



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Blackpool and the Fylde College

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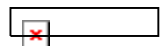
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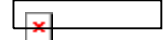
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Basic information about the college

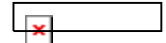


Name of college:	Blackpool and the Fylde College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Reg Chapman OBE
Address of college:	Ashfield Road Bispham Blackpool FY2 0HB
Telephone number:	01253 352 352
Fax number:	01253 356 127
Chair of governors:	Graham Essex-Crosby
Unique reference number:	130739
Name of reporting inspector:	David Lindsay
Date of inspection:	20-31 January 2003

Part A: Summary

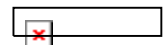


Information about the college



Blackpool and the Fylde College is a large general further education (FE) college serving the town of Blackpool and the surrounding area known as the Fylde. The college serves a population of approximately 333,200. Students are drawn from the local area, nationally and from overseas. The area depends heavily on tourism, leisure and related service industries. Although there are areas of high prosperity in the region, Blackpool itself is the 32nd most deprived authority in the country according to the index of multiple deprivation. The college provides courses in all 14 areas of learning funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In most of the college's areas, it is possible to progress from entry level to degree level. The college is an associate college of a local university. The college has four main campuses located along the 17-mile stretch of the Fylde coastline and over 70 learning centres throughout the locality. At the time of inspection, there were over 300 work-based learners following National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and modern apprenticeships. During 2001/02, there were nearly 21,000 enrolments on long courses; according to college figures 78.5% of students were over 19 and 1.3% of minority ethnic origin. Some 57% of student enrolments were on part-time courses. The three boroughs that make up the area, Blackpool, the Fylde and Wyre, have unemployment rates of 4.1%, 1.1% and 2.8%, respectively. Minority ethnic groups make up 0.8% of the population. In 2001, the proportion of school-leavers with five or more grades at C or above for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) was 35.6%; 6.7% of school-leavers gained no GCSEs. The college was designated a Beacon college and an Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) accredited college in 1999, was awarded the Charter Mark in 2000 and re-accredited as an Investor in People in November 2001. The college mission is 'to be leaders in personal development through quality education and training'.

How effective is the college?



The college's provision in all but one of the areas inspected is good or outstanding: it is outstanding in hairdressing and beauty therapy, art and design and numeracy and literacy; it is good in science, construction, engineering, business and management, information and communication technology (ICT), hospitality, sports leisure and travel, humanities and English and communications. Provision is satisfactory in health, social care and public services. Work-based learning, which makes up a small part of the college's provision, is good in hairdressing, and satisfactory in construction, engineering, business, and hospitality.

Key strengths

- much very good and some outstanding teaching and learning

- an effective retention rate strategy

- good pass rates on many courses
- wide range of provision which meets the needs of its students
- good resources and some excellent specialist facilities
- well-qualified and experienced staff
- outstanding support for students
- good student progression
- outstanding promotion of equal opportunities
- excellent external links
- effective management of the curriculum
- accurate and thorough self-assessment.

What should be improved?

- teaching in a few areas to fully meet the needs of individuals
- pass rates in NVQ and the retention rate on level 2 courses for adults

- pass rates at GCSE for students aged 16 to 18

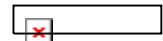
- accommodation in three areas

- aspects of work-based learning (reviews, assessment and achievement)

- accuracy of the central 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

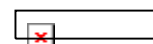


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	Good. There is much very good teaching, and pass rates are good in most subjects except for GCSE human physiology, which are poor. There are good resources to support teaching and learning and there is good progression to higher education (HE). There is a lack of appropriate vocational opportunities for students.
Construction	Good. Retention and pass rates on courses at levels 1 and 3 are good. However, there are poor retention and pass rates on the NVQ 2 course in wood occupations. There is very good teaching and learning and students are very well supported. Resources are very good. Leadership and team working within the department are effective. There is no assessment in the workplace. Induction fails to provide some work-based learners students with adequate knowledge of their programmes.
Engineering	Good. High retention rates and very good pass rates on most programmes. Very good teaching and learning and good resources. Good team work and effective support to students in both work-based training and college courses. Wide range of courses and good progression opportunities. Little employer involvement in work-based learning and poor retention rates for these students.
Business, management	Good. Good pass rates on most courses, although poor and declining

and professional	retention rates on the City and Guilds 7307 course. Diverse range of well-managed provision. Much well-planned teaching and off-the-job training. There is a lack of rigour in internal verification in work-based learning and on the accountancy technician programmes.
Information and communication technology	Good. Courses are well managed and pass rates on full-time courses are high. Retention rates are generally good with the exception of General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programmes. Wide range of courses which provide good opportunities for progression. Much good teaching, but in some lessons not all the needs of individual students are met. Learning support in the classroom is effective.
Hospitality, sports leisure and tourism	Good. High pass rates on most courses in 2002. Teaching is mostly good, but in some cases fails to meet the needs of individuals. Good support for students, although there are poor assessment practices in work-based learning. The curriculum is effectively managed.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Outstanding. Teaching is very good and some is outstanding. High pass rates and very good retention rates on most courses. Resources are excellent. Effective management and strong team work. Staff active in implementing effective strategies to improve teaching, learning and attainment for students.
Health, social care and public services	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are good on some courses with an improving trend on others, although NVQ achievement remains poor. The department is effectively managed. Good support for staff development. Students well supported through learning mentors and education support workers.
Art and design	Outstanding. Good pass rates and high standards of students' work in most areas and at most levels. Teaching is outstanding and enthusiastic. Students are well supported and highly motivated. There are high levels of progression through the school and on to HE. There is good management of both the school and courses.
Humanities	Good. Very good pass rates in many courses. Teaching is generally of a high quality. Wide range of effectively managed courses. Good support for students. Some poor teaching in a minority of classes, and poor pass and retention rates on a few courses.
English and communications	Good. Pass rates in General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced-level (A-level) English language and English literature are good, but pass and retention rates at GCSE are poor. Much of the teaching is good and there is effective use of information learning technology (ILT). In a small number of lessons, students' individual needs are not met. The area is well managed.
Literacy and numeracy	Outstanding. Teaching and learning are very good, some is outstanding and there is excellent achievement. Very good range of courses which meets the needs of students and the community. Support for students is excellent. Management of literacy and numeracy across the college is outstanding.

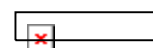
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. Governors and managers set a clear strategic direction for

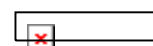
systematically addressed. An outstanding feature of the college is the way it now promotes and sustains equal opportunities. The college has been successful in meeting its strategic objective to widen participation through partnerships and extend the provision in the community. The quality of teaching and learning is high. The self-assessment process is effective and includes all staff in a collaborative and rigorous manner. Quality assurance procedures are well established and are effective in bringing about improvements. The quality of provision in three curriculum areas inspected is outstanding, good in eight others and satisfactory in one other. Retention rates are much improved in the majority of subjects. Students' pass and retention rates on some level 2 courses and in work-based learning however, remain low.

To what extent is the provision of the college educationally and socially inclusive?



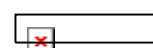
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The college provides an excellent range of learning opportunities that are designed to meet the needs of individual learners, disadvantaged groups, employers and the local community. There are clear and effective policies to widen participation and support the progression of all students. The college has successfully improved participation by attracting new client groups such as adults returning to education and disaffected young learners. Support for these students is expert and comprehensive. There are clear progression routes and students are able to study from foundation level to HE in most curriculum areas. There are extensive links with schools and the college provides a wide range of vocational education for a number of pupils aged 14 to 16, including excluded and disengaged young learners. The college's equal opportunities policy has been updated and enhanced by an equality charter. Promotion of issues related to disability and discrimination are effectively addressed in tutorials and in the personal support given to students. There is good access for those of restricted mobility to most areas of the college. The college is responding well to the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 with an effective implementation plan and training for staff.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are outstanding and highly sensitive to individual needs. The management of advice, guidance and support is highly effective with clear communication structures and comprehensive support roles. The college provides detailed and well-presented information to prospective students. Welfare support is comprehensive and detailed information is readily accessible. Induction is well managed, comprehensive and takes account of late starters. Tutorial support for full-time students is very good and meets group and individual needs. The majority of students receive tutorial support from a personal tutor. Students are very aware of the range of support available through information given at induction and a comprehensive range of leaflets on display around the college and in the community. Staff are well informed about the learning support services and the range of support available. Effective initial assessment clearly identifies literacy, numeracy and other learning support needs and leads to clear individual targets. The expert support provided is of excellent quality. Specialist support for students with profound and complex difficulties is outstanding. The arrangements for monitoring attendance and promoting retention rates are highly effective.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- friendly and supportive staff

- good relationships with staff

- the welcoming atmosphere

- the range of courses and flexible timetabling

- the learning resources

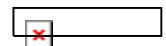
- the support for students.

What they feel could be improved

- ease of movement around the building for wheelchair users

- overcrowding in the canteens and cost of food.

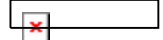
Other information



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

stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



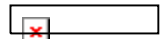
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	71	24	5
19+ and WBL*	80	20	0
Learning 16-18	65	31	4
19+ and WBL*	73	26	1

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. The college has experienced some difficulties with its management information systems (MIS) during the years 1999 to 2001, which have prevented the correct classification of some student data. This has made comparisons with national averages difficult. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some judgements about the performance trends during the years 1999 to 2001 and college data have been used for the year 2002 to make comparisons with national averages. Curriculum inspectors have checked the accuracy of data in particular courses for 2002 and have used official data for the years 1999 to 2001.

2. The college's wide range of provision meets the needs of both adults and students aged 16 to 18, although the number of courses offered in land-based and retailing and customer service is small. In most areas, there are courses from foundation to advanced level and HE. There is work-based learning mainly in construction, engineering, hospitality, business, hairdressing and beauty therapy and health and social care, although students on these courses represent a very small percentage of the total enrolments. In 2001/02, 78.5% of enrolments were from students over the age of 19, and 21.5% were from students aged 16 to 18.

3. Adult performance is better than that for students aged 16 to 18, both in retention and pass rates at all levels, except at level 3, where pass rates are similar. For example, at GCE A level, pass rates in 2001 for adults and students aged 16 to 18 were 68% and 72%, respectively, whilst at GCSE, pass rates were 55% and 24%, respectively.

4. In key skills courses, pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 are better than those for adults. There are, however, considerably fewer adults taking key skills than students aged 16 to 18. In 2001/02, the numbers enrolled were 186 and 1,286, respectively.

5. Published figures show that retention rates for both age-groups have generally declined at most levels during the years 1999 to 2001. Pass rates have fluctuated; generally showing a peak at all levels in 2000 and a fall in 2001. The college was the recipient college for the North and West Lancashire University For Industry (Ufi) hub from 1999 to 2001, and the data have included Learndirect enrolments from all the partners in the hub. However, college data, which exclude these enrolments, indicate that retention rates have been generally static, but with some declining retention rates, particularly at level 2 for adults. College data for 2002 show improvement in retention and at all levels it is at or above the national averages. It is improved particularly for students aged 16 to 18 at level 3. Pass rates from college data are also at or above national averages for 2001/02, except for adults on level 2 courses.

6. Curriculum inspectors found improved retention rates in most areas and very good rates in many, compared with national averages in 2001/02. Pass rates on most courses are good and in some cases very good. Almost all areas had courses with 100% pass rates in 2002. Students' work is generally of a high standard and in some cases excellent. Commercial work is undertaken in some areas and students' work is of industrial standard. In business administration, two students achieved the silver award given by an examining body. During the inspection, attendance and punctuality were good. Students in general are highly motivated and some are working above the level that might have been expected. Practical and analytical skills are well developed. Both adults and students aged 16 to 18 make good progress, although the attainment of adults is significantly better. Progression of students on to HE courses is good. The Gateway programme for students aged 16 to 18 provides an effective progression route into other college courses.

