



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## King George V College

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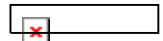
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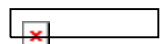
**Basic information about the college**



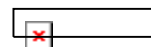
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Name of college:	King George V College
Type of college:	Sixth Form
Principal:	Hilary Anslow
Address of college:	Scarisbrick New Road Southport PL8 6LR
Telephone number:	01704 530601
Fax number:	01704 548656
Chair of governors:	John Rostron
Unique reference number:	130492
Name of reporting inspector:	Peter Newton HMI
Date of inspection:	10-14 February

**Part A: Summary**



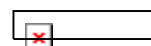
## Information about the college



King George V College is a sixth form college close to the centre of Southport and is within the Sefton authority. The college is located in a largely residential area on the east side of the town. There is little manufacturing industry in the area. Many local people commute to work, particularly to Liverpool. The college was established in 1978. Since incorporation in 1993, it has extended its catchment area and widened the range of programmes it offers. The college draws students from an area of around 12 miles distance. There is a general further education (FE) college two miles away and a tertiary college in South Sefton. The college works in collaboration with the other FE and secondary providers in the area.

In 2002/03, the college enrolled 1212 full-time and 620 part-time students, giving a full-time equivalent of 1272. There are 1207 students aged 16 to 18, of whom almost half are male. The college has 3% of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, a higher proportion than that of persons from minority ethnic groups in the general population of Sefton and West Lancashire. Nearly 10% of students have specific learning difficulties. Some of these students are on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses or other programmes involving some GCSE work. The college is proud of its learning support provision. The college offers mainly General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced-level (GCE AS and A-level) courses. It also offers some general vocational programmes, mostly at level 3. There are a small number of GCSE courses. All students undertake key skills programmes and some enrichment activities are certificated. The majority of the students progress to higher education (HE). The college offers a range of adult evening/weekend courses. The college's mission is 'to be a premier centre in the north west for high quality academic and general vocational education'.

## How effective is the college?



The quality of teaching and standards of students' achievement are outstanding in four of the nine curriculum areas inspected and good in the remaining five. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- very high GCE A-level pass rates
  
- high retention rates
  
- very good teaching
  
- excellent support for all students

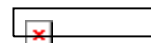
- o highly effective governance and outstanding leadership
- o excellent enrichment programme.

**What should be improved**

- o the sharing of teaching skills and best practice between subject teams
- o collation and analysis of findings from lesson observations

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
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> Pass and retention rates for GCSE are high and those for GCE A level are mainly around the national average. Pass rates for GCE A-level further mathematics are very high. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Teachers make insufficient use of information and communications technology (ICT) in lessons.
Science	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are high. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Students demonstrate good understanding of scientific concepts. In a minority of lessons, learning tasks are not differentiated to take account of students' different abilities. There are few progression routes to level 3 courses within the college.
Business studies and economics	<b>Outstanding.</b> Teaching is excellent and students learn most effectively. Students' progress is rigorously monitored. Students receive effective support that meets their individual needs. Retention and achievement rates are excellent. Students speak highly of their courses. Their written and practical work is of a high standard.
Information and communications	<b>Good.</b> Retention rates and pass rates are very high on most courses. Good feedback is given to students on their work. Facilities are good.

technology	Some learners have low value added scores. In a few lessons, teachers do not give learners enough scope to test and demonstrate their understanding in class.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Outstanding.</b> Teaching is very good, and students learn effectively. Pass rates are high. Students receive outstanding support. Students' progress is carefully monitored and assessment is rigorous. Standards of students' analytical and research work in art and media are high.
Psychology, sociology, law and politics	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are very high in government and sociology. In 2002, the pass rate in GCE AS psychology was below the national average. Courses are well managed. Students receive a great deal of support. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching.
Geography, history, religious studies, classical civilisations and archaeology	<b>Outstanding.</b> Retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses are outstanding and most are high on GCE AS courses. Teaching is excellent and students learn effectively. Students develop a broad range of learning skills and value their curriculum enrichment activities. Subject teams work hard to improve provision.
English	<b>Outstanding.</b> Pass rates on all GCE A-level courses are high. Students are well supported and taught by enthusiastic and very well-qualified teachers. The department is well managed. There is a strong staff team. The department's performance is reviewed effectively.
Foreign languages	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are at, or above, the national average for most courses. A thorough and detailed action plan is being implemented to address the low value added scores of some students on German courses. Much of the teaching is very good. There is good support for individual students; both high achievers and those with additional learning needs.

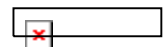
#### How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The college has developed the scope of its work since the last inspection while maintaining high standards. Recruitment of students has grown. The college has successfully introduced Curriculum 2000. New provision for adults has been introduced. Teaching and learning are very good. Students' progress is rigorously monitored. Retention and pass rates for advanced courses in most subjects are consistently high. Most students on GCE A-level courses obtain grades at least as good as those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. The principal and senior managers provide very good leadership. Quality assurance procedures have improved since the last inspection but are not yet firmly established. Outcomes of the self-assessment process are consistent with the findings of inspectors. Curriculum management within most departments is effective. Insufficient information on the outcomes of teaching observations is provided to curriculum managers. Governors play an exceptionally valuable role in helping the college succeed. They have established a clear strategic direction based upon principles of inclusiveness. The college is in a very strong financial position and has used this well to extend the scope and quality of learning opportunities.

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

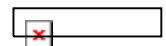
The college's response to education and social inclusion is outstanding. Strategy and planning are firmly based upon principles of inclusiveness and equality of opportunity. It welcomes all students who can benefit from the courses it offers. It encourages students with specific learning difficulties to apply and provides them with excellent support. It thoroughly monitors the experiences of students of different gender and ethnic background, and has taken strong action to establish an environment where bullying or harassment are not tolerated. Even though the local population has a very low proportion of students from ethnic minorities, the college has taken positive and successful steps to attract them. The college has produced a thorough race equality policy and action plan. Governors have attached high importance to the promotion of race equality and approved the establishment of a 'student equality group'.

