- effective revision activities in social science lessons

- good academic support for individual students.

Weaknesses

- low proportion of high grades in GCE AS and A2 examinations

- low retention rates on some courses

- insufficient enrichment activities

- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

105. The humanities curriculum area comprises GCE AS and A2 in geography, history, law, psychology, sociology, and politics. A GCE AS course in critical thinking was introduced in 2002. Psychology and sociology are the most popular subjects, with over 100 students taking psychology and around 70 taking sociology. Most students are full time, aged 16 to 18. Access courses for adults run both in the day and the evening, and currently attract 65 students. Access provision was not running during the week of inspection. Total enrolments have increased significantly over the past two years.

Achievement and standards

106. There has been a significant improvement in pass rates over the past two years. Pass rates for GCE A2 psychology, sociology and history were 93%, 100% and 100%, respectively, in 2002. Pass rates for GCE AS psychology, sociology, history, and politics were also above national averages in 2002. However, pass rates for GCE AS and A2 law courses are unsatisfactory. The proportion of students gaining high grades of A and B at GCE AS and A2 remains low. Too many students fail to complete their courses. Overall retention rates have declined over the last two years, and are particularly low for GCE AS politics and GCE A-level law.

107. Most students make satisfactory progress over time from their GCSE starting points. On GCE A-level psychology, sociology and history courses, many students achieve grades higher than those predicted for them on the basis of their prior attainment. However, in law, and in many GCE AS subjects, too many students are not achieving the grades of which they are capable.

108. The standard of students' work is satisfactory overall. They show a sound understanding of key concepts and theories, although most written work is insufficiently evaluative. In psychology, students can explain and discuss appropriate strategies for coping with stress. Law students have a sound understanding of fault, negligence and trespass, but are less clear about court structures. History students conducted an intelligent debate on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Critical thinking students held an interesting, reasoned debate on the value of GCE AS qualifications. Sociology students have a sound basic grasp of research methods, although their understanding of the relationship between methodology and theoretical issues is superficial. In geography lessons, students are not expected to develop their ideas in sufficient detail.

109.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE A-level psychology (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	39	38	28
		% retention	77	74	93
		% pass rate	87	96	100
GCE A-level sociology (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	56	25	30
		% retention	70	68	100
		% pass rate	56	65	97
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	62	66
		% retention	*	85	79
		% pass rate	*	96	88
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	32	28	75
		% retention	69	86	81
		% pass rate	55	50	94
GCE A-level law (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	25	**	19
		% retention	52	**	63
		% pass rate	62	**	25
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	52	66
		% retention	*	90	85
		% pass rate	*	91	86

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

* course did not run

** less than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

110. Teaching is satisfactory or better, but only one lesson was judged to be very good. Most lessons seen were focusing on revision. In the better lessons, students work at a good pace on a variety of activities successfully designed to reinforce learning. For example, in a psychology lesson, students worked in groups matching cue cards with concepts to different theorists. In a sociology revision lesson on the family, a very good study pack combined with the teacher's good question and answer techniques ensured that most students made rapid progress. The teaching of theoretical concepts is sound and students' learning is systematically checked through questioning, tests and essays, which are marked promptly and constructively. Students support each other well and gain teamwork skills through group work to discuss the application of concepts.

111. In weaker lessons, there are not enough varied tasks to match the needs of different groups. More able students are not always given enough opportunities to develop critical and evaluative techniques. Some teaching is competent but dull, resulting in too many students losing interest in the lesson. In such lessons, only a minority of students answer the teacher's questions.

112. Teachers' assessment of students' work is good. Marking is thorough and constructive and, in the best practice, teachers annotate text and provide targets for improvement, using a grid that provides useful information to track progress. However, students do not always improve their work following suggestions by teachers.

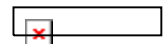
113. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Teaching rooms are satisfactory with some good wall displays, for example, in geography. By contrast, law and politics do not have a base room to display relevant material. The use of ILT is underdeveloped. There are insufficient computers in classrooms. Most teachers provide students with a list of Internet sites, but opportunities to use relevant subject software in teaching and learning are missed. There is an adequate stock of relevant textbooks in the library. There are insufficient enrichment activities, with few trips to relevant institutions and an absence of outside speakers in most subjects.