16 to 18 year olds

7. At level 1, retention rates fell slightly from 1999 to 2001. In 2002, according to college data, they improved to well above the national average. Pass rates in 2002 were significantly above the national average from college data. Level 2 retention rates have been around national averages for the three years to 2001, remaining fairly static, and were slightly improved in 2002. Pass rates fell in 2001, but recovered to the national average in 2002. At level 3, retention rates fell to just below national averages in 2001, but recovered to the national average in 2002. Pass rates fell steadily from 1999 to 2001, but improved to above the national average in 2002, according to the college data.

8. Short course retention rates were very good from 1999 to 2000, at above 90%, but only around two thirds of those who completed actually passed. Key skills enrolments have increased significantly and retention and pass rates are now good.

9. Although retention rates at GNVQ level 3 have fallen, those at level 2 have risen. Retention rates in 2002 at levels 2 and 3 were around the national average. Pass rates at level 3 have fallen. In 2002, pass rates were around the national average for both level 2 and level 3.

10. In previous years there were around 400 enrolments on GCE A-level qualifications, and retention and pass rates were around national averages. In 2002, the retention rate rose to above the national average, the pass rate, however, fell to below the national average. The numbers starting the courses fell significantly. The numbers taking GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) qualifications rose, in 2002, to over 500. The retention rate in 2002 was close to the national average and the pass rate slightly above.

11. At NVQ, retention rates were above the national averages at levels 1 and 2, but below at level 3 according to college data for 2002. Pass rates at all levels are significantly above national averages. Over 400 students took NVQ level 2, 200 at level 1 and 60 at level 2.

12. Significant numbers of students, nearly 800, take GCSE courses and retention rates are around

national averages. Pass rates at grades A* to C, however, were poor at 31% in 2002.

Adult learners

13. Over 2,500 students started on level 1 qualifications each year from 1998 to 2001. Retention rates, although declining, have remained above national averages. Pass rates have fluctuated; in 2002, according to college data, they were significantly above the national average.

14. At level 2, there were over 3,500 enrolments each year. Retention and pass rates showed the same pattern as at level 1. Retention rate figures for 2002 showed a fall to the national average and pass rates below the national average.

15. At level 3, significant numbers of students start on courses, over 3,000 in the year 2001. Retention rates fell slightly, but remained above the national averages in 2002. Pass rates have remained close to national averages.

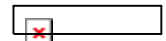
16. A large number of students, over 14,000, take short courses such as popular ICT courses, basic food hygiene and health and safety. Retention and pass rates were good at 95% and 83%, respectively, in 2001, although pass rates declined in 2002. Retention and pass rates in key skills were well above the national average in 2002.

17. There are around 200 enrolments on GCE A-level qualifications each year. Retention and pass rates have been consistently good and above the national average. An increasing number of adults are taking GCE AS qualifications, nearly 180 in 2002, when the retention rate was around the national average. The pass rate was significantly above the national average. Significant numbers, around 600, take access to HE courses, and whilst retention rates are above the national averages, pass rates are slightly below. On GNVQ courses or their equivalent, retention and pass rates are around national averages. Significant numbers of adults, nearly 1500, take NVQs. Retention rates at level 3 fell below the national average in 2002 and pass rates have been low. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 are now around the national average. Pass rates at levels 1 and 2 were below the national average in 2002.

18. Over 900 students took GCSE courses in 2002. Retention rates have been around national averages, and pass rates at grades A* to C above the national average.

19. In work-based learning, retention rates in some areas have been low, but are improving. Students' work is good and portfolios of evidence generally well organised. Achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework is low, but in some cases NVQ completion and key skills development indicate good progress.

Quality of education and training



20. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 217 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 74% of sessions, satisfactory in 23% and less than satisfactory in 3%. Some 8% of lessons were outstanding. The profile of grades awarded for learning was slightly different, with fewer good or better sessions and more satisfactory. Learning was still outstanding in 8% of the sessions. Attainment showed the same distribution as learning, but with less good or better attainment, more satisfactory and slightly more unsatisfactory.

21. Teaching, learning and attainment were significantly better for adults than for students aged 16 to 18. The teaching in 81% of lessons for adults was good or better compared with 70% for students aged 16 to 18. Learning was better for adults than for students aged 16 to 18. All the unsatisfactory teaching observed was in lessons for students aged 16 to 18, but the figure for outstanding teaching

was the same for both age-groups. Attainment for adults showed roughly the same difference as that for teaching and learning compared with students aged 16 to 18. There is little difference in the quality of teaching at levels 1, 2 or 3, all teaching having over 70% of lessons good or better. The best teaching was at level 1 followed by levels 3 and 2.

22. There were significant variations in the quality of teaching between curriculum areas. The best teaching was in art and design, literacy and numeracy, and engineering. This contrasts with health, social care and public services, where just over half of the lessons observed was good or better. Instances of unsatisfactory teaching were seen in half of the curriculum areas inspected. Attendance rates were higher for adult than for students aged 16 to 18, but were good overall. The best attendance rate of 86% was in art and design.

23. The majority of lessons are well prepared, well planned, structured and organised. Lessons have clear objectives which are shared with the students. The development of key skills was seen in many lessons. There are good relationships between staff and students and students are highly motivated. In the better lessons, teachers use a wide variety of interesting methods and activities to involve and challenge the students. Theory and practice are well linked and in practical lessons there is good reference to industry standards. In many lessons, teachers give good individual attention to students, set appropriate targets to meet their needs, and review their progress throughout the lesson. Students are active and involved and teachers make frequent checks that learning has taken place. In a small number of lessons, there was too great a reliance on the teacher talking and note taking by students. In a few lessons, the learning materials and methods did not meet the needs of individuals and some of the higher-achieving students were not sufficiently challenged by the work. Occasionally, lessons were boring and students lost interest.

24. Resources to support learning are very good. Teachers are well qualified and, where appropriate, have recent and relevant industrial and vocational experience and training. Staff demonstrate excellent subject expertise in all curriculum areas. Access to staff development, one focus of which is to improve the effectiveness of teaching, is good for all staff. Most departments have ILT co-ordinators who have provided effective support to improve the integration and use of information technology (IT). Technician support is good. Recruitment and retention of teachers are generally good, although there have been difficulties in filling posts in some areas.

25. Teaching accommodation is generally good, with the exception of some cramped classrooms in health and social care and crowded workshop facilities in motor vehicle engineering. Specialist resources to support learning are frequently excellent, particularly in art and design, hairdressing and beauty therapy and motor vehicle. Students have good access to IT facilities and all computers are networked, including outreach centres. Technician support for IT is generally good during the day, but evening support is limited. Attractive and well-designed learning resource centres are located throughout the college, with specialist learning materials near the appropriate curriculum areas. There is a good range of books, journals and CD-ROMs. There is a daily, inter-library loan service between campuses. The college intranet provides extensive materials for staff and students in many areas, although it is currently underdeveloped in health and social care, humanities and performing arts.

26. College buildings are well maintained and clean, they provide a pleasant working environment for students and staff. Outreach facilities are also good. At present, the no smoking policy is inadequately enforced and student smoking areas are untidy and unpleasant. Most of the college is accessible to students with impaired mobility.

27. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are very good. The initial assessment of all students' literacy and numeracy skills is effective and leads to individual targets for learners. Support for literacy and numeracy needs is excellent. Senior tutors review the suitability of targets in individual learning plans. Students understand the assessment process on their programme. The assessment practice on most courses is very good, although there are some missed opportunities for assessment in work-based learning. Most students' work is marked accurately with appropriate feedback within a two-week period. Assessments are planned to meet the requirements of the awarding body and include clear assignment briefs. Assessment schedules take into consideration students' workload. Staff attend awarding body updates and disseminate this information to

colleagues. Cross-college working groups, for example, a work-based training group, develop strategies on assessment in relation to specific qualifications.

28. Teachers monitor their students' progress effectively on most courses, although review for some work-based learners is ineffective. Full-time students and those on substantive part-time courses have a thorough six-weekly review followed by the setting of revised targets. Students receiving support for literacy and numeracy have additional regular reviews with their personal tutor and support tutor to discuss progress and establish new targets. Parents and most employers get good feedback on students' progress. The college is aware of inconsistencies in feedback to some employers and has an action plan for improvement.

29. The internal verification process is well established and operates very effectively on most courses. The system is supported and developed through clearly written assessment and internal verification procedures in detailed internal verification handbooks, a thorough audit process and the monitoring of external verifier reports. There is inconsistent practice on some courses, for example, health and social care, but the college is aware of these inconsistencies and action plans have led to improvements.

30. The college provides an excellent range of learning opportunities designed to meet the needs of individual students, disadvantaged groups, employers and the local community. Students' needs are extensively researched. For example, in English, a Gateway course provides extra time for students to prepare for GCSE English language, and in humanities, there is an academic bridging course for Year 11 students. Progression routes are excellent and students are able to study from entry to HE levels. Progression is very good in many areas; for example, in art and design most students progressed to well-regarded HE courses.

31. The college is responsive to the needs of employers and has developed a range of short courses and specialist provision. There are good formal links with employers and student progress is well reported where appropriate. The college has responded well to community needs and has effectively widened participation through such initiatives as the 'seasiders' programme, which targets hard to reach groups. There are over 70 learning centres in the community, including Carelton Court in Fleetwood, which was opened in response to local literacy, numeracy and employment issues. Three community education officers are employed to work within the community identifying and addressing the needs of learners. There are extensive links with schools; the college currently has over 700 pupils aged 14 to 16 attending a wide range of vocational programmes through the increased flexibility project and provision for the disaffected and disengaged.

32. The college provides a wide range of enrichment activities for students. In hair and beauty, students have the opportunity to work with a number of disadvantaged groups and local theatres. In humanities, students visit party political conferences, museums and courts. Key skills are well led and managed, with co-ordinators in each school. Key skills are well embedded in the curriculum and there has been effective staff development.

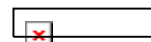
33. Guidance and support for students are outstanding and highly sensitive to individual needs. The management of advice, guidance and support is highly effective, with clear communication structures and comprehensive support roles. The college provides detailed and well-presented information to prospective students across a range of community settings. The experienced support teams and the effective services that they provide are much valued by students. Students are fully aware of the range of support available. Welfare support is comprehensive, with well-established external links to enhance the college support. Well-produced leaflets are displayed around each site and provided at induction. Counselling is effectively marketed to students through leaflets, tutorials and at induction. Initial assessment clearly identifies literacy and numeracy and other learning support needs. This is supported by a six-week period of observation of learning support needs in all level 1 and level 2 classes. A wide range of support is provided to meet individual needs, including one-to-one support during and outside class, whole-class support from educational support workers or learning support tutors, specialist dyslexia support from highly qualified staff, motivational support, and additional workshops in study skills.

34. Tutorial and induction arrangements are well managed to take account of the wide variety of

students. Induction is comprehensive and takes account of late starters. All full-time students have a weekly tutorial which allows for both group and individual needs. Part-time students on weekly programmes of six hours or more receive tutorial support from a personal tutor. Students are set rigorous and challenging targets, which are reviewed at six-weekly intervals. Senior tutors work with course tutors to develop the tutorial programme. For example, they have undertaken observation of tutorial sessions, which have led to improvements in provision and provided staff development on relevant topics. The college has a team of learning mentors and retention officers to work closely with students at risk of leaving. The arrangements for monitoring attendance and promoting retention are highly effective. Students and parents are aware of and value this support.

35. Welfare support is well managed; the information provided is comprehensive and readily accessible. Specialist support for students with profound and complex difficulties is outstanding and includes an assessment of needs and guidance from a range of external specialist links. Students with additional physical or communication needs are provided with the necessary aids; for example, communicators for the hearing impaired. Several staff have sign language or lip-reading qualifications. Staff are highly qualified to support students with a wide range of support needs. There are currently 382 students with a range of learning difficulties or disabilities being supported. Specialist staff have produced a series of informative documents for staff to raise awareness of the needs of students with disabilities and how staff might best support them.

Leadership and management



36. Leadership and management are good. There is strong leadership by the principal in both the college and the local community. Governors and senior managers undertake their work with enthusiasm and commitment. The strategic aims and mission of the college are well understood by governors, staff, students and parents and are effectively promoted by college managers. Each of the major weaknesses identified in the last report has been addressed and some, such as the provision of learning support, now represent important strengths.