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



Students receive very good guidance and support at the college. They are given effective guidance onto courses and good induction to the college. There are very good procedures for addressing students' individual learning needs. Tutors give students good support on both personal and academic issues. The tutorial programme is effective and students' performance is monitored closely. There is very good personal support for students from teachers and tutors. Students have access to a good range of counselling, accommodation, welfare and financial advice through student services. Careers education is responsive to the needs of students and provides effective guidance on progression to employment and HE.

### 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***

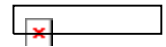
- plenty of help with problems and learning
  
- lots to do outside the curriculum
  
- good study, computer and IT facilities
  
- friendliness and approachability of teachers

- similarity to school and being made to work hard

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

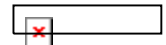
- pointlessness of studying key skills and critical thinking
- lack of social space, especially in the middle of the day
- price and quality of the food in the canteen
- timetabling, to avoid rushed 45-minute lessons

**Other information**

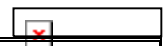


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The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

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



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



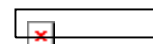
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory	Graded less than satisfactory
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		(Grade 4) %	(Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	81	17	2
19+ and WBL*	100	0	0
Learning 16-18	78	19	3
19+ and WBL*	100	0	0

*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's retention and pass rates were compared with national averages for 16-18 year old students, and students who are aged 19 years or over who study in sixth form colleges.

#### **16 to 18 year olds**

2. GCE A-level pass rates are high and have been at or above the national average in each of the last two years. In 2002, the pass rate for GCE A-level, including general studies, was 89%, a slight decrease on the pass rate of 91% in 2001. Retention rates are high and consistently well above the national average. The proportion of students achieving high grades at A and B in 2002 was 26%, below the national average for sixth form colleges. The overall pass rates for all GCE A-level subjects has risen from 92% in 2001, to 95% in 2002. For the last two years, pass rates in English literature and English language, chemistry, art and design, classical civilisation, history, geography, government and politics, sociology, French, Spanish, further mathematics, and music have been very high. In 2002, there were over 400 entries for GCE A-level general studies and the pass rate rose significantly.

3. The performance of students in individual subjects was particularly good in chemistry, history, geography and English literature.

4. Most students achieve GCE A-level grades that are in line with or above those predicted for them on the basis of GCSE results. In 2002, students studying English language, English literature, French, geography, history, geology, sociology and classical civilisation have achieved better results than those predicted. In a number of subjects, such as psychology, mathematics, physics, law, theatre studies and German, some students with lower GCSE point scores do not achieve their target grade.

5. In 2002, the pass rate for GCE AS subjects averaged 88% and 34% of students achieved the higher grades. Retention rates were above the national average at 90%. The pass rates for GCE AS history, geography, ICT and computing, sociology, English language and literature, business, and media studies were high and above the national average. There were more than 20 examination entries for each of these subjects and the proportions of high grades awarded were well above the national average. The pass rates for GCE AS psychology and physics were below the national average.

6. Approximately 30 students are studying subjects at level 2. GCSEs are offered in eight subjects. Some students on a foundation programme combine a GCSE course with vocational courses or, occasionally, GCE AS subjects. During the last three years overall pass rates (GCSE A\*-C) and



retention rates have been consistently above the national average. In English, retention and pass rates have been consistently above the national average. In 2001, 63% of students achieved high grades. In mathematics, pass rates are above the national average.

7. The college offers AVCE courses in business, health and social care, and information technology (IT) either as single or double awards. Overall pass rates in 2002 were good at 89%, although the proportion of students achieving high grades was lower than the national average. Of particular note, all students who enrolled on the AVCE in ICT double award course completed it, and 94% passed, with 69% achieving high grades.

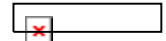
8. The standard of students' work is high. In 76.8% of lessons observed, students' work was good or very good. It was excellent in very few lessons. Most students work extremely hard and give of their best. When working independently, they demonstrate well-developed research skills and make good use of the learning centre.

9. Attendance in the lessons observed was 86%, which is above the 85% average attendance for sixth form college inspections. Attendance was highest in mathematics and lowest in information and communications technology (ICT). Students were punctual for lessons.

### **Adult learners**

10. Adult enrolments have increased over the last two years to approximately 1400 learners in 2003, from around 600 in 2002. The college makes provision for adults in five areas of learning. Most enrolments are for computer-related subjects and languages courses. Retention rates are high. However, some students chose not to enter for end of course examinations and pass rates are low on some courses. The overall pass rate for 2002 was 65%, close to the national average for sixth forms.

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



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 140 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 80.7% of these and satisfactory in 17.2%. There was unsatisfactory teaching in 2.1% of lessons. In a high proportion of lessons, 42%, teaching was very good. Teaching was excellent in 6% of lessons. The highest proportion of excellent teaching was in English and visual and performing arts. Across all other subject areas, the quality of teaching was consistently high. Learning was good or better in 78% of lessons.

12. Much of the teaching enables students to learn effectively. Lessons are well planned. Teachers give students plenty of support and encourage them to reach high standards. Teachers are sensitive to the learning needs of students who have specific difficulties and do all they can to meet these. The motivation of students is high and they arrive for their classes well prepared and ready to learn. Much of the advice students are given on individual assignments is clear and timely, helping them to move forward and grow in confidence. Most students are inspired by the scholarly approach of their teachers. For instance, a high achieving art student, also studying Spanish, is making paintings bringing the colour symbolism used by Pedro Almodovar in his film *Todo sobre mi madre* and images of Gaudi buildings in Barcelona to a feminist, political and cultural viewpoint. Many teachers are models of excellence in learning.

13. Teaching is generally good or better. There is, however, too little teaching of excellence that meets the needs of students of all abilities. In some lessons, where the teaching is less than excellent, some students are not given all the help they require. These students fall a little behind others in the class and their attainment is low. Weaker students do not always seek help and some teaching goes over their heads. Some students said that they find the lessons of only 45 minutes

rushed and that teachers try to cram too much into them.

14. In the very best lessons seen, learners were fully involved, excited and stretched. For instance, in a lesson on basic statistics, effective questioning drew out the strengths of individuals, pair work was effective and interspersed with tightly focused investigative activities. In an excellent lesson exploring plate tectonics, students challenged the teacher, who enjoyed the lively debate that ensued and used it to steer learning and broaden the students' knowledge. In the very small number of unsatisfactory lessons, students were not required to do anything than sit and listen to the teacher. They were not encouraged to ask questions, express their views or enter into discussion, and many of the learning materials they were given were inappropriate.