114. Support for students is good. Teachers give students good help in organising their work. Each full-time student has an individual learning plan, which is reviewed regularly by personal tutors. Students who are not making sufficient progress are given clear targets to achieve that are monitored regularly. Students value the individual support they receive, both from their subject teachers and their personal tutors.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Individual courses are well co-ordinated. Course reviews are effective in identifying the key strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Systems to identify students causing concern in order to improve retention rates are having some impact in the current year. However, there are few formal links between subjects in humanities. As a result, there is little opportunity to share good practice in teaching and learning.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- good teaching

- high pass rates on most full-time courses

- effective support for individual students

- good resources and enrichment opportunities for English students

- good staff development.

Weaknesses

- o low retention rates on some courses

- o inadequate alternative provision for students without a GCSE grade D in English

- o low take-up of accreditation by adult evening students.

Scope of provision

116. There are over 150 students in English, mostly aged 16 to 18 studying full time. On modern foreign languages courses, there are around 200 students; mostly adults studying part time. GCE AS and A-level courses are available in English language and literature, English literature, French, German and Spanish at the sixth form college. English language and literature GCE A-level over one year is also available in the evening for part-time adult students, and a daytime GCE AS course has been started for adults. GCSE English is provided for students aged 16 to 18 who have already achieved grade D or equivalent. Students who do not meet this entry criterion may take communication key skills level 2. GCSE English is also available during the evening. Adult students attend classes in a wide variety of languages including French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Japanese and Arabic and may enrol for NVQ language units at levels 1 to 3, depending on the course.

Achievement and standards

117. There are high pass rates on full-time courses, including 100% in 2002 on GCE AS English and German and on all the GCE A2 full-time programmes. Overall, pass rates are significantly above national averages. Many adult students fail to complete assessments or sit the examination for NVQ foreign language units.

118. Retention rates were low between 2000 and 2002. On GCSE English courses, retention rates declined from 80% in 2000, to 65% in 2002. For GCE AS English language and literature, the retention rate was 63% in 2002, significantly below national averages. Many adults who enrol for language courses in the evening fail to complete the course. There has been some improvement in the current year on GCE AS courses, but the in-year retention rate for GCSE English is unsatisfactory.

119. Attainment is satisfactory or better in most lessons. Students in English demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the texts studied, and they have developed good skills in analysing language and literature. Modern foreign languages students master new vocabulary well and have an appropriate grasp of grammatical structures. The standard of students' work overall is in line with expectations.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ French	1	No. of starts	64	29	32
		% retention	59	59	69
		% pass rate	47	88	27
NVQ Spanish	1	No. of starts	32	30	57
		% retention	50	77	86

		% pass rate	75	57	53
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	167	144	97
		% retention	80	66	65
		% pass rate	33	62	59
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	*	**	21
		% retention	*	**	76
		% pass rate	*	**	100
GCE A-level English language and literature (A2 in 2002)	3	No. of starts	33	23	15
		% retention	61	65	87
		% pass rate	90	100	100
NVQ French	3	No. of starts	25	32	27
		% retention	88	91	81
		% pass rate	86	72	45

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

* course did not run

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

120. Teaching is good. Teachers pitch their lessons well to the needs of students. Varied activities are used effectively to help students in English identify writers' linguistic and literary techniques, and to revise and apply their skills of analysis in preparation for examinations. In modern foreign language lessons, an effective range of techniques is used to enable students to acquire and consolidate vocabulary and grammatical structures and to improve their language skills. In a lesson on poetry analysis in English, the teacher enabled GCE A-level students to build up their understanding of the techniques of persuasion used in an 18th Century satirical poem through a series of entertaining activities, discussion and reading aloud. In a Spanish lesson, the teacher had made a board game that helped students generate sentences and learn vocabulary around the topic of lost property in an enjoyable way.

121. Teachers work with students in a friendly and supportive manner. They keep lessons moving at a good pace to achieve the learning aims, but introduce humour and fun when possible. Teachers have a good knowledge of students' individual learning needs and progress, which they use effectively in lessons. Students respond well to learning opportunities and participate willingly in class activities.

122. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Target grades are used effectively to monitor students' progress and achievement. Students have a clear sense of the progress they have made and what they need to do to achieve their target grade. The quality of written feedback on students' work is inconsistent. Sometimes little advice is given to students on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

123. There is particularly good use of enrichment opportunities. In English, students learn much from theatre visits and talks from staff who work in the theatre. Foreign language students benefit from trips abroad, such as a forthcoming trip to Berlin. There are good learning resources for English. There is a good set of materials on the college intranet designed by staff and used by students to supplement class work. There is also a good range of appropriate texts. IT resources for modern foreign languages are still under development. The recently refurbished language laboratory is a good resource, with access to the Internet to access current foreign language material. The satellite equipment to enable foreign television reception has not been operational this year.