37. The college is well supported by its governing body. Governors are highly committed to the college and make good use of their skills, experience and expertise. They are fully involved in strategic planning. They undertake their responsibilities effectively by providing critical support over a wide range of curricular, financial and management matters. Governors monitor closely how far the college meets its strategic objectives, particularly those relating to financial performance and students' achievements. There is effective communication between governors and college managers. Governors effectively evaluate the quality of provision, supported by an independent clerk. However, until recently, systems to measure and improve pass rates and levels of retention have been hampered by the unreliable data produced by the college central information system. The college identified this problem in the self-assessment report. Governors acknowledge the inadequacy of the former MIS and are seeking improvements in the quality and rigour of target setting.

38. There have been improvements in pass rates over the last three years for courses at levels 1 and 3. Pass rates on level 2 courses are low, particularly at GCSE level for students aged 16 to 18. Retention rates have generally improved. However, whilst they are good in many areas, they remain low on some adult courses. Statistical information relating to work-based training programmes is inaccurate and provides little opportunity for a rigorous analysis of the retention and pass rates of trainees.

39. All curriculum areas are well led and managed. Courses are well planned. Meetings are productive and actions to address weaknesses are effective. Roles and responsibilities are clear and there is a strong emphasis on teamwork. The college work-based training provision is less well managed and the completion rates for work-based learners are low.

40. Communication across the college is good. Good use is made of the college web site and intranet to provide a range of information for staff and students. Staff have good access to computer-based college documentation. Weekly briefings by heads of school and remote access to e-mail facilities aid the effectiveness of communication across all college sites.

41. The college staff development policy and programme has focused effectively on improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is effective sharing of good practice and support. There is a good performance review system. This is linked to remuneration. All college staff have the opportunity of an annual appraisal with their manager at which their performance against targets is reviewed, objectives agreed and training needs identified. Professional development is given high priority and carefully cross-referenced to school and college strategic plans.

42. The college quality assurance system is thorough and effective in identifying ways in which the college provision can be improved. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement throughout the organisation. Staff at all levels in the college understand and contribute to the cycle of quality assurance activity. The self-assessment process is well established and rigorous. There is a well-organised and accurate system of internal inspection. All teachers are observed and the quality of teaching and learning is accurately evaluated and graded. All curriculum and corporate teams are fully involved in the self-assessment process and good use is made of students' opinions on the quality of provision. There is effective validation of the self-assessment report. Staff from other colleges and external consultants are used to ensure that the process is rigorous and that judgements are objective. There is, however, insufficient comparison of the college performance with national averages. Until recently, heads of school did not receive regular information that could accurately support them in managing and planning. Recent developments have improved access to the MIS. Statistical information relating to work-based learning is inaccurate and prevents rigorous analysis of retention and pass rates of students.

43. The college was designated a national Beacon of Excellence and an FEFC accredited college in 1999. It has used funding effectively to disseminate good practice to other colleges. The college has been successful in achieving and retaining Investor in People status and was awarded the Charter Mark 2000. The range of external accreditation awarded to the college, such as the gay-friendly Navajo Charter Mark, is an acknowledgement of its commitment to providing high quality, flexible and easily accessible learning opportunities for individuals, organisations and the local community.

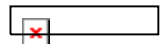
44. An outstanding feature of the college is the way it promotes and sustains equal opportunities through the equality committee, chaired by the principal. The committee is dedicated to ensuring that the needs of disadvantaged groups are effectively met. The college works successfully with other organisations to provide education and training that meets the needs of all students. The college aims to widen participation, and innovative initiatives and sources of funding have been used successfully. Provision for asylum seekers, parents at home, the homeless, and seasonal workforces is particularly successful. The college equal opportunities policy has been updated and enhanced by an equality charter which is prominently displayed throughout the college. The college is responding well to the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. However, it has been slow to prepare for the increased responsibility of governors. The college holds the 'Positive about Disability' accreditation and provides good access for those with restricted mobility to most areas of the college. Issues related to disability and discrimination are effectively addressed in tutorials and in the personal support given to students. The new MIS provides an analysis of students' gender and racial origin, but this is not widely disseminated within the college and is not related to students' pass or retention rates. No targets are set for participation and achievement against the local community profile. There are effective measures to respond to complaints, appeals and bullying or harassment of any nature. The college is regarded by staff, students and parents as very responsive to issues raised through personal referral or through the well-publicised internal procedures. Information received is promptly and effectively analysed and acted upon. An atmosphere of trust and collaboration pervades all levels of the college.

45. The college has collaborative involvement with a significant number of activities aimed at supporting the regeneration of the community. The college gained approval for a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in 'customer service quality for tourism industries' in November 2002. It has effective links with the local education authorities, the local LSC, the Connexions service and

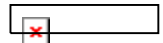
the local strategic partnerships for Blackpool and Fleetwood. There is good communication between the college and key organisations and agencies in the local community. Links with local employers, schools and other colleges are very good and improving.

46. The college remains in a strong financial position. Budgeting is careful and rigorous. Heads of school and corporate services manage individual budgets well. The deployment of resources is effective and efficient. Financial management is sound. The college is cost effective and provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science



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

Strengths

- good achievement on most courses

- very good teaching

- good progression to HE

- good resources to support teaching and learning.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement in GCSE human physiology and health

- lack of appropriate vocational opportunities.

Scope of provision

47. The college offers a range of courses, for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults, across the sciences from foundation through to degree level. GCE AS and A-level courses are available in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics and environmental science. GCSE courses are available in human physiology and health, chemistry, physics and science. The academic gateway for adult students includes a foundation science module. GCE A-level and GCSE courses are delivered on full-time programmes to students aged 16 to 18 and part-time adult students in the evening and day. Open college courses at levels 2 and 3 are offered to adult students as a pathway to HE. The flexibility of the teaching programme makes a wide combination of courses available, particularly for adults returning to education. Vocational provision is limited to a certificate in animal science. Since the introduction of Curriculum 2000, all courses are modular. Forensic science is offered at present as an enrichment study.

Achievement and standards

48. Retention rates have improved on most courses. They were above national averages in 2002 in all two-year GCE A-level courses, but low in the one-year GCE A-level human biology at 57%. Retention rates on all GCE AS and GCSE courses have been good, except for GCSE human physiology and health. This course attracts a large number of starters. The retention rate has been consistently low and, at 63%, in 2002, was still below the national average of 76%. Pass rates have improved and are now above national averages in all GCE AS and A-level and GCSE subjects, except GCE AS chemistry and GCSE human physiology and health. The pass rates for GCSE chemistry and physics have been consistently high; in 2002, they were 53% and 60%, high rates compared to the national averages of 49% and 44%. The numbers taking the certificate in animal science are small, but pass rates are high and there is good progression to HE. There has been a decline in numbers in vocational science and GCE A2 courses since the advent of Curriculum 2000.

49. The standard of students' coursework and work in class is good. Most students keep well-organised files with good quality notes. A few students have poor literacy and organisational skills. Some students have English as a second language. Staff identify these students and any problems are addressed by a learning mentor. The coursework is of a good standard. Presentation is above average and many students make effective use of their IT skills.

50. Progression from all GCE A-level science courses is good. For example, all ten students who passed GCE A-level biology in 2002 went on to HE. Many universities report favourably on their achievements at this next stage in their career.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE physics	2	No. of starts	17	16	19
		% retention	41	88	79
		% pass rate	71	50	60
GCSE human physiology and health	2	No. of starts	77	105	103
		% retention	47	64	63
		% pass rate	42	33	37
GCE AS environmental science	3	No. of starts	*	13	9
		% retention	*	92	89
		% pass rate	*	67	88
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	*	22	11
		% retention	*	64	91
		% pass rate	*	64	100

GCE A-level human biology	3	No. of starts	26	19	23
		% retention	38	84	57
		% pass rate	60	44	92
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	8	16	8
		% retention	38	56	100
		% pass rate	100	88	100

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

*course not running

Quality of education and training

51. Overall, the teaching in most lessons was good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Most sessions are well structured and organised. Students demonstrate purpose and focus. Activities are varied, and the lessons progress at an appropriate pace. Students are active and engaged in the learning, make good progress and reach high standards. Good use is made of ILT. In a physics lesson, the lecturer gave a quick and memorable demonstration of measuring the speed of sound by using data logging equipment and a computer with a screen projector. This was contrasted with a method involving an oscilloscope and wave reinforcement. The range of well-prepared activities kept the students' interest. Clear guidance from the teacher ensured the students understood the concepts involved.

52. Practical work in science is well organised and offers good opportunities for skill development. Well-qualified technicians provide good support. They also help in lessons by having the expertise to demonstrate apparatus and experiments. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. Many have professional interests in their subject outside of teaching. They are informative and have the enthusiasm and commitment to inspire students. In a successful human physiology lesson, the teacher skilfully explained the relationship between blood grouping and blood donation. By drawing on the students' own experiences she quickly got the students involved. Discussion was lively and the teacher showed students a good strategy for remembering which blood groupings were compatible. By the end of the session, this mature group of students understood the importance of blood compatibility and could answer an examination question on this topic with confidence.

53. The teaching accommodation and resources in science are good. There is ample equipment to support practical work and a more interactive teaching style. It is readily available and all level 3 and some level 2 students have textbooks provided. The rooms have good displays of learning material with a clear subject identity. Corridors have bright and stimulating displays. Most science lessons are taught in appropriate rooms.

54. Students' progress is regularly monitored. Homework is marked accurately with appropriate feedback. All students aged 16 to 18 have targets set. Students are aware of their target grades and these are reviewed on a regular basis. Individual action plans are used to plan progress and the tracking and monitoring are good. The standard of course assessment meets examining body requirement. Many teachers are external moderators or examiners.

55. The range of courses meets the needs of most students. There are good progression routes through to degree level. Many students have a weak academic background, but there is limited level 1 provision in science and few opportunities for vocational studies. All full-time students have the opportunity to gain key skills. Communication key skills is embedded well into level 3 courses.

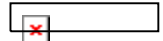
56. The college has a well-thought-out strategy for guiding students on to, through and out of, programmes. Progression to HE is particularly high for science. There are strong links with local HE provision. Teachers have a commitment to students' success and provide strong support to guidance given by the pastoral tutors. Learning mentors are also available to help students with

difficulties.

Leadership and management

57. There is good leadership, teamwork and staff development. Courses are well managed. There are clear schemes of work and comprehensive record keeping. Provision is delivered over two sites, but common schemes of work and cross moderation maintain standards. Meetings are held on a regular basis, action points and responsibilities are clearly identified. There were discrepancies between centrally held data and the departments own data and the tracking and identification of courses are unsatisfactory. Staff share a common purpose and put students and achievements first. Demanding targets are set for students and courses are reviewed annually to identify weaknesses. Most weaknesses in pass rates have been addressed, but some weaknesses in retention rates remain.

Construction



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 3

- good pass rates on courses at levels 1 and 3

- high standard of students' practical work

- very good teaching and learning

- very good resources to support learning

- successful strategy for widening participation

- very good individual support for students

- o effective leadership and teamwork in the department.

Weaknesses

- o poor retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 2 wood occupations course
- o inadequate induction for modern apprentices
- o missed opportunities for assessment in the workplace.

Scope of provision

58. The college offers a broad range of construction courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. These include craft and technician courses and foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. Specialist provision includes plastering and an electrical installation assessment centre. Students can attend for full-time, day-release, block-release or evening-only courses. There are 75 work-based learners on modern apprenticeships and NVQ courses. There are 304 students aged 16 to 18 and 853 students aged 19 or over.