15. All teachers are well qualified. Students benefit from their experience and expertise. The college encourages support staff to undertake initial teacher training. The college has a strong staff development programme; teachers are able to keep up-to-date with new subject developments. There are no systematic arrangements for teachers of vocational subjects to update their industrial and commercial experience. The individual training needs of staff are identified through the annual cycle of staff appraisals. Staff development activities are then planned to meet their needs, and also enable staff to help the college fulfil the objectives of its strategic plan.

16. The college has made significant improvements to its accommodation over the past few years and is continuing to refurbish existing provision and acquire new buildings. Staff and students report that the college environment is welcoming, conducive to learning and secure. There is a bright, clean and pleasant atmosphere in buildings and classrooms. General facilities, such as the refectory and sports hall, are satisfactory. Teaching support materials are good. Specialist learning areas, such as the learning resource centre, language and science laboratories, provide good learning environments. Subject base areas have good visual displays and extensive specialist resources.

17. Priority has been given to helping students learn effectively through the use of ICT. Students have good access to ICT in the well-equipped and amply staffed learning resource centre. The Centre provides a growing range of services, networked across the college. Staff from the centre work closely with teachers and students. Students value the service provided. Some classrooms are being equipped with interactive whiteboards and data projectors. Several teachers say that more computers for students' use in the subject classrooms would make it possible for the range of learning activities to be extended.

18. Assessment is thorough across the college and is used well as a means of monitoring students' progress. Students' standards of work are rigorously monitored and students' progress towards meeting minimum target grades is carefully reviewed. Targets for achievement are set on the basis of performance data and GCSE point scores. Reviews of progress are carried out each half term. Students have individual tutorials following their review. Those students who are not making satisfactory progress or are causing concern have additional one-to-one tutorials. There is good communication between subject teachers and tutors. Record keeping and monitoring of students' progress are very thorough on the majority of courses. Attendance is monitored closely through electronically generated records. Most students have a good understanding and awareness of their progress. On English and art and design courses, they are encouraged to evaluate their own work and progress. In general, students are highly appreciative of the support they receive from teachers. Subject workshops have recently been introduced to give students extra support on particular topics

19. The college policy for teaching and learning includes brief guidance to teachers on the amount of work students on different courses should be set. Heads of department and heads of faculty implement and monitor assessment practice. There is very good practice in several subject areas such as mathematics, health and social care and English, where students receive clear information on their course structure and when work is to be set and marked. Students said there was no common approach to the amount of work they should be given and, in a few subjects, they received too little notice of forthcoming tasks.

20. Students' progress is assessed both in lessons and through frequently set homework. Teachers mark students' work regularly. Most teachers, and particularly those in English, business and some humanities courses, give students constructive written feedback on the standards required and how

they can improve their performance. The marking of work is thorough and usually carefully annotated, although in a few instances spelling is not corrected. Internal moderation and verification are organised within departments. Course teams hold regular meetings to discuss students' progress and ensure that assessment decisions are valid.

21. The college provides a range of programmes and courses that meets most of the needs of students. There is a very good range of GCE AS and A-level courses, including subjects as diverse as archaeology and European studies. Market research informs curriculum development and the timetable is well planned to take into account students' choices and to avoid timetable clashes between subjects. Most students study four GCE AS subjects plus GCE AS critical thinking and key skills in the first year of their course, and three GCE A-level subjects, plus GCE A-level general studies in the second year.

22. All students on level 3 courses take a GCE AS course in critical thinking and through this, they also work towards certification at level 3 in the key skill of communication. They also have lessons in application of number or IT and depending on their previous qualifications these are at either level 2 or 3. Management of the key skills provision has improved in 2002/03. Many students, however, do not see much relevance in their key skills work.

23. The mission of the college is to be a premier centre in the northwest for 'high quality academic and general vocational education'. However, there is insufficient provision of general vocational courses. The college offers only four AVCE courses and no General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate courses. The college is aware of the need to introduce an AVCE course in performing arts and there are plans to introduce a vocational GCSE in ICT from September 2003. A new programme was established in September 2001 for a group of approximately 30 students each year, combining GCSE or GCE subjects with football training, in association with Southport Football Club.

24. The college offers a narrow range of GCSE subjects for students who do not meet the requirements for entry to level 3 courses. There are no GCSE courses in science or IT and few progression routes to level three courses in these curriculum areas. In its self-assessment report, the college has recognised the need to increase the range of provision at level 2. Many students who are successful in the GCSE progress to further courses. In the first two years, 71% of students who completed their GCSE courses went on to take GCE AS courses at the college. In 2002, 89% of students who completed level 3 courses progressed to university.

25. The college offers a range of part-time courses for adult learners. These include languages, business courses, ICT and a number of leisure courses, such as creative writing photography and yoga. The number of adults attending these courses has grown rapidly over the last two years. Since September 2002, the college has offered ICT courses at three venues in the local community.

26. There is a very wide range of voluntary enrichment activities available to all students. These include the Duke of Edinburgh Award, foreign languages at work (French), sports coaching and leadership awards, and a wide range of non-accredited activities, such as charity work, sports and drama. Many students are able to participate in learning activities that complement their academic programmes, such as revision courses, field trips and visits to theatres and art galleries.

27. There are very good support and guidance arrangements for students. Liaison with partner schools is good. Detailed information about the college is made available to prospective applicants. A well-planned sequence of presentations, visits to the college and interviews help to ensure that students are prepared for the transition from school and are placed on appropriate courses. However, feedback from students indicates that 15% of them felt that they had made one or more wrong subject choices on entry. The inappropriateness of students' choice of courses was identified in the self-assessment report, but the reasons have yet to be investigated. Induction arrangements are very effective and ensure that most students are able to settle in to college routines and are aware of the demands of their courses.