124. Staff development is good. Many staff have attended relevant internal or external courses. A number have attended IT courses, enabling them to improve the standard of classroom materials. Some language tutors, having attended language courses, have improved their own teaching. English staff have taken part in a training workshop on the teaching of Shakespeare, provided by a national theatre company.

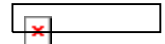
125. There is a good range of courses available, considering the small numbers of students. However, there is no viable alternative to GCSE English for students entering the college without a grade D at GCSE. The communication key skills programme has not been an effective route to help these students achieve an accreditation.

126. There is effective support for individual students. Students feel well supported by their personal tutors and teachers. However, not all students identified as needing additional learning support actually receive it.

Leadership and management

127. The English and modern foreign language sections are well managed. Courses are well organised, and good attention is paid to staff development and student enrichment. The annual review is thorough and has identified the key issues accurately, but not all the data on which the analysis is based are reliable. Action points arising from self-assessment pay insufficient attention to weaknesses. The lead given by senior managers to focus on raising pass rates has meant that strategies to improve retention rates lack conviction, relying mainly on the raising of entrance criteria for full-time students.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good literacy and numeracy support for entry level students

- effective teaching on community and workplace courses

- responsiveness to local needs

- good individual support for literacy and numeracy students in the classroom

- good use of authentic primary learning resources.

Weaknesses

- insufficient development and use of individual learning plans in adult part-time provision

- weak initial assessment of sixth form students' literacy and numeracy

- lack of use of pre-course test results for individual ESOL students

- inadequate additional support for ESOL students.

Scope of provision

128. The inspection covered ESOL, part-time literacy and numeracy courses for adults in the community and the workplace, literacy and numeracy on entry level courses, and the provision for sixth form college students. A total of 500 students have been enrolled on ESOL courses during the current academic year. During the inspection, 70 students attended workplace and community ESOL courses. A total of 164 adults and 55 students aged 16 to 18 have been enrolled on part-time courses for literacy and numeracy.

Achievements and standards

129. Achievements and retention rates in the area are satisfactory overall. Students on entry level courses are developing their personal and learning skills within the context of literacy, numeracy or ESOL. Students are effectively prepared for participation in the workplace and the community in outreach provision.

130. Pass and retention rates are satisfactory overall for the majority of the ESOL provision. Pass rates in 2002 were high on the elementary, intermediate and advanced ESOL courses. However, retention rates were low on the elementary and advanced level programmes. Over the last three years, the retention rate for students on the preliminary English test course has been over 90%. However, pass rates on this course have been low. The provision for adult literacy and numeracy began in September 2002. The overall retention rate has been 76%.

131. Many students are developing literacy, numeracy and language skills that enable them to participate more effectively in their communities and workplaces. Individual learning plans do not contain challenging learning goals, which can be used as a measure of students' progress relative to their prior attainment. Inadequate recording of individual students' progress in both ESOL and literacy and numeracy part-time courses means that students are not clear about the progress they have made.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English for speakers of other languages courses, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Preliminary English test	Entry	No. of starts	208	168	63

(short)		% retention	93	95	97
		% pass rate	66	34	39
ESOL elementary (one year)	Entry	No. of starts	118	86	158
		% retention	86	79	59
		% pass rate	27	76	96
ESOL intermediate (one year)	1	No. of starts	155	119	80
		% retention	55	84	71
		% pass rate	24	82	91
ESOL advanced (one year)	2	No. of starts	38	43	36
		% retention	100	56	56
		% pass rate	5	83	95

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

Quality of education and training

132. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Provision for literacy and numeracy for entry level students is good. Comprehensive initial assessment is used effectively to plan the student's individual learning programme. For example, in one very good lesson students were learning to follow written and verbal instructions by producing gift bags. The teacher incorporated individual learning goals, such as listening to others, into the lesson. Good monitoring and celebration of students' progress is effective in motivating previously underachieving students.