Achievement and standards

59. Retention rates on NVQ 1 and level 3 courses are good. They are consistently above national averages and have improved since 1999. Pass rates for level 1 and level 3 craft and for level 3 technician courses are good. Most have improved since 1999 and many were excellent in 2001. However, retention and pass rates on NVQ 2 wood occupations are particularly poor. Many construction students produce practical work of a high standard. Work-based learners consistently produce work of a commercial standard for paying clients under industry conditions. College-based students also produce work of a commercial standard. The level 1 carpentry and joinery staff often arrange commercial jobs to supplement standard assignment tasks. Such work challenges and motivates the students to improve their skills continually. For example, a small team of level 1 students produced five casement windows and door frames to industrial tolerances for a paying client. Attendance at lessons is satisfactory and about the national average for construction courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	32	33	34
		% retention	88	10	88
		% pass rate	100	100	77
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	33	33	69
		% retention	42	47	62
		% pass rate	0	0	15
NVQ brickwork	2	No. of starts	35	29	6

		% retention	69	86	83
		% pass rate	87	80	50
NVQ plumbing	3	No. of starts	16	7	16
		% retention	81	86	93
		% pass rate	69	80	100
National certificate in building studies	3	No. of starts	15	17	28
		% retention	73	64	89
		% pass rate	27	91	80
NVQ carpentry and joinery	3	No. of starts	20	20	28
		% retention	85	95	93
		% pass rate	94	95	100

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

Quality of education and training

60. Most teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well planned to ensure that individual needs are met. Students are often provided individually with clear, challenging targets. Teachers generally give students good individual attention. In the best lessons, targets appropriate to their level of attainment are given to the students and frequently reviewed as the lesson progresses. Most teachers know well the strengths and weaknesses of their students and use this knowledge to good effect. In one of the best lessons, the teacher quickly caught the interest of students and held it throughout by outstanding presentation skills and simple explanations. Changes of activity were perfectly timed and students were given opportunities to demonstrate the skills learned during the lesson to the rest the group. Many teachers make very good use of visual aids. For example, in a lesson on water circulators, the teacher supplemented a handout by providing students with actual circulators, which they stripped to find parts shown on the diagrams. They then found pre-planned faults in the circulators before reassembling them. This activity helped to maintain interest and accommodated several different learning styles. Less good lessons generally failed to hold the interest of the students. In such lessons, students were not involved in any activities or discussion and were expected to absorb passively much verbal or visual information. In one lesson, students spent too much time copying notes from overhead projector slides.

61. The resources to support learning are very good. Workshops are spacious, well laid out, clean and tidy. Technician support is excellent and valued by the students. Tools and equipment are of good quality, well maintained and managed. Tools are issued speedily and efficiently which maximises productive workshop time for the students. Classroom accommodation is good. There are good displays of materials to enhance the teaching. Teaching staff are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience that they use to good effect. Students make good use of a small range of computer-based learning materials located on the intranet. Although usage is not monitored, some teachers ensure that the materials are used by setting appropriate assignments. These assignments are generally well chosen to cover subject matter that many construction students find tedious.

62. The department has a successful strategy for widening participation. Staff work well in teams to promote construction and attract a wide range of students. Particular attention is given to attracting disadvantaged students. Staff and managers work hard to break down typical stereotypes of the construction industry. Notice boards and other materials portray positive images of the industry. For example, images of successful women students in craft and technician occupations are displayed.

63. There is very good individual support for students. Formal support is provided through the tutorial system and through additional support within or outside the classroom. The tutorial system is very good. Tutors are provided with timely and current information on the performance, behaviour and

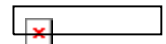
attendance of each student. The system is well managed and has a significant positive impact on the students. Students assess their own performance and agree an action plan with the tutor. Actions are followed up regularly and formally. Not all work-based learners are aware of the framework they are following and information provided during induction is not always remembered.

64. Assessment is accurate and fair. However, not all experience gained in the workplace is used as evidence for assessment. In some cases, no assessment takes place in the workplace. Internal verification is thorough and well documented. Verifications are well planned, feedback is appropriate and awarding body requirements are met. The monitoring of students' progress is generally good. However, the recording of completions is not thorough and some poor retention and pass rates had been overlooked. Examination board pass lists are not held by department or routinely checked by departmental staff.

Leadership and management

65. There is good leadership and teamwork. There is a clear vision and strategy that is shared, understood and welcomed by the staff. An important aim of the department is to improve continually the experience of students. The excellent pass rates in several courses in 2002 indicate that this aim has been successfully realised. Communications within the department and with a substantial network of external agencies are good. For example, staff links with industry provide very good sponsorship for the annual student prize giving. There is also good sponsorship in the form of donations of equipment and materials. Budget and resource management are good. Government funded provision is subsidised by specialist commercial provision such as electrical testing and gas training and assessment.

Engineering



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high retention rates on most programmes

- high pass rates on most programmes

- very good teaching and learning

- good resources to support learning

- good accessibility to work-based assessment

- wide range of courses with good progression opportunities

- effective support for students

- effective leadership and team working.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates for work-based learning programmes

- insufficient checking of student understanding in some lessons

- insufficient employer involvement in the NVQ process.

Scope of provision

66. The college provides a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time courses from foundation level to HE in response to local demands. Courses in motor vehicle engineering include body repair, paint, motorcycle and auto engineering. Engineering courses include vocational courses in mechanical, fabrication and welding. Engineering design and production courses are also offered in computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM). Electrical engineering courses are offered at national certificate and diploma level. The department runs an automobile Saturday morning club for Year 10 and Year 11 school pupils. This has resulted in young females progressing into college courses after leaving school. At the time of the inspection, there were 480 students, 178 of whom were full time and 306 part time. There are 218 students aged 16 to 18 and 262 aged over 19. There were 60 learners in work-based training. These are equally split between engineering and motor vehicle vocational areas. Attendance by students was good, at 83%, in the lessons observed.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass and retention rates are very good. Most pass rates are above national averages. At NVQ level 3 in vehicle finishing, the pass rate has been 100% since the course started. Apart from one course, retention rates vary from 7 to 26 percentage points above the national average. However, the retention rate of work-based learners is poor. Steps have been taken to address this problem and this is reflected by a current rise in the retention rate for motor vehicle advanced modern apprenticeships. The majority of students' work is good. In practical classes, students' work is of a very high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ valeting	1	No. of starts	31	91	45
		% retention	100	86	91
		% pass rate	71	29	85
City and Guilds 3992-01 motor	1	No. of starts	*	26	85
		% retention	*	96	84
		% pass rate	*	72	86
NVQ in vehicle body fitting	2	No. of starts	6	34	31
		% retention	83	62	87
		% pass rate	80	**	78
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	14	12	11
		% retention	71	83	82
		% pass rate	80	60	78
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	49	42	29
		% retention	92	95	93
		% pass rate	66	81	93
NVQ in vehicle finishing	3	No. of starts	*	52	52
		% retention	*	81	54
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

* course not running

** data unavailable

Quality of education and training

68. Teaching and learning was good or better in most of the lessons observed. There was no unsatisfactory teaching or learning observed. There are good relationships between staff and students. Most students are highly motivated and make substantial progress when working at their own pace. Lessons generally take place in a relaxed environment that supports learning. Schemes of work and lesson plans are well designed and show how key skills are integrated. Lessons are well organised and the monitoring of student progress is well recorded. In most lessons, teachers support students' progress either individually or in small groups. In the best lessons, there is a good review of previous work through well-directed questioning of students. Students respond well and their answers indicate a good level of attainment. In less good lessons, there is little linking of theory and practice and insufficient checking of students' understanding. Occasionally, the teacher proceeded too quickly and left the students behind. Attention to health and safety is generally good, but a small number of minor infringements were observed.

69. Staff are suitably qualified and many have current industrial experience. Teachers regularly attend manufacturing update courses. The engineering section has a good range of workshops although the main workshop is sometimes overcrowded because of its high usage. Workshops are well resourced. The motor vehicle section includes an authorised motor vehicle testing station with reception and public viewing area. Vehicle stock is extensive and use is made of private cars for repair, refurbishment and maintenance. CAD facilities are very good and include an interactive whiteboard. The facility is linked to computer numerical control (CNC) machines for the manufacturing of students' design pieces. Current industrial-standard software is used in the facility. The electronics lab is currently undergoing refurbishment and will include an extensive range of new

electronic and control equipment. The range of equipment and experience in the workplace for work-based learners is good. Computer access for students is good and all have e-mail addresses. In the learning resource centre, there is also a dedicated computer, used by motor vehicle students for underpinning knowledge, testing and Internet access.

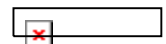
70. Student support is good both in the workplace and in college classes. The department has revised its initial assessment procedures. It has recognised that many students need basic skills support and 12 support workers have been appointed. Support workers have a high profile in the department in which approximately 10% of students have been identified as requiring support. Some support workers are employed in the workshops to help students with communication and numeracy. An experienced tutor monitors their progress and advises and supports new members of staff who have been recruited directly from industry. Enrichment activities for students include weekends away with a local sports car manufacture, visits to vehicle manufacturers and educational visits to national shows. There are also after class activities in electronic car racing, the results of which are presented in a league table, which is used as a resource for key skills. Awards are given to students for good retention and pass rates.

71. The slow progress of some students has been a problem, especially in work-based training programmes and on lower level courses. Key skills progress has been slow, leading to some poor achievement of qualifications within the normal timespan. This has been recognised and acted upon. Work-based learners are now visited more frequently and reviews and assessment are carried out well. Students can contact the college to ask for assessments to be carried out. They have access to assessors' mobile phone numbers and response is quick. Support for students continues even though funding has ceased. However, some employers are not sufficiently involved and lack full knowledge of the NVQ. Some do not get sufficient feedback on students' progress.

Leadership and management

72. There is effective leadership and team management at all levels within the department. Formal and informal communications are good. Meetings are regular, frequent and well minuted. The department holds a quality assurance accreditation. An operational manager ensures the smooth running of the workshops. There is an annual appraisal of staff performance at which staff development needs are identified. There is an extensive staff development programme. There is an arrangement with another college with similar commitments to industry to interchange staff periodically for short periods. A female member of the staff has been instrumental in attempting to increase the participation of women in engineering.

Business, management and professional



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good pass rates

- much well-planned and effective teaching and off-the-job training

- good standard of students' written and classwork

- broad range of provision

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor and declining retention rate on City and Guilds 7307 teachers certificate course

- lack of differentiation in a small number of lessons

- lack of rigour in internal verification in work-based learning and accountancy technician courses.

Scope of provision

73. There is a wide range of courses, from level 1 to HE, which are responsive to local requirements. There is no foundation level provision at present. A high proportion of students progress to higher levels of study within the curriculum area. There are full-time and part-time courses in business, management, administration and teacher education. Specialist professional training is available through courses accredited by the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), certificate in Personnel Practice (CPP), Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX). Students also benefit from a varied enrichment programme and additional qualifications are also taken by full-time students to widen their skills. For example, on an Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) business course, students study word processing as an additional skill and also e-business. There are currently 114 full-time and 1,614 part-time students, the majority of whom are adults. There are 33 learners on work-based programmes in administration and accounting covering NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4; 11 are on the foundation modern apprenticeship and 22 on the advanced modern apprenticeship.

Achievement and standards

74. Pass rates on most courses are good. For example, students have achieved above the national average in NVQs in accounting and administration, in both GNVQ intermediate and AVCE business, on CPP and on word processing and text processing courses. Two students have received the silver award for achievement in 2002, awarded by the London Chamber of Commerce Institute, one for level 2 administration, and the other for audio transcription. Retention rates are generally improving and, in many cases, are at or above national averages. However, in the case of City and Guilds 7307 teaching certificate the retention rate is poor and declining. In work-based learning, the retention rate is low but improving.