28. There is good personal support for students. Students have access to a good range of

counselling, accommodation, welfare and financial advice through student services. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given strong support by the whole college community. The college identifies vulnerable students, such as those with difficult domestic circumstances, and provides effective support to help them complete their programmes successfully. There is a good range of useful leaflets produced by student services, addressing such issues as mental health problems, money matters and equality of opportunity. Communication between student services and Connexions staff based at the college is effective.

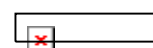
29. The initial diagnosis of students' learning needs is thorough. Students are referred for learning support by teachers and tutors, and they refer themselves. There is very good support for students with additional learning needs. Most additional learning support is provided on an individual basis outside lessons. A small number of students with specific difficulties receive help in lessons from learning facilitators. Retention rates for students who receive additional learning support are above the college average and pass rates are close to it. Some learning support is also offered to adult students with specific learning difficulties. The college played a key role in the national dissemination 'sharing good practice' project from 2000/02, hosting a number of conferences and seminars on the subject of learning support.

30. In addition to the services supplied by learning support, many students benefit from subject-specific support at workshops within faculties. Most students also feel able to ask subject teachers for additional guidance and support, and are appreciative of the individual help they receive from them. In lessons on English and art and design courses, teachers adapt their teaching approach and learning tasks to suit the different abilities of individual students. In most lessons on science courses, however, all students are taught in the same way and have to carry out the same tasks, irrespective of their aptitude and ability.

31. Students have good access to relevant and effective support on both personal and academic issues from tutors. There is an effective tutorial system that is monitored through the college's quality assurance arrangements. Pastoral tutors meet their groups for daily registration and tutorials twice a week, with half the group present at each tutorial. Tutors have a major responsibility to help students settle in to the college, make progress, receive individual support and move on to HE or employment. Tutors also implement the pastoral programme, which is managed by student services and includes sessions on study skills, working in teams and understanding the needs of others in the community. Students appreciate the time and effort that go into the individual interviews and progress reviews, and these activities form an important part of the tutorial programme. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality, using the college's management information system, is good. Records of students' progress reviews are thorough. Progress towards some of the targets students are set is difficult to measure. In some instances, students are not given a clear timescale within which they have to achieve their targets.

32. The careers education and guidance support provided by the college guidance staff and the external careers service is very effective. Specialist careers guidance and advice on courses are available from Connexions staff based at the college and are appreciated by students. All students receive an individual careers interview in their first or second term and are encouraged to attend a careers convention at the college and a HE convention at Liverpool University. Students applying for HE courses are particularly well supported. There is a well-resourced careers library. The college provides assistance in finding work-experience placements for students wishing to apply for vocational degrees or employment. Adult learners are made aware of the careers advice and guidance available at the college. Information on students' destinations is gathered carefully and summarised in a report.

## Leadership and management



identified in the last inspection in 1998 and made appropriate improvements to provision. Governors have reviewed the mission and strategic direction of the college. They gave careful consideration to, and approved, the management decision to extend the provision of part-time courses for adults. Inclusiveness and equality of opportunity have been adopted as key foundations for strategic planning. The principal has provided strong leadership in implementing the strategy and applying its key principles to all areas of the college's work. These principles are well understood and supported by staff of the college.

34. Recruitment of students aged 16 to 18 and adults has grown substantially and college targets for growth have been met. Retention and pass rates for advanced courses are consistently high in most curriculum areas. In several they are outstanding. Most students achieve GCE A-level results in line with those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. More able students often exceed their teachers' expectations of them. In some subjects, some students struggle to keep up and do not achieve the examination results predicted for them. Since the last inspection the college has successfully introduced Curriculum 2000, providing students with a wide range of opportunities to broaden and enrich the curriculum. A substantial programme of capital investment has led to the provision of new and excellent specialist accommodation for teaching.

35. Clear and demanding targets for retention and pass rates and value added scores are set with heads of department each year by the principal. Many are well above the national average for the sector. Progress towards reaching targets is reviewed thoroughly and appropriate action is taken if it appears that they are not going to be met. Curriculum areas are divided into three faculties each containing a number of subject departments. The lines of accountability of teachers and heads of department are not always clear. Links between departments are not well developed and there is little sharing of good practice. Communication between senior managers and staff is good although staff feel that they have too little opportunity to influence policy decisions.

36. There is clear and effective leadership of student support systems. Minimum target grades are set for all full-time students, and teachers rigorously monitor students' progress towards reaching these. The principal is personally involved in identifying and helping students whose work is falling below their target grades. Support for students with specific learning difficulties is outstanding.

37. Governance of the college is excellent. Governors are very well qualified and demonstrate their high commitment to the college in a number of effective ways. They are very well informed about developments in post-16 education and the work of the college. Their extensive skills are well deployed, particularly in the very detailed work of the committees. The curriculum committee undertakes close scrutiny of standards achieved by students on all college courses. It also monitors the progress made by areas of the college that have not performed as well as others. Governors receive regular financial statements, and closely monitor the use of resources, and performance against robust financial targets. They also monitor their own performance thoroughly. The principal and college managers make regular presentations to the corporation on emerging issues such as the growing importance of the analysis of the value added to students' achievement.

38. The use of quality assurance systems to evaluate performance and drive continuous improvement has developed well since the last inspection. Managers draw upon a range of relevant information, including accurate statistical data and the views of students, to produce thorough self-assessments. Curriculum managers and a panel including governors and parents rigorously validate the college self-assessment report. Each head of department maintains a folder of information relating to required standards and criteria for assessing quality. These are used well in many departments to monitor and develop the quality of their courses.

39. There is a well-established programme for observing teaching and learning. A small team of senior and middle managers carry out all observations and have received training for this role. They take each department in turn, observing all full-time teachers over a short period. The college has developed its own clear and suitable set of criteria against which teaching and the effectiveness of learning are judged. Individual teachers receive constructive feedback on their performance, which clearly identifies how they can improve it. Findings from the observations are not collated or analysed in order to arrive at an assessment of the quality of teaching and effectiveness of learning in individual subjects, or across departments. Heads of department are not provided with the findings

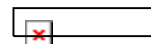
from observations except for a summary of the grades. The lesson observation scheme does not lead to systematic identification of good practice in the classroom, or of ways in which teaching can be improved and students can be helped to learn more effectively.