133. Teaching and learning in the community and workplace provision are good. Very effective pre-course taster days include practical activities, personal interviews and tests. Students' personal statements are used very effectively in planning programmes of study that build on students' prior experience and match their aspirations. For example, in taster sessions, students are asked to consider all the areas to be included within the course for their personal development and their roles in the workplace and in the community. A group of students were gaining the literacy skills required to write reports for their work in care homes and fulfil the requirements of their NVQ.

134. A wide range of teaching methods is used effectively to reach students with diverse backgrounds and learning needs. Good use is made of role play and other practical activities. ESOL teachers make good use of questioning techniques. Speaking and listening skills are developed through exercises that draw upon students' personal experiences. For example, in one lesson, students were discussing the position of elderly people in their own society in comparison with the United Kingdom.

135. Particularly good use is made of authentic learning resources. All the learning materials are sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of the students. The use of relevant, local, up-to-date leaflets, notices and flyers as teaching materials motivates students and supports their participation in the community. However, insufficient use is made of ILT and multimedia resources in lessons.

136. Group learning goals in schemes of work and lesson plans are satisfactory. However, there is insufficient development of students' individual learning plans. Individual learning goals such as 'improve writing' or 'spelling' are insufficiently specific. As a consequence, students cannot judge their own progress or take responsibility for their learning. Comprehensive information about individual students' needs is not used to plan individual learning and courses. Procedures for ensuring that ESOL students are on the appropriate level of course are inadequate. The results of initial assessment for both sixth form college and ESOL students are not consistently shared with teachers or used to plan their programme of support. Additional support for ESOL students on full-time courses in the sixth form college is inadequate.

137. Programmes and courses are very good at meeting the needs and interests of students. Students on full-time and part-time courses are able to gain national qualifications and courses are responsive to local needs. The college has been proactive in making links with local employers. A comprehensive range of courses for under-represented groups has been established both within the college and the community. A system of continuous enrolment on ESOL courses provides flexibility and attracts students from outside the immediate catchment area. A good programme of additional language support leads to national qualifications for students aged 16 to 19 progressing to HE. An innovative full-time course meets the needs of asylum seekers and refugees aged 16 to 18, and ESOL students with little formal education and offers many examples of good practice.

Leadership and management

138. Operational management across the majority of provision is good and managers are aware of the most significant weaknesses in their area and are seeking to address them. However, there is insufficient dissemination of good practice, for example, in effective initial assessment and support for community and workplace provision. Promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Management of the monitoring and reporting of attendance in ESOL classes is inadequate. At a strategic level, the college does not have a coherent policy to ensure that the basic skills needs of all students are addressed.

Part D: College data

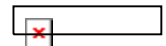
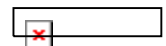


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18	19+
1	17	36
2	26	24
3	51	16
4/5	0	1
Other	7	22
Total *	100	100

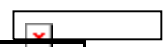


Source: provided by the college in 2003

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

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments % *



Science and mathematics	382	50	5
Land-based provision	0	53	1
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	9	112	1
Business administration, management and professional	546	1,121	17
Information and communications technology	484	1,308	19
Retailing, customer service and transportation	32	210	3
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	168	356	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	9	245	3
Health, social care and public services	178	944	12
Visual and performing arts and media	432	62	5
Humanities	356	394	8
English, languages and communication	214	360	6
Foundation programmes	203	1,214	15
Other	60	38	1
Total	3,073	6,467	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	320	665	310	413	206	436
	Retention rate (%)	90	97	73	81	71	82
	National average (%)	80	79	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	73	26	72	44	51	73
	National average (%)	65	68	68	66	68	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	936	557	722	729	469	596

	Retention rate (%)	81	81	77	78	82	77
	National average (%)	76	76	76	79	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	72	78	63	51	74	74
	National average (%)	66	69	69	65	69	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	954	1,380	1,527	539	492	384
	Retention rate (%)	85	85	78	83	88	79
	National average (%)	76	77	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	76	80	86	55	54	65
	National average (%)	74	76	76	66	69	69
4	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	173	127	90
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	93	84	87
	National average (%)	*	*	*	81	84	84
	Pass rate (%)	*		*	16	20	69
	National average (%)	*	*	*	56	53	53

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999/2000 to 2001/2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council.

2. College rates for 1999/2000-2000/01: College ISR (Individual Student Record). Data for 2001/02 is college data produced on kitemarked software.

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	68	32	0	78
Level 2 (intermediate)	57	30	13	37
Level 1 (foundation)	63	31	6	16
Other sessions	60	35	5	18
Totals	64	31	5	149

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