75. Students' work is of a high standard. Students enjoy working together and on their own in class, and are able to reach good standards at the appropriate stages of their courses. Many gain in confidence and self-esteem and are able to analyse, criticise and present logical arguments with increasing intellectual maturity. Students make use of the learning resource centres and written work is usually well presented, with many portfolios constructed in a detailed and meticulous manner.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	64	49	48
		% retention	80	86	85
		% pass rate	73	83	83
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	*	13	15
		% retention	*	77	87
		% pass rate	*	50	77
NVQ administration (2 year)	3	No. of starts	47	37	23
		% retention	43	92	87
		% pass rate	90	80	85
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	19	25	22
		% retention	89	92	100
		% pass rate	94	87	95
City and Guilds 7307 teachers certificate	3	No. of starts	39	48	51
		% retention	100	67	57
		% pass rate	67	69	86
GNVQ/AVCE business	3	No. of starts	13	17	21
		% retention	62	60	76
		% pass rate	50	100	88

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

76. Teaching and learning were good or better in most of the lessons observed. There was no unsatisfactory teaching or learning. There is also a good standard of off-the-job training for work-based learners, with flexible teaching programmes and good rates of progression. Across the curriculum area, teachers are well prepared and organised. There are thoroughly planned lessons and good documentation and materials. Relationships are good and, in general, tutors use a variety of appropriate methods to interest and challenge their students. Teaching often links theory and practice effectively; for example, in an administration class on business practice, students had developed a good level of understanding of business practices and focused on elements of the marketing mix, discussing applications and strategies adopted by well-known companies. A key feature of this session and in CPP and AVCE classes was the effective use of ILT in teaching. However, in a minority of classes, there was a heavy reliance on teacher exposition and excessive note taking with some use of outdated teaching materials. Inspectors also observed several classes that did not fully cater for the range of needs of a diverse group of learners. For example, levels mixed together with no planned differentiation and group work that inhibited progress of most able

learners and exerted pressure on the lower-achieving students.

77. Induction is effective and well planned, enabling students to settle into their courses quickly. Staff offer good guidance and support to students on course, curriculum and personal issues. Part-time and work-based learning students also feel that their course helps them in their work role.

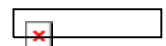
78. There is good centralised tracking of student progress and students receive prompt and carefully considered feedback. This is especially detailed in the case of some GNVQ intermediate and AVCE assignments, with annotation showing students how to improve their work in the future. Assignment workshops are also provided for business students. On administration courses, students are carefully coached in examination practice. Procedures for internal verification of assessment are established, although there is variation in practices and rigour. All full-time students attend individual tutorials at least once a month, supplemented by progress reports and with individual learning plans and targets agreed. The irregularity of meetings does not allow for continuing action planning, however, and there are no similar procedures in place for part-time students. In work-based learning, there is frequent and effective action planning, with visits every two weeks. Although changes have recently been made, the progress reviews lack sufficient detail.

79. Staff are well qualified and both full-time and part-time staff regularly attend training and development days. A growing number have benefited from industrial updating. There are good specialist IT resources, although these are under-used in some lessons. Accommodation is of a good standard and there are attractive wall displays demonstrating student achievement and enrichment activities. Resources for students are good and independent study is encouraged. The library and learning resource centres are well equipped and accessible to all learners. There are learning materials available on the developing hard drive and learnnet intranet site. Designated training areas are provided for business and administration students, enabling them to have access to learning in a real working office environment and an industry-standard call centre. However, the number of students using this resource at any one time is low.

Leadership and management

80. The curriculum area is well managed with good communications and clear strategic goals. Morale is good and staff aim to achieve high quality provision with targets set and monitoring arrangements in place. Managers and senior tutors have been an effective driving force for improvement and dissemination of good practice. Part-time staff are utilised as a key source of up-to-date business experience and, as such, feel valued and supported. Sometimes, however, they cannot be fully involved in curriculum planning and review. Course teams are well organised with well-maintained documentation. Quality assurance procedures are effective, although some course level self-assessment is rather perfunctory. Although there are good commercial links developed through part-time and professional courses including work-based learning, these are not fully utilised for some full-time business students.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on full-time courses

- good progression rates

- much good teaching

- broad range of courses

- excellent provision of learning support

- well-managed curriculum.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on GNVQ courses

- lack of differentiation in some lessons.

Scope of provision

81. There is a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in computing and ICT from level 1 to degree level which provide good opportunities for student progression. The college offers considerable flexibility to its part-time students by providing courses of varying duration in a variety of locations. Full-time provision includes GCE AS/A level, GCSE ICT, national certificate and diploma in computing, AVCE and GNVQ intermediate and foundation courses in ICT. Part-time courses include introduction to computers, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), desktop publishing, Integrated Business Technology stage 2 and 3 (IBT 2 and IBT 3), web technologies, and European computer driving licence (ECDL). Specialist courses are available to meet the needs of employers in a dedicated management technology centre. Provision is carefully planned to ensure equality of access and opportunity for students from disadvantaged groups. The access to employment in IT course provides opportunities for students with little experience in ICT to obtain suitable employment. There are good opportunities for progression for both full-time and part-time students. Student progression rates on all courses are high.

Achievement and standards

82. Pass rates on full-time courses are high. The GNVQ foundation course pass rate has risen consistently from 59% to 89%, which is well above the national average. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate ICT have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. The AVCE pass rate has been well above the national average for the last two years. The GCE A-level ICT pass rate reached 100% last year. Retention rates on most level 3 courses are above the national average. Retention rates are close to national averages on most other courses. Retention rates on GNVQ and AVCE programmes are poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	16	29	27
		% retention	44	72	70
		% pass rate	57	81	89
City and Guilds 7261 computer programming certificate	2	No. of starts	66	126	74
		% retention	67	75	75
		% pass rate	84	69	75
City and Guilds 7261 diploma	2	No. of starts	20	15	22
		% retention	60	73	100
		% pass rate	100	91	64
GCSE IT	2	No. of starts	107	71	81
		% retention	59	73	67
		% pass rate	67	78	65
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	41	29	28
		% retention	83	96	75
		% pass rate	68	68	100
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	17	30	7
		% retention	53	47	100
		% pass rate	88	50	100

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

Quality of education and training

83. Teaching was good or better in most of the lessons observed. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are made clear to students. Teaching on full-time courses successfully improves students' independent research skills particularly in making effective use of the Internet. Support for individual students, particularly those with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is excellent. All full-time foundation programmes have dedicated learning support workers attached to classes. Teachers communicate effectively with learning support assistants to ensure students make good progress during lessons. Many learning support workers also have appropriate ICT qualifications, which enable them to provide good specialist support to students.

84. Students on part-time courses are able to progress at a pace that suits them. These students benefit from supportive tutors and the use of high-quality learning materials. In the majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate high levels of up-to-date subject knowledge and use this to extend the experiences of their students. The working relationship between teachers and students is good. In practical lessons, teachers effectively monitor the progress of individual students and provide positive verbal feedback to them. In a few lessons, teachers failed to take account of students' prior knowledge and set tasks which did not reflect the students' level of expertise.

85. Where teachers have access to good teaching resources they provide informative interactive demonstrations to enhance students' learning. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards. In one session, the teacher used a well-prepared set of resource files in conjunction with the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate techniques in manipulating images and text in designing web pages. There is a lack of use of multimedia resources and specialist software in some lessons, which prevents students from further developing their expertise. Facilities to enable students to save large

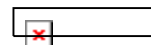
files are limited. The intranet provides good resources for part-time students, including course materials. There is useful guidance for prospective students on the college web site. Most classrooms provide a good learning environment for students, although some suffer from poor ventilation and a lack of air conditioning.

86. Students' work is marked thoroughly and regularly. Their progress is well monitored both on part-time and full-time courses. Assessment practices meet awarding body standards. Group tutorials on vocational programmes are well planned and provide good academic and pastoral support for students.

Leadership and management

87. The curriculum area is well managed. Roles and responsibilities are clear and the head of school has effectively dealt with recent major staffing issues. The school self-assessment report is thorough and self-critical. Course reviews and internal verification procedures are rigorous with a focus on improving students' retention and pass rates. The evaluation of full-time programmes has led to an improvement in the quality of assignments, particularly on the intermediate and foundation GNVQ courses. Good use is made of feedback from staff and students to inform the self-assessment process. Good practice is shared and there are regular staff meetings. There is good teamwork and excellent links between full-time and part-time staff. Team meetings are regular, informative and are well minuted. Clear priorities are set for staff development, including both cross-college and subject-related issues.

Hospitality, sports leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses in 2001/02
- much good teaching
- wide range of provision which meets the needs of students
- very good support for students
- effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- lack of differentiation in a small number of lessons

- poor assessment practices in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

88. There is a wide range of provision, which meets the needs of a variety of students and is responsive to local community and employer needs. There are very good progression routes. Courses range from entry level to level 4. There are work-based learning routes and a variety of modes of attendance. There is a good range of additional qualifications available to full-time students and a wide-ranging programme of enrichment that students take part in and enjoy; these include indoor-carting, paintballing and Brazilian football. There is a full programme of visits, guest speakers and external trips, which enhance the students' learning experiences. Catering students have the opportunity to enter competitions and work on special functions with local employers. In catering and food production, there are 83 full-time and 31 part-time students aged 16 to 18 and 125 full-time and 736 part-time adult students. In hospitality, leisure and tourism, there are 373 students aged 16 to 18 and 679 adult students. Of these, 404 are full time and 648 are part time. There are 40 work-based learners.

Achievement and standards

89. There are high pass rates on most courses in sport and leisure and tourism. The national diploma in public services has had nearly 100% pass rates for two consecutive years. Pass rates were above the national average in 2001 in the sport and leisure programmes. Most travel and tourism pass rates are at or above national averages. There are improving retention rates on most courses so that they meet or exceed national averages. Retention rates on the national diploma in European hotel industry have been poor for 2000/01 and 2001/02. The written and practical work produced by students is of a good standard.

90. Pass and retention rates on NVQ food preparation and cooking level 2 and NVQ craft bakery level 2 are good. Retention rates on food and drink management operations level 1 and NVQ craft bakery level 2 have improved to the national average or above.

91. In work-based learning, students make slow progress with extended lengths of stay on NVQ and modern apprenticeship programmes. Most students commence off-the-job training at the beginning of the academic year. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently tailored to individual needs. They all have the same progress and achievement targets.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Food and drink management operations	1	No. of starts	65	109	51
		% retention	69	33	73
		% pass rate	47	78	54
GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	19	22	24
		% retention	89	80	92
		% pass rate	76	69	91
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	47	28	73
		% retention	81	89	79

		% pass rate	82	52	97
NVQ craft bakery	2	No. of starts	7	26	21
		% retention	29	73	81
		% pass rate	73	79	88
National diploma in public services (sports)	3	No. of starts	22	17	12
		% retention	55	35	100
		% pass rate	92	100	92
National diploma in European hotel industry	3	No. of starts	14	7	14
		% retention	71	43	43
		% pass rate	40	67	100

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

Quality of education and training

92. Much teaching is very good. Students are effectively involved in learning with a variety of activities used to promote and aid understanding. In one lesson, students made use of an interactive whiteboard to explore travel-booking systems on the Internet. In an outstanding lesson in catering, students were able to take a basic recipe and adapt it to prepare a range of complex dishes. The vocational experience of tutors is used to good effect and aids students' understanding of the industrial practices.

93. All lessons are well planned and documented. Schemes of work are comprehensive and include key skills opportunities. A small minority of lessons lack variety and are inappropriately paced and some students lose interest. In a small number of lessons, there is a lack of differentiation, which results in more able learners being insufficiently challenged. Students work well in most lessons.

94. In work-based learning assessment, practices are poor. There is a lack of initial assessment of formal and informal training undertaken to inform individual learning plans. There is inadequate employer involvement in training and assessment planning and insufficient assessment in the workplace.

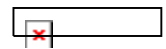
95. On college programmes, effective initial assessment is used to plan learning for full-time students. The assessment of students' work in practical lessons is very good. Assessment plans are updated regularly, either in lessons or tutorials, carefully recorded and well maintained. All staff contribute to the planning process and students can amend their plans at any time. Most students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve their qualifications. Students keep a daily log of completed tasks each day. Assessment is rigorous and portfolios contain detailed evidence of assessment. Theory work in portfolios is marked and feedback is helpful in enabling students to make progress. The excellent records give students a clear overview of how much progress they have made. Assignment briefs are good. Work is returned promptly. Students value the comments made by teachers on how their work needs to be improved. Marking is detailed and includes careful correction of spelling. Students are aware of assessment schedules and deadlines and non-submission of work is promptly followed up by staff.