40. The college has a clear equal opportunities policy which is widely publicised to staff and students. Complaints, bullying and harassment policies are also given a high priority by the principal and managers at all levels. The entitlement of students to a safe environment and equal treatment is clearly explained in college literature and during the students' induction process. There are well-established systems for analysing student pass rates by gender and ethnic background, and reporting on them regularly to governors. The college has adopted a detailed policy for promoting good race relations. This policy, however, has not yet been implemented fully. It builds upon existing successful practice in the college in fostering good race relations.

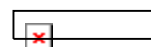
41. Staff development is good. It is used well to support staff joining the college and in helping them to adapt to curriculum change. New staff have a thorough induction programme before they start at the college. Each member of staff has a personal development plan which is regularly updated. A college staff development plan is drawn up annually to reflect needs identified by staff and broader college priorities. There are no systematic arrangements for staff who attend training activities outside the college to tell their colleagues what they have learnt. All staff are appraised annually using a flexible college-wide appraisal system. When staff are appraised, their success in achievements are recognised and their personal and professional development needs are identified. During their appraisals, however, there is little reference to the key elements of their job role and how well they have carried these out.

42. The college is in a strong financial position. Financial management is good and resources are deployed efficiently. The proportion of students achieving the qualification they are aiming for when they join the college is high. Major new building projects have been completed within budget and on time. The college offers good value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass and retention rates on the GCSE mathematics course
  
- consistently high pass rates for further mathematics
  
- effective teaching and learning

- o thorough assessment and monitoring of students' progress.

**Weaknesses**

- o little provision and low take-up of extra mathematics support
- o insufficient use of ICT in lessons.

**Scope of provision**

43. An appropriate range of courses is offered. The provision includes the key skills of application of number skills, GCSE and GCE AS and A-level courses. Students can choose advanced level modules to cover aspects of pure and applied mathematics and statistics. GCE A-level further mathematics advanced level is also offered and taken each year by students who wish to obtain a double qualification. There is no provision for adults.

**Achievement and standards**

44. All students are strongly encouraged to retake GCSE mathematics if they do not have grade C or above in this subject. Students who are able to demonstrate some competence in mathematics can take a short course in GCSE mathematics, whilst others study for the qualification over a year. Staff have looked at alternative qualifications for students who find GCSE mathematics difficult to work towards, but consider these will not necessarily stand them in good stead with future employers. Retention rates on GCSE mathematics courses and the proportion of students who obtain grade C or above, are higher than the national average. Many students who resit GCSE mathematics, improve their performance by at least one grade. Attendance at GCSE classes was high.

45. Pass and retention rates for GCE A-level mathematics are close to the national average for sixth form colleges. Students are set target grades based on their GCSE grades on entry. Most students achieve their predicted grades but few exceed them. Some students with low GCSE scores fail to obtain their target grades. Pass rates for the small number of students who take GCE A-level further mathematics have been consistently high for the last three years, at 100%. Nearly all students achieved grade C or above.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	83	74	79
		% retention	84	96	90
		% pass rate	53	55	45
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	116	127	87
		% retention	82	**	88
		% pass rate	81	**	90

GCE A-level further mathematics	3	No. of starts	8	9	9
		% retention	75	**	78
		% pass rate	100	**	100

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

\*\* data unreliable

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

46. Most teaching is good or very good. Working as a team, teachers have produced detailed schemes of work, which include guidance on various ways of presenting each topic. The schemes emphasize the need for variety in teaching and learning methods. Lesson plans translate schemes of work into practice effectively and specify the learning activities students will carry out. Many of these activities involve discussion and investigation. For example, in one advanced-level lesson, the learners were beginning to develop a mathematical understanding of probability. They investigated for themselves how the design of fruit machines can change the odds of winning, or, more likely in practice, losing. Learners in theory classes often worked in small groups on different problems, and then came together as a class to share, explain and discuss solutions. They found this investigation approach highly enjoyable and it enabled them to check their own understanding of theory. The department has a voluntary 'problem of the week' scheme to encourage learners to extend their skills and develop an interest in the subject for its own sake. The 'problem of the week' at the time of inspection, involved working out strategies for surviving a truel, or three-way duel.

47. There is thorough assessment and monitoring of learners' progress. Homework is regularly set, and marked to examination standards. Learners record their marks in booklets. Their progress towards reaching their target grades is reviewed regularly. Advanced-level students have to write topic summaries for revision. Teachers check these carefully, giving students feedback on how they can improve their work. Students have a good understanding of the extent of their progress and teachers give up their own time to help students who are falling behind. Those students who most need help, however, often do not accept it when it is offered to them. Recently, the department has begun to timetable additional lessons for students who need additional help and their attendance at these is monitored.

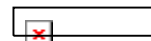
48. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory. A suite of rooms provides a pleasant subject base. In a few rooms, however, it is not easy for teachers to use the overhead projector and the whiteboard simultaneously. Most rooms have good displays of mathematical material. Teachers are well qualified. Students are issued with good commercial texts for their advanced-level modules. In some lessons, there was good use of graphical software packages but teachers sometimes find it difficult to book the nearby ICT room. In some classrooms, there is no convenient access to a computer. Learning resources for mathematics in the learning resource centre and available through the college's ICT network are not used a great deal in lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

49. The management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. The mathematics teachers work effectively together as a team. Curriculum management is good. Subject files are well maintained and there is a common approach to assignments and assessments. There are regular staff meetings. The minutes show that staff discuss teaching methods, learning materials, monitoring procedures and ways of raising standards. All staff are involved in preparing the annual self-assessment report. Insufficient use is made of management information in the self-assessment process.

## **Science**





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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses
  
- good teaching and effective learning
  
- effective use of resources in lessons
  
  
- good understanding of scientific concepts by students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- in a minority of lessons teaching does not meet the needs of all students
  
  
- restricted progression opportunities.

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

50. GCE A-level and AS courses are offered in biology, chemistry, geology and physics. Currently, the numbers of students on the GCE A-level courses are as follows: biology, 97; chemistry, 70; physics, 50; geology, 20. The numbers of students on the GCE AS courses are: biology, 132; chemistry, 92; physics, 61; geology, 36. There is no GCSE science provision and no intermediate or advanced AVCE science course is offered.