96. Students are set demanding targets and their progress towards them is monitored regularly. The tutorial and pastoral care system carefully tracks and effectively supports students. There is a rigorous system for monitoring attendance. Students benefit from specialist learner support that is recorded and monitored. Students value highly the support they receive from teachers. Resources are very good, well managed and support learning effectively. There are very good links with local industry. Students undertake relevant work experience. An industrial placement office supports students in finding placements among the extensive range available.

Leadership and management

97. There is effective management at course and school level. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. A number of strategies have been identified to improve attendance, retention and pass rates and they are having a positive effect. There are clear procedures for dealing with student discipline and non-attendance. Course reviews are thorough and involve all staff. Actions identified are acted upon quickly and are effective in improving courses. The travel and tourism team are beginning to explore with external partners their role in the continued development of the area's tourism industry. The college has recently been awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence status for customer service quality in tourism. The excellent links with employers help in curriculum development and planning. Students' destinations are collected and used to inform decisions about course planning.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- very good retention rates

- much good and some outstanding teaching and learning

- excellent resources

- very good enrichment activities that broaden students' experience

- good pastoral and additional support for students.

Weaknesses

- ineffective review of students' progress in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

98. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty, sports and holistic therapies ranging from level 1 to Higher National Diploma (HND). The main provision is offered at the Andsell site in Lytham St. Annes, with additional smaller provision in Fleetwood. Some 42% (272) of students are aged 16 to 18 and 369 students are aged 19 and over. There are 300 full-time and 403 part-time students, 47 of whom are male. There is a wide range of short courses. The college has a good pre-16 schools programme and offers NVQ level 1 in hairdressing and a foundation course in beauty therapy attended by some Year 11 school pupils. There are 58 foundation and advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing and the appropriate key skill qualifications.

Achievement and standards

99. Pass rates are high on many programmes and have been consistently above national averages for three years on NVQ level 2 in beauty therapy, and in the diploma courses in reflexology and advanced nail techniques. Retention rates are very good and are above national averages. In work-based learning, the retention rates on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme have improved from 41% to 100% over a three-year period. Achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework is low, but improving. The timely achievement of key skills and vocational qualifications is helping students to make good progress towards framework achievement.

100. The quality of the students' practical work is very good, with students often displaying standards that are above awarding body requirements. Many students on the NVQ level 1 hairdressing course are producing practical work of a level 2 standard. Students demonstrate a sound knowledge of their subject and are confident in applying their skills on a range of clients. The standard of written work is high, and shows that students have developed a good understanding of their subject. This was particularly notable in holistic therapy assignments, where students extended their knowledge through research and the work produced exceeded the assignment brief. Modern apprentices' portfolios of evidence are well organised and show an extensive range of evidence. Attendance and punctuality in lessons are very good. During inspection, the average attendance rate was 83%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	18	21	66
		% retention	78	62	83
		% pass rate	93	85	93
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	2	No. of starts	40	44	44
		% retention	78	86	77
		% pass rate	87	68	76
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	64	54	48
		% retention	78	81	81
		% pass rate	80	95	87
Diploma in reflexology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	19	20	19
		% retention	84	90	95
		% pass rate	63	28	89
Diploma in advanced nail techniques (short)	3	No. of starts	11	20	27
		% retention	100	100	93

		% pass rate	90	95	88
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Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

Quality of education and training

101. Lessons are carefully planned, with consideration being given to students' individual needs and learning styles. Teachers are very knowledgeable and extend students' knowledge beyond the requirements of their qualification. Students are eager to learn and very motivated. There is no difference in the teaching and learning between students aged 16 to 18 and adult. All teaching is good with examples of some inspirational and innovative teaching. In a lesson on anatomy and physiology, the teacher expertly used a variety of teaching aids to demonstrate the complexity of the olfactory system to students. She skilfully managed students' discussion and used humour effectively to emphasise key points. The students thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and very good learning took place. In another lesson, students of different abilities and levels were matched together to provide hairdressing treatment on clients. Level 1 students acted as assistants to more advanced students. This extended the more advanced students' skills in managing and organising others, whilst the lower level students were able to observe good practical skills and client care at first hand. In all practical lessons, there was good reinforcement of industry standards. Theory and key skills lessons had a good vocational focus, making the learning relevant to the students. Some progress reviews in work-based learning do not include the employer. Employers are not sufficiently involved in agreeing targets at the review, and subsequently do not support the apprentice to meet the targets in a work-place setting. In some salons, no time is set aside for the review and apprentices are interrupted to shampoo clients and answer the telephone. The review does not clearly identify opportunities to carry out assessment in the workplace. Inspectors observed assessments being carried out on inappropriate clients that did not meet the criteria specified by the awarding body.

102. Resources to support learning are outstanding. A dedicated building houses the hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapy courses. Salons are decorated and equipped to industry standards. A ground floor commercial salon is run by qualified students who attend on a rota basis providing treatments in beauty therapy and hairdressing. Most rooms have interactive whiteboards; all salons have a separate reception area with a computerised till. There is a wealth of good quality anatomical models to support learning in anatomy and physiology. A resource centre is well stocked with books, journals, videos, CD-ROMs and computers with Internet and intranet access to support students' independent study requirements.

103. Staff are highly qualified and benefit from regular and relevant training and professional updating. All have or are working towards a teaching qualification and many, in addition to their vocational qualifications, hold degree level qualifications. Placement salons used by all full-time and modern apprentice students are of good quality. Students benefit from good links developed by the college with local theatres, community groups, schools and voluntary organisations. An annual exchange programme with Finland, Italy and Spain gives students the opportunity to work in hairdressing and beauty salons in other countries and to broaden their experience of different cultures. Students are encouraged to participate in external competitions and have had good regional, national and internal success. In one notable example, a student who represented England in the skills Olympics in Canada was placed second overall.

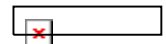
104. Good support from teachers and additional support tutors effectively encourages students to progress and achieve in line with their ability and aspirations. Teachers work hard to accommodate the differing needs of their students. For example, to accommodate the predominantly adult cohort in the curriculum area, classes do not start until 9.30am to give students time to negotiate busy traffic and public transport to arrive at college on time. Students with school-age children are placed in groups that accommodate school hours. Initial assessment is effective in identifying additional learning needs. Students with identified physical or additional needs are provided with a support tutor in their class. Drop-in practical workshops provide students with additional opportunities to practise skills.

Leadership and management

105. There is strong leadership and management of the department. Staff work well together as a team, and responsibilities are delegated at an appropriate level. The curriculum is well managed. There are good systems to monitor students' progress, attendance and attainment. Regular well-attended meetings involve staff and students and resulting actions are monitored and reported upon. Course reviews are detailed and focus upon improvements for the students. Staff set targets on retention and pass rates at course level and effectively monitor progress toward their achievement. Cross-college quality systems are thoroughly and rigorously applied. Internal verification procedures are good and effectively assure the quality of training.

106. The department is proactive in its approach to equality of opportunity. Students have wide opportunities of working with minority and disadvantaged groups to help develop their understanding. For example, they provide treatments at a clinic for people with the HIV virus. Both training centres have ramped access and a lift.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- very good achievement on counselling courses and childcare
- good, well-qualified staff with up-to-date professional experience
- good broad range of courses
- very good and effective support for students in the classroom
- effective sharing of good practice.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on all NVQ programmes
- poor retention rates on the diploma in childcare and education course and NVQ in early years

- some small cramped rooms

- poor management of data.

Scope of provision

107. The college offers a broad range of courses across the health, social care and early years sector, providing learning opportunities for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Courses are offered from foundation level through to foundation degrees and include full-time and part-time provision. Currently, there are 332 full-time and 488 part-time students enrolled. Of the full-time students, 164 are on early years programmes and 168 on health and social care programmes. Of the part-time students, 146 are on early years and 342 on health and social care. There are 286 students on NVQ programmes levels 2 to 4. Short and part-time courses support the needs of local health and care providers and the local community.

Achievement and standards

108. Retention rates on most courses are satisfactory and are good on the first diploma in care course and excellent on the counselling courses. Retention rates on the diploma in childcare and education course have been below national averages for the last three years and on the NVQ in childcare and education programmes for the last two years.

109. Pass rates on the certificate in childcare and education course and on the counselling courses are high. These have been consistently above national averages for the past three years. On the certificate in childcare and education course, the pass rate has been 100%, 94% and 96% over the last three years. Data for the GNVQ foundation course and the diploma in childcare and education course in 2000/01 are unreliable. Pass rates are better than indicated on the data and inspectors were able to verify the improved pass rates. Pass rates on the first diploma in care and the AVCE are low and pass rates on all NVQ programmes are very low.

110. Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding relevant to their level of study. Some are working above the level which might be expected of them and demonstrate good presentation skills when sharing their work with the rest of the class. There is good support for students in the classroom from learning mentors and education support workers. Students' work is generally of a good standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First diploma in care	2	No. of starts	15	10	20
		% retention	80	90	80
		% pass rate	83	67	75
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	33	30	42
		% retention	73	67	86
		% pass rate	100	94	96
NVQ in care	2	No. of starts	25	23	108

		% retention	80	87	84
		% pass rate	0	25	17
Counselling skills	2	No. of starts	56	52	19
		% retention	88	98	89
		% pass rate	90	94	100
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	48	*	48
		% retention	79	*	59
		% pass rate	84	*	89
AVCE in health and social care	3	No. of starts	*	27	29
		% retention	*	47	76
		% pass rate	*	**	55

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

* course not running

** insufficient data

Quality of education and training

111. Most of the teaching is satisfactory or good. Outstanding and poor lessons were also observed. Most students are enthusiastic, well motivated and interested in their lessons. The best lessons encouraged students to analyse and synthesise information. Students work well in groups. In one lesson, students had to complete an exercise on diabetes. The teacher skilfully used good question and answer techniques to draw the students out and encourage contributions from each member of the group. In many lessons, teachers link theory to practice well. Students are encouraged to relate learning to the workplace or placement. All full-time students have work placements. In a practical lesson where students were developing resources to use with children, the students developed well the key skills of problem solving and group working. Some lessons were boring and students became uninterested. Occasionally, some students dominated group discussion and prevented participation of the whole group.

112. Some rooms are too small for the classes, limiting the variety of teaching methods that can be used. Other resources are generally good or satisfactory. The better rooms are light and well ventilated. The centre has a well-equipped moving and handling training room used for short courses and training for full-time students. IT facilities are adequate. The NVQ team is piloting a web site to increase access to resources for students.

113. Students undertake an initial assessment of basic and/or key skills to identify any additional learning needs they may have. Their preferred learning style is assessed and teachers are aware of these preferences when planning learning. Students have regular tutorials to review learning plans, agree an action plan and negotiate targets. Targets are set for learning and behaviour. The centre is piloting a value added tracking system linked to initial attainment and the support required. Feedback on assessed work is generally good, but in some cases is not sufficiently detailed to enough help the student improve.

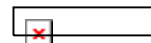
114. There is a good range of courses from foundation level to degree. Progression of students is good, with 83% of national diploma health studies progressing to HE and 17% to other FE programmes. All national diploma early years students move on to employment, with 17% enrolling on the foundation degree. Courses meet the needs of the local community. The initial training for classroom assistants (stage 2) is delivered in Fleetwood at a local community centre, at times to suit students with childcare responsibilities. Lesson start times at the main site have also been adjusted to accommodate these students and those who have long journeys to college.

115. Students are well supported. Staff from the learning support centre join lessons in the first few weeks after enrolment to monitor the support and identify other needs. Education support workers and learning mentors support students in lessons. This support provides one-to-one and small group support for basic skills during classroom activity. Lessons at foundation level address students' literacy needs. In lessons at foundation level, students undertake 'spell checks' of key words. When students are absent, notes are taken from the lesson and twilight sessions arranged to bring them up to date. The learning mentor scheme includes students at levels 2 and 3. Students find staff friendly and supportive. There is good careers and progression advice from tutors. Targets set in tutorials helped students to make progress.

Leadership and management

116. Leadership and management in the school of health and social care are satisfactory. Staff are very clear about their roles and the roles of others. Staff are committed and enthusiastic and work well in their teams. There is a detailed schedule of meetings for managers and staff, which facilitates good communication. Meetings focus on important issues such as retention and pass rates, teaching and learning, assessment issues, sharing good practice and staff development. Many new initiatives to help improve pass rates, assessment practice and the NVQ programmes have been put in place this year, but at the time of the inspection it was too soon to judge the effectiveness of the initiatives. The staff have made strenuous efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Recent staff development sessions have focused on sharing good practice in meeting the needs of students in lessons. There is good professional development for all staff. Many staff spend time each year in schools, health authority and social services departments in order to update their professional practice. The central data provided for staff is not always accurate and does not match the data held by course teams. Staff do not routinely use data to monitor performance or assist in future planning.

Art and design



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

Strengths

- outstanding teaching

- very good and consistent pass rates

- high standards of students' work

- very good progression

- high quality resources in photography and printmaking

- o effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- o there are no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

117. There is a good range of courses which allow students to progress from level 1 to level 3, and on to HE. About 230 full-time students are studying on a range of courses that include foundation and intermediate GNVQ, AVCE art, diplomas in design illustration, graphic design and photography, and a pre-degree foundation course. The school also offers GCE AS and A-level studies. There are 336 students studying part-time on the range of Open College Network (OCN) and City and Guilds courses in, for example, fashion, sculpture, interior décor, stained glass, life drawing, and art history. Most of these are at the Park Road site. There are outreach courses at other sites. There is very good progression through the courses. Some 90% of intermediate students progressed to level 3 last year. All AVCE and national diploma in design students went on to HE, including the college's Higher National Certificate (HNC), HND and Bachelor of Arts (BA) courses. Almost all foundation students gained places on HE courses, many at well-regarded institutions. The school organises an extensive range of visits and trips to enrich the curriculum. The school has developed good links with local schools and many potential students attend the regular exhibitions held in the college and around the town.

Achievement and standards

118. There are high pass rates and these have been consistent for a number of years. On many courses, including the full-time AVCE, national diploma in design and pre degree foundation courses, pass rates are above the national average. The part-time provision has been equally successful, with some 23 OCN and City and Guilds courses achieving 100% pass rates. There were low pass rates on the GCSE art. The school has worked hard to improve retention rates and in 2002 on most courses it was at or above national averages.

119. Students' work in all areas is of a very high standard. In textiles, full-time and part-time students are exploring colour and surface with some innovative work. In photography, the work is professional both in its technical competence and in its creativity. The printmaking is ambitious in scale and very lively, producing finished prints of a high quality. A display of AVCE students' ceramic work and foundation students' three-dimension constructions showed exciting work, well above the required level. There is a professional approach to graphic design and illustration with appropriate use of computers. All of this is underpinned by strong drawing, both formal perspective drawing and expressive drawing. All students' folders include a range of strong life drawings. Students are producing well-presented and researched contextual studies essays. The attendance during inspection was high, at 86%. Students develop good basic skills with assignment work. The presentation of key skills portfolios is of a high standard and the work is closely related to students' art and design studies.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate in art and design	2	No. of starts	20	13	19
		% retention	85	92	84

		% pass rate	88	75	88
GCSE art techniques and practice	2	No. of starts	16	8	13
		% retention	63	25	77
		% pass rate	50	50	60
National diploma foundation studies art and design part time	2	No. of starts	13	14	12
		% retention	62	64	83
		% pass rate	100	78	90
National diploma in design (graphic design illustration, photography)	3	No. of starts	59	55	54
		% retention	76	65	81
		% pass rate	84	86	95
National diploma foundation studies art and design full time	3	No. of starts	80	69	70
		% retention	98	80	89
		% pass rate	95	87	92
GNVQ advanced diploma art and design	3	No. of starts	31	26	40
		% retention	84	67	89
		% pass rate	96	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

120. The teaching is of a particularly high standard. Of the lessons observed, almost all were good or better. Staff prepare well and have developed good schemes of work. Attention is given to teaching styles, and assignments are written to allow students to develop their individual interests. The challenging teaching demands high standards of finish and concentration from students. In many drawing lessons, students are well organised in relation to the model or still life. They work in a professional manner on largescale drawings. In all lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and create a strong atmosphere of serious, lively work. In one class, foundation students were being challenged to develop large black and white drawings using experimental media, string, sand, rags etc. The studio was full of fresh drawings, rich in their qualities of texture, rhythm and form. All students have developed a good work ethic and are continuing their studies outside course hours. The quality of work is demonstrated throughout the public areas of buildings in the extensive displays of students' work.

121. Processes of assessment are thorough. These are well understood by students, who have clear guidance on assessment methods and criteria in their course handbooks and included on the assignment sheets. The written and verbal feedback to students is detailed and ensures that students are well informed on their progress. Evaluations of students' progress between assessments ensures that students are clear about their targets. Within the studios assessment helps to differentiate the learning to meet individual need. There is a thorough system of internal verification. Students are well supported and meet regularly with tutors for individual tutorials, which include portfolio reviews. Tutorials are available on demand for all students. The induction programme is very successful, involving trips to galleries, sites of interest and group activities. The students at levels 1 and 2 are supported by a teacher who co-ordinates basic skills. The teaching of basic skills is integrated in the art and design work. Staff are developing powerpoint presentations of assignments that refer to basic skills and set short exercises to reinforce learning. These learning resources are very professional in their content and design quality.

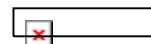
122. Staff are very well qualified and most are practising artists and designers. There are adequate support and technical staff. The majority of lessons are taught in good accommodation. The studios are well managed and have excellent displays of work. The printmaking facility is excellent and well

managed. It includes etching, silkscreen and intaglio printing. There are good three dimension workshops and textile studios. The photography resources are excellent. The range of equipment, the standard of lighting studio and darkrooms are all of a very high standard. The library has an extensive journal collection and students have good access to computers, both for word processing and specialist image manipulation software.

Leadership and management

123. There is effective curriculum management. Staff meet regularly in course teams and at curriculum level. They work well as teams. Part-time staff feel very supported and valued in their work. There are good communications in the school. There are thorough systems of course review and analysis and the college is responsive to the school's development and action plans. The appointment of senior tutors for teaching and learning and for pastoral work has improved the tutorials and teaching. There is regular observation of staff teaching, which includes part-time staff. There is an extensive programme of staff development. Foreign and mature students are well integrated into the classes.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- very good pass rates in many courses

- much effective teaching

- good support for individual students

- wide range of courses meeting the needs of students

- good leadership and effective management of courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in GCE A-level, AS and GCSE law and in GCSE psychology

- poor retention rates in GCSE law

- o insufficiently challenging teaching in a small number of lessons.

Scope of provision

124. There is a wide and diverse range of provision in humanities, catering for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults. There are very good progression routes from return to study to degree level. There is good access provision for adult returners which offer opportunities to progress to HE. This provision is available through a variety of study modes, part time or full time, day or evening, and is available at the Blackpool central campus. Recruitment to these courses is strong and progression is good. There is a large GCE A-level and GCSE provision at the Bispham campus and a wide portfolio of subjects which gives extensive choice at all qualification levels. Courses in archaeology, criminology, history, law, psychology and sociology are all offered.

Achievement and standards

125. There are very good pass rates in many courses. On most GCE A-level courses, there has been an increase in the pass rates to a point where they are now above or at the national average. In psychology and general studies, pass rates improved to above the national average in 2002. In sociology, the pass rate has improved and was above the national average in the last two years. In law, the pass rate at GCE A level has fluctuated; it remained below the national average for 2002. All GCE AS programmes, except law, showed an increase in pass rates in 2002. Pass rates in psychology, sociology and history rose so that they were at least at national average; some were above. In politics, the pass rate was 100%. The pass rate in law fell to well below national average in 2002. There were good or very good value added results for general studies, psychology, history and politics. Sociology, however, had a poor value added score for 2002. Pass rates and progression are good on access to HE courses.

126. Retention rates on GCE A-level sociology and general studies courses have steadily improved to above national average in 2002. Retention rates on all GCE AS subjects, except psychology, rose to above or to the national average in 2002.

127. At GCSE, there was an increase in pass rates to national averages or above in all subjects except law, which fell below national average. Retention rates have improved to the national average or above in all subjects except law. Student attendance during the inspection was 80.3%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE history	2	No. of starts	36	40	56
		% retention	58	55	75
		% pass rate	57	59	62
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	140	88	125
		% retention	63	58	65
		% pass rate	51	31	44
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	53	72
		% retention	*	81	76
		% pass rate	*	72	82
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	42	40

		% retention	*	76	78
		% pass rate	*	41	84
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	34	38	45
		% retention	65	71	67
		% pass rate	87	82	100
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	16	15	33
		% retention	69	53	76
		% pass rate	63	83	60
Access to HE humanities	3	No. of starts	100	90	80
		% retention	79	72	71
		% pass rate	78	69	77
Access to HE social sciences and social work training	3	No. of starts	108	148	95
		% retention	72	76	72
		% pass rate	72	63	76

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

* courses not offered

Quality of education and training

128. Most teaching is well planned and effective. In the main, teachers inspire enthusiasm, lessons are stimulating and often lead to lively debate. Students participate fully. One such debate was in a politics class on the reforming of the House of Lords. Students were asked to propose a new second chamber and there was some lively discussion on its powers, representation and title. Teaching and learning are at an appropriate level, while extending the knowledge and skills of the most able students. In the majority of cases, the assessment of students' work was thorough and instructive, with critical but helpful analysis. There is good use of ILT in many lessons, especially psychology. However, in a minority of lessons the most able students are insufficiently challenged and work is less productive.

129. Staff are well qualified and show good subject expertise. Classrooms are well equipped with overhead projectors, television/video facilities and some have interactive whiteboards. The library facilities are good for humanities students, with a substantial book stock for all subjects that extends to degree level. Students have good access to ICT facilities, the Internet and college intranet.

130. Students' progress is regularly monitored. Reports to parents are systematic and thorough. Students' attendance, punctuality and academic progress are reviewed at set points throughout the year. Students are able to reflect on their own progress using a range of information that includes value added data. This also informs subject staff and tutors about their progress. Students who are identified as being 'at risk' are given action plans and are provided with effective support.

131. Full-time adult students are assessed at interview and their progress is carefully monitored. There is no systematic policy for reviewing the progress of part-time students, although all of the part-time students observed were aware of the progress they were making and teaching staff had a detailed knowledge of their progress. There are clear assessment and homework policies in operation throughout humanities. Assessments are well planned and feedback to students provides helpful information on how they can improve and develop their work.

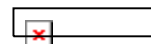
132. There is comprehensive and extended support and guidance for students. All students receive pre-enrolment advice and guidance to help them to choose the right course. Full-time students are

allocated a personal tutor who provides guidance and support. There is also good informal and formal support from most teaching staff. Both full-time and part-time students are given study support if needed or required. There are regularly held student workshops for GCE A-level students, and revision workshops at Easter. In addition, workshops for GCSE students help them with their key skills. Learning mentors are available to all full-time students. Students were well supported in overcoming barriers to success. This support was in addition to learning support, which is attached to an individual student or group. Learning mentors have already been successful in raising pass and retention rates at GCSE.

Leadership and management

133. There is good course management and effective communication. The area covers a large staff of full-time and part-time teachers. Roles and responsibilities are clear and support students' progress and course planning. Course reviews are held at the end of the year and these feed into the self-assessment report. The system allows for all staff and students to contribute to and inform the learning process and curriculum development within the school and subject areas.

English and communications



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCE A-level English language and GCE A-level English literature

- high standard of students' written work

- much good teaching

- effective use of ILT in teaching and learning

- good management of courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on GCSE English language and GCSE English literature

- poor retention rates on GCSE English literature

- insufficient focus on differentiation in some lessons.