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

51. The pass rates are high on the two-year GCE A-level courses. The pass rate on the GCE A-level chemistry course has been consistently above the national average for sixth form colleges. Pass rates in biology and physics have fallen slightly but remain above the national average. In geology, pass rates were 100% in 2002.

52. The pass rates for GCE AS biology and chemistry are above the national average, but those for geology and physics are just below it.

53. Increasing retention rates are a strong feature of this curriculum area. In 2002, the rates for GCE A-level science courses were well above the national average. In 2002, the retention rate for GCE AS biology, chemistry and geology courses was at, or above, the national average, but it was below it for physics.

54. The proportion of students who achieve high grades in GCE A-level biology and chemistry is consistently above the national average. In 2002, this proportion was above the national average for geology and physics.

55. Students have a good grasp of scientific vocabulary and confidently articulate a good understanding of scientific explanations. Students attend regularly and are punctual for lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	*	143	156
		% retention	*	88	90
		% pass rate	*	89	84
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	109	96
		% retention	*	89	91
		% pass rate	*	93	83
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	*	93	86
		% retention	*	94	90
		% pass rate	*	79	75
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	97	115	98
		% retention	87	**	97
		% pass rate	94	**	89
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	83	74	67
		% retention	72	**	97
		% pass rate	98	**	97
GCE A-level Geology	3	No. of starts	34	18	21
		% retention	88	**	100
		% pass rate	87	**	100
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	42	53	58
		% retention	100	**	98
		% pass rate	98	**	91

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

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

56. The proportions of good and very good teaching observed were well above the national average. In the most effective lessons, teaching was well planned. Learning tasks, were clearly structured to suit the whole ability range. Much teaching was inspirational with an exciting range of activities. In one lesson, use was made of simple chemical reactions to explain enthalpy, promote discussion and to reinforce and consolidate learning. The concept of entropy was introduced through a comparison with the disordered state of students' bedrooms. In biology, effective use was made of the interactive white board. Students enjoyed a visual animation of the formation of lymph fluid allowing them to relate the phenomenon to water movement. Together with the use of humour, these lively explanations engendered enthusiasm for the subject. Skilful questioning is well used to help

students contribute ideas and formulate and exchange hypotheses. In geology, students are encouraged to review their learning critically during the lesson. In a few lessons, the teacher talked at length and the students were required to do little more than sit and listen. The teacher did not ask the students demanding questions to check that they were extending their knowledge and understanding.

57. Students receive an effective induction to their course and during this they are given well-presented workbooks. Introductory topics are well chosen and taught in a sequence to smooth the transition from GCSE to GCE AS science. Students value the induction process. They feel it gives them a broad picture of their course and enables them to improve the ways they write their ideas down. Students' written work is promptly returned with well-annotated, constructive criticism. Students are set homework regularly and this includes tasks that aim to extend the scope of their understanding and help them to develop the skills of working effectively on their own. Students on biology courses are able to obtain past examination questions and marking schemes through the college's intranet.

58. Students are set target grades on entry and with the help of their teachers, they monitor their progress towards achieving these. Students who fall behind in their work and those resitting modules are directed to workshops where their progress is monitored carefully. All students have formal attainment and progress reviews with subject and personal tutors.

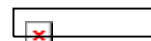
59. Teachers are well qualified and regularly update their knowledge and skills through internal and external training. Laboratories are bright and pleasant places in which to work and three have interactive whiteboards. Three technicians serve the area ably. Teachers make effective use of resources, from simple polystyrene models to help students visualise radioactive decay to graph plotting software to allow rapid processing of student practical data. Students make good use of the ICT centre where they access the college's intranet for private study. Data logging has recently been introduced in chemistry. The library contains a good and varied selection of texts.

60. All students have ready access to textbooks. Students are provided with a wide range of curriculum enrichment activities and events. These include field trips, courses leading to additional qualifications and talks by visiting speakers. Staff willingly give extra help to students outside normal class time.

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

61. Leadership and management are effective, open and supportive. Quality assurance procedures are thorough. Innovative workshops are provided for students who are falling behind in their work. Schemes of work, student workbooks and assessment practices have recently been revised. Staff have introduced key assessments with the aim of helping students monitor their progress more effectively. The advice of external consultants has been well used to bring about improvements. There are no systematic arrangements to enable staff to identify and share good practice. Attendance of students aged 16 to 18 is closely monitored, and parents are informed if their child is not coming to college regularly. Lessons are observed as part of the self-assessment process, but observers awarded a greater number of high grades for teaching than the inspectors did.

### **Business studies and economics**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- excellent retention rates on all courses

- high pass rates on GCE AS business studies , GCE A-level economics and GCSE business studies
  
- very good teaching
  
- rigorous monitoring of students' progress
  
- very effective management of the curriculum.

***Weaknesses***

- insufficient use of information learning technology in teaching.

***Scope of provision***

62. GCE A-level and AS, GCSE, and AVCE courses in business studies are offered. These are among the most popular courses in the college and in 2002/03, there were 322 enrolments for them. There were 107 students on the GCE AS and A-level economics courses. Many students progress to HE or employment. Students from across the college are also involved in the Young Enterprise scheme.

***Achievement and standards***

63. Pass rates are particularly high for GCE AS business studies, GCE A-level economics and GCSE business studies. In 2002, the pass rate for GCE A-level economics was 100%, compared with the national average of 86%. The proportion of students progressing from GCE AS to A-level was high in both business studies and economics. In 2002, the pass rate in GCE AS economics was low. With the exception of GCE AS economics, pass rates are consistently high on all courses.

64. There are excellent retention rates on all courses. For example, in 2001/02, the retention rate on the GNVQ/AVCE in business studies was 94%, and 97% for the GCE AS in business. Retention rates have been consistently above the national average over the last three years. Students demonstrate extensive knowledge and good understanding of their subjects. They are confident in discussions and express their ideas with clarity and confidence.

65. Students are able to apply theory to commercial situations skilfully. For example, in one lesson, students were able to relate marketing concepts to the marketing strategy of Boots PLC. Students are well motivated, rarely miss lessons and are punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
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GCSE business studies	2	No. of starts	17	14	17
		% retention	89	79	94
		% pass rate	100	100	93
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	*	140	140
		% retention	*	93	94
		% pass rate	*	94	95
GCE AS economics	3	No. of starts	*	43	61
		% retention	*	91	95
		% pass rate	*	95	78
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	85	106	104
		% retention	87	**	97
		% pass rate	92	**	93
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	42	43	28
		% retention	98	**	89
		% pass rate	90	**	100
GNVQ advanced/AVCE business	3	No. of starts	43	26	34
		% retention	84	**	94
		% pass rate	97	**	88

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

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

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

66. The teaching is very good across all subjects. Teaching is well planned and teachers draw effectively upon their professional knowledge. Teachers have an excellent rapport with students. Lessons have clear learning outcomes and a good range of activities enthuse students and hold their interest. Excellent use is made of relevant and current teaching resources. There is frequent use in lessons of business, management and economic journals, CD-ROMs and web sites. In a GCE AS business studies lesson an Equal Opportunities Commission website article was introduced to highlight the forthcoming introduction of new rights of parents to flexible working arrangements. Students were able to provide extensive examples of the effect of such changes for business organisations. In another lesson, students drew upon their previous GCE AS studies to argue the business case for and against the UK becoming a member of the 'Eurozone'.

67. Students enjoy their lessons. They are challenged appropriately and undertake activities that extend their knowledge and skills. In a lesson on time series analysis, the more able students calculated and produced a graph to show a four-year moving average of sales revenue. In a small minority of lessons, students spent a disproportionate amount of time merely taking down notes. Learning materials and handouts are relevant, up to date and of a high standard. Significant investment has been made in the learning resource centre to meet students' research needs and students are well supported when using the Internet.

68. Teaching staff are well qualified, possess relevant commercial experience and teaching qualifications. Accommodation is good and there are vibrant displays of students' work and business articles in classrooms.

69. There is insufficient use of ICT in curriculum planning and teaching. In most lessons, teachers do not use or refer to IT. For example, in a lesson on cash flow forecasting, there was no use of IT. Students are not encouraged to use ICT to enhance presentations they give in class. In a lesson on international marketing, the students made no use of PowerPoint when presenting information and data to the class.

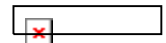
70. A wide range of effective assessment activities helps students to develop their skills and understanding. Students are given clear targets and know what is expected of them. They value the strong emphasis placed on regular reviews of their progress. When teachers assess students' work, they check that it is up to the standard required for students to achieve their target grades. Teachers also check students' progress routinely in lessons. Teachers return work promptly and write detailed, constructive comments identifying areas for further development.

71. Effective tutorial support is provided on both an individual and group basis. A particular strength of the curriculum area is the informal support provided. Students speak highly of the supportive approach of all staff. Specific learning support needs of individual students are identified in lesson plans and these are met.

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

72. There is very effective management of the curriculum. Subject/course and departmental managers are self-critical and do all they can to ensure the continuous improvement of provision. Much action has been taken to improve the quality of the students' learning experience. There are good internal communications within the curriculum area and cross-discipline meetings have been introduced to disseminate good practice. At the time of inspection, however, there were few systematic arrangements, other than these meetings, to enable staff to identify and share good practice.

## **Information and communications technology**



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

### ***Strengths***

- very high pass rates
  
- very high retention rates
  
- good learning resources
  
- regular testing with good feedback on learners' work.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low value added scores of ICT students
  
- students passive in too many lessons
  
- action planning is not always used to ensure improvement.

**Scope of provision**

73. Provision has expanded rapidly in this area over the last two years. Daytime courses are offered at level three. GCE AS and A-level courses are offered in ICT and computing. An AVCE IT course has been successfully introduced for students who do not have sufficiently high entry grades for a GCE AS/A-level course. No computing or IT courses are currently available at level two, although there are plans to introduce one in 2003/04. There are evening courses for students who want to obtain the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) at levels 2 and 3 and the Computer Literacy and Information Technology award at level 2. The college makes it possible for students to study for the ECDL through distance learning. Students can also work towards qualifications in the key skill of IT at levels 2 and 3.

**Achievement and standards**

74. Retention and pass rates are very high on GCE A-level and AS courses in computing and ICT and the level 2 ECDL evening course. They are outstanding on the AVCE IT course. In 2002, the proportion of students who achieved high grades in both GCE AS computing and IT was above the national average. Retention rates are very good on all courses. Few students achieve certification in the key skill of IT at level 3. This is generally true nationally. In the past two years, students on GCE AS and A-level courses in ICT and computing courses who have low GCSE scores, have not achieved the grades predicted for them.

75. Attendance averaged 76% in the daytime classes observed which is below the national average during inspection of 86%. Students' work in lessons and in portfolios is of a high standard. AVCE students show good design skills using PhotoShop to create complex multi-layered images.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
ECDL	2	No. of starts	41	96	161
		% retention	93	92	96
		% pass rate	63	63	61
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	*	104	102
		% retention	*	84	85
		% pass rate	*	85	90
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	*	55	58
		% retention	*	91	95
		% pass rate	*	84	91

GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	*	40	59
		% retention	*	**	97
		% pass rate	*	**	89
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	55	39	36
		% retention	85	**	97
		% pass rate	96	**	91

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

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

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

76. Teaching is mostly good or satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, the teacher outlined the objectives of the lesson at the beginning and summarised the most important points of the lesson at the end. Students participate in learning activities with enthusiasm and demonstrated good understanding of concepts and processes. For example, in one GCE AS IT group, students searched for job advertisements on the Internet and identified the personal qualities required of job applicants. They pooled these data and then compared them with the qualities listed in their textbook. In the next lesson, the students were to create a website using these data. In another lesson, a teacher followed up a PowerPoint presentation explaining the concept of referential integrity with an exercise that allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of it.

77. In less effective lessons, however, the teacher talked a great deal and did not give the students sufficient opportunity to take the initiative and demonstrate their understanding of what was being taught. Students listening and copying from printed notes became passive and were reluctant to respond to questioning. Some theory lessons were dull. In some lessons, teachers did not manage their time well and did not allow enough time to go through the important points with students.