Scope of provision

134. The English section provides a wide range of courses. These include GCE AS and A levels in English language, English literature and English language and literature (combined) and GCSEs in English language and English literature. The section also offers OCN A unit and OCN B unit in English. A Gateway to GCSE English enables students to take the course over two years. Courses are available on a full-time or part-time basis on the Bispham campus, as well as at the central Blackpool campus. Students aged 16 to 18 and adults are taught in the same classes. Key skills communications are offered to students and are integrated across GCE A-level subjects and assessed in workshops.

Achievement and standards

135. There are good pass rates on GCE A-level English language and GCE A-level English literature. Achievement on GCSE English language is poor. Pass rates have risen over the past three years and were just above the national average in 2002. Pass rates in GCSE English literature have been below the national average for the past three years. Achievement in GCE AS in English language and GCE AS English literature has been satisfactory, with pass rates at about the national average. The retention rate in GCSE English literature is poor. It has been consistently below the national average for three years. Students generally perform well within lessons and coursework is well organised and of a good standard. In GCE A-level English language lessons, students are set tasks that provide opportunities for them to extend their skills of research and analysis. Students write well analytically and creatively.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	507	363	368
		% retention	74	75	76
		% pass rate	46	39	53
GCSE English literature	2	No. of starts	35	18	34
		% retention	57	61	59
		% pass rate	27	50	53
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	*	61	52
		% retention	*	81	81
		% pass rate	*	98	81
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	*	38	22
		% retention	*	91	77
		% pass rate	*	88	88
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	31	40	37
		% retention	65	56	86

		% pass rate	100	94	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	16	21	14
		% retention	69	71	93
		% pass rate	100	100	92

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

*courses not offered

Quality of education and training

136. The majority of the teaching in the lessons observed was good and in some cases very good. In the best lessons, the activities were challenging to learners and engaged their interest in the subject. Most lessons are well planned and based on thorough schemes of work. In one GCSE English language lesson, students followed an effectively integrated assignment on the theme of World War I. Students read the work of war poets such as Jessie Pope and confidently discussed the effects of the language on readers. They carried out a detailed semiotic analysis of a range of recruitment posters from World War I before producing some imaginative posters themselves. The teacher used a variety of resources to engage the students' imagination and enable them to produce good work. The teacher successfully broadened their vocabulary by asking the group to produce a list of words for every letter of the alphabet relating to the theme of war. These were shared among students and resulted in a good standard of written work.

137. In one GCE AS English literature lesson on 'The Glass Menagerie', by Tennessee Williams, analysis of imagery and intention was used in effective group work. Students' understanding of plot, character and language was clearly enhanced by the activity.

138. Teachers have a high level of subject expertise in English language and this enables students to develop their knowledge of linguistics. In one English language lesson, a teacher skilfully incorporated the students' own perceptions of received pronunciation and estuary English in a discussion on accent and dialect. Students' interest was engaged and they gained a good knowledge and understanding of the topic in preparation for a course essay. In another English language lesson, the international phonetic alphabet and the international teaching alphabet were explored, in order to extend students' knowledge and understanding. Students looked at children's books in groups and gained a good understanding of the processes by which children can learn to read.

139. In a few lessons, teachers used methods that did not engage or gain responses from all students. They did not use differentiation in their approach or in their teaching and learning materials, and there was insufficient checking of all students' progress.

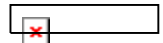
140. Resources are of a very high standard and reflect the team's very good subject knowledge of linguistics and literature. These resources are wide ranging and are accessed through e-mail by staff via the college's GroupWise system. A GCE A-level drop-in workshop is provided for students in the learning resources centre. Students attend when they need advice on research skills or with subject content. There is a clear strategy on key skills communication which is well integrated across courses.

141. Assessment is fair and accurate. Teachers give detailed written feedback on students' work and provide constructive advice for improvement. Diagnostic assessment is used during induction and students are referred for additional learning support when appropriate. Records of this are kept in the additional learning support unit, but are not monitored formally by English staff. Additional learning support within lessons is conducted effectively. Learning mentors are present at lessons when students need specific learning support. Students appreciated the support provided by learning mentors in improving their essay writing skills as well as their study skills and time management.

Leadership and management

142. Leadership and management are good. English teams meet regularly and discuss issues relating to the curriculum. Resources are shared among staff and these are used well to support learning within lessons. However, the college policy on differentiation in the English section has not been fully implemented. Teaching and learning strategies to address the individual needs of all students are not shared across the team. Staff attend awarding bodies' subject-support meetings as well as staff development in the school of academic studies. Poor pass rates on GCSE English language are being systematically addressed through review and quality assurance systems.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- excellent achievement

- very good and some outstanding teaching and learning

- very good range of courses which meet students' needs

- excellent support for students

- outstanding management of literacy and numeracy across the college.

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

143. The school of access and continuing education provides a very good range of day and evening, full-time and part-time programmes at pre-entry, entry, and level 1. The adult core curriculum for literacy and numeracy is integrated within the content of all programmes and support offered by the school. The school provides literacy and numeracy support to students whilst they are taking courses across the full range of the college provision. This is offered on all college sites. In 2001/02, 224 students received whole-group, in-class literacy or numeracy support and 86 students received

individual out-of-class support. The Gateway programme for disengaged students aged 16 to 18, at entry and level 1, provides very good progression routes into mainstream programmes or other provision. In 2001/02, 25 students participated in these programmes. There are currently 45 students on these courses. A range of nine, two-hour modules are provided for students who have mental health issues. These aim to support progression into education. The college is actively involved in partnerships that increase learning opportunities for adults in the Lancashire and Blackpool area. In 2001/02, the school catered for 1,014 adult students in 29 venues. This included a summer school, innovative themed programmes, and bite-sized courses. There are currently 705 adults on this provision.

Achievement and standards

144. Students in basic education programmes are exceptionally well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They work hard in lessons and make good progress. Pass rates on basic literacy and numeracy courses are very good and significantly above the national average. There is good attendance in lessons. Retention rates are satisfactory and improving through an effective retention strategy. For students receiving additional support for literacy or numeracy, well-planned and effective individual or small group support from well-qualified tutors ensures that they make good progress. There is very good progression from the Gateway courses. On foundation Gateway, progression, in 2001/02, was 45% and from intermediate progression, was 40%. Learning activities are planned in small stages, which effectively supports achievement.

A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy and numeracy, 2001 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002
Basic literacy course	1	No. of starts	680	867
		% retention	72	80
		% pass rate	94	98
Basic numeracy course	1	No. of starts	144	233
		% retention	73	80
		% pass rate	100	96
certificate of achievement	1	No. of starts	49	45
		% retention	94	98
		% pass rate	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

145. The standard of teaching and learning on basic skills courses is high, with some outstanding teaching. Most lessons were very good or outstanding. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Lessons are planned in very good detail. An appropriate pace is set so that interest is maintained and the students learn effectively. Teachers demonstrate very good knowledge and expertise in the teaching of basic skills. The teaching methods used take very good account of the different abilities of the students in each group. All students are included in learning by teachers, who takes into account each students' needs and learning styles to ensure that the lesson content meets those needs. There is a very good variety of learning activities, which are planned in small steps to ensure achievement, and a good range of differentiated teaching materials and tasks. IT is used creatively in many lessons. Support teaching is flexible and meets the needs of students. For example, extra literacy or numeracy sessions are put on, at short notice, in vocational areas in response to student need. Learning support tutors attend vocational lessons to support students. The learning support tutor liaises well with the vocational tutor to plan individual programmes. This effective support promotes good progress. In some schools, where there is a high number of students requiring

literacy or numeracy support, an educational support worker is located full time in each programme as well as a learning support tutor and additional educational support workers as required. Individual sessions take place outside the classroom at a time and venue convenient for the student. Additional literacy or numeracy support is greatly valued by the students who speak highly of the college. Support for students is very good and provided by highly qualified staff.

146. Initial assessment is well managed, providing a very good basis for designing an appropriate individual learning programme for each student. Targets on individual learning plans are clear and support continuing achievement through an effective review process. The outcomes are used to establish specific and challenging targets that promote students' learning. All students have individual learning plans that are reviewed every three weeks and updated. There is very good monitoring of progress. Work is regularly marked and used to provide good feedback to students. Very good and effective support is provided for students identified as needing additional help in literacy and numeracy.

147. The school has a core team of the head of school, two curriculum managers, five curriculum leaders, two senior tutors and sixteen full-time teachers. There are 20 part-time teachers and 150 non-vocational tutors. Staff are well qualified. Staff development is well planned and highly effective. Currently, 77 basic skills tutors, vocational tutors and support staff have appropriate literacy and numeracy teaching qualifications. Many staff have undertaken the adult core curriculum training and there is more planned in-house training in the core curriculum. This is supported by highly relevant training on learning styles and differentiated learning. Promoting inclusive learning is a major feature of the provision. All staff show real awareness and sensitivity in addressing equal opportunities issues. In one session where a student made an inappropriate comment, this was addressed quickly and sensitively by the tutor and the rest of the students. Support staff are used effectively to support students' needs. There is a lead support tutor in each school who liaises with the basic skills co-ordinator. Good differentiated learning resources are used effectively. This includes worksheets and writing frames. There is a nominated member of staff who produces the differentiated materials. Very good use is made of specialist resources in ICT literacy workshops. These include keyboards and specialist software for students with visual impairment. In one observed session, an interactive board was used effectively as part of a wide range of activities to provide an outstanding learning environment. Accommodation is satisfactory to very good. Room sizes are appropriate, community venues are clean and decorated and, as needed, refitted by the college. There is a satisfactory number of computers.

Leadership and management

148. There is outstanding management of literacy and numeracy across the college. The head of school and team of staff work exceptionally well together. There are effective systems in place for the implementation and monitoring of all the key processes. Communication is excellent and all staff receive a basic skills bulletin. Well-documented course team meetings take place regularly. There is clear evidence of continuous improvement. Monitoring of the quality of individual learning plans and targets is undertaken by senior tutors, which leads to improvements through effective support for staff. Learning support staff are well deployed. Great care is taken to match support workers or tutors to curriculum areas. The management and use of data are effective. Targets and data reports are reviewed in team and management meetings. Specific and challenging targets for retention, achievement and progression are set within staff personal development plans. There is a very good classroom observation process that has led to improvement. Improvements are shown by the recent grades awarded. The internal moderation process has been recently reviewed and improved.

Part D: College data

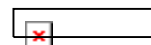


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18	19+
1	31	29
2	45	28
3	21	25
4/5	0	3
Other	3	15
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	1,048	1,310	11
Land-based provision	8	10	0
Construction	125	636	4
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	405	381	4
Business administration, management and professional	391	1,506	9
Information and communication technology	880	1,871	13
Retailing, customer service and transportation	10	127	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	970	1,243	11
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	267	292	3
Health, social care and public services	491	988	7
Visual and performing arts and media	424	787	6
Humanities	534	676	6
English, languages and communication	1,266	1,076	11
Foundation programmes	1,294	1,932	14
Total	8,113	12,835	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	1,289	1,019	799	3,169	3,347	2,659
	Retention rate	89	84	82	88	86	81
	National average	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate	60	72	58	63	74	61
	National average	59	65	68	60	66	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,088	2,128	1,953	3,973	3,768	3,692
	Retention rate	78	77	78	88	85	83
	National average	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate	52	72	59	62	74	66
	National average	65	66	69	62	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,320	1,115	1,807	1,989	2,327	2,782
	Retention rate	80	74	74	86	81	81
	National average	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate	76	73	66	48	71	66
	National average	72	74	76	62	66	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	21	29	*	539	522	256
	Retention rate	81	90	*	85	88	78
	National average	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate	79	93	*	61	70	43
	National average	64	66	55	56	56	53

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

Sources of information:

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

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

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

* too few students to provide a valid calculation

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	75	23	2	109
Level 2 (intermediate)	73	25	2	51
Level 1 (foundation)	77	15	8	38
Other sessions	71	23	6	19
Totals	74	23	3	217

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