78. When students were working individually in workshop sessions, teachers usually made good use of their time, discussing work with students. On a few occasions, they failed to check that quieter students were making progress, for example, during a workshop session when students were creating tables in Access for their coursework project.

79. Teachers are well qualified and demonstrate considerable knowledge of their subjects. Lessons are well planned and work is set and marked consistently and rigorously. Good feedback is provided to students on their work, and on how they may improve it. Regular testing is carried out. Good use is made of past examination questions and students are prepared for examinations well

80. Most students are able to do some of their work on computers at home. Students who do not have facilities at home are able to use those in the college.

81. Resources are good. Most classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, which are effectively used by teachers to help students learn effectively. The suite of rooms has been improved by the addition of air conditioning and staff resource areas. The college computer network is reliable. Software is of an industry standard and Office 2000 and Visual Basic 6 are available across the network. Good learning materials, both in printed and electronic form, are available to students through the network.

82. Support for students is good. Extra support and revision sessions are available during the half-term break. Students appreciate the help and support teachers willingly give them.

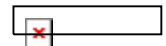


### ***Leadership and management***

83. Leadership and management in the curriculum area are satisfactory. Teachers meet regularly, both formally and informally. Some teachers keep detailed records of students' progress, but others do not. For instance, the progress students on GCE AS IT courses make in their coursework, and in acquiring portfolio evidence of their competence in the key skill of IT, is not always monitored and recorded thoroughly.

84. Some action planning is insufficiently rigorous or effective. Targets have been set with no indication of how they are to be achieved. For example, one department aims to increase the proportion of students who progress from GCE AS and A-level by 10%, but does not specify how. Some weakness identified in the self-assessment report for 2001, have not been rectified and they were cited again in the self-assessment report for 2002. For example, students' poor performance in the module of one course was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment reports for both 2001 and 2002. Action to address this weakness has not proved effective and has not been formally evaluated. Schemes of work have recently been reviewed but advice on ways of improving teaching activities has not been acted upon. Through the self-assessment process, the department identified the need for students to investigate the way in which a large entertainment project uses IT, and arranged for students to visit Disneyland in Paris in order that they might find out.

### **Visual and performing arts and media**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- very high retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses
  
- very high pass rates on most GCE AS courses
  
- very good teaching
  
- high standard of students' analytical and research skills.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates in GCSE media in 2002.

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

85. Full-time GCE AS and A-level courses are offered in film studies, media, general art and design, fine art, graphics, music, music technology, drama/theatre studies, and performing arts. There are currently 332 enrolments on GCE AS courses and 212 enrolments on GCE A-level courses. A GCSE course in communications/media is also offered. Adult classes use the art rooms in the evening.

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

86. There are high retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses. In 2002, the pass rates in art and design and media were excellent, at 100%. An outstanding feature of provision is the help given to students with learning difficulties, for example, those with dyslexia.

87. Students on art and design and media courses demonstrate good skills of analysis and research. The standard of students' written work and work in lessons was very high. Sketchbooks are packed with vivid experimental colour work and GCE AS students have produced inspired work for an African art project. Students are learning to relate what they see around them, and what they learn about other artists, to their own work and experience. Students' skills of critical analysis and comparison in film studies and media are excellent.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCSE communications/ media (general)	2	No. of starts	33	21	19
		% retention	94	100	89
		% pass rate	68	86	59
GCE AS drama and theatre studies	3	No. of starts	*	39	37
		% retention	*	85	84
		% pass rate	*	94	100
GCE AS art and design	3	No. of starts	*	75	74
		% retention	*	89	91
		% pass rate	*	96	94
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	*	105	123
		% retention	*	88	84
		% pass rate	*	98	96
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	33	101	54
		% retention	91	**	96
		% pass rate	100	**	100
GCE A-level communications/ media (general)	3	No. of starts	65	108	78
		% retention	83	**	97
		% pass rate	98	**	100

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

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

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

88. Most teaching is very good or excellent. Students arrive for classes on time, properly prepared and keen to learn. Many lessons are imaginative and teachers demand the best from students in and out of class. A graphic design student used punk culture as the target group for his skilfully designed chocolate bars. In one lesson, students' investigative work in media on prejudice and press bias was able to get to the nub of issues surrounding the Steven Lawrence murder.

89. Very clear objectives are set. Art students have progress reviews and are set new targets at the end of each week. Media students are frequently set timed essays. Classroom management is good. Lessons are well organised and teachers ensure that all learners' needs are met. Film studies teachers use edited film clips effectively and efficiently to stimulate learning, punctuate lessons and maintain students' interest. All teachers manage classroom activities well and ensure a smooth transition from presentations to the class as a whole, to work by the students in small groups. Teachers question the students skilfully. They keep the class alert by asking questions and then naming individuals to answer them. Teachers check the students' understanding and do all they can to help students learn effectively.

90. Staff are dedicated, enthusiastic and put the students' interests first. They are proud of what the college is able to do to help those students who have experienced difficulties in the past. Specialist resources and equipment throughout the area are satisfactory. Computers are available to students at all times, mainly for research purposes. Accommodation for media, music and music technology courses, in which the students are cramped, is currently being replaced with new buildings. Lessons in screen printing, fabrics and textiles, three-dimensional studies, painting, drawing and research take place in a studio through which everyone has to pass to get to the second art room. This arrangement prevents students from carrying out artwork involving a life model. There is a heavy demand on accommodation and resources in all areas.

91. Procedures for assessing students' work and monitoring students' progress are very good. Teachers of art and design and media take stringent measures to ensure that students meet the requirements of their examination syllabus. There are effective systems for helping students who miss work to catch up. At department meetings, staff raise concerns about students who are underperforming, prepare action plans and discuss their implementation. Performance data are used when planning courses and setting targets for the improvement of provision in music, performing arts, media and art and design. The proportion of students who achieve high grades in art and design is below the national average. Art and design students are now given demanding and stimulating research projects to carry out, with the aim of raising the level of their performance. Work is carefully marked and annotated, then returned promptly with attention paid to grammar and spelling.

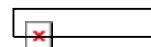
92. Students value the educational trips and visits arranged for them. They draw on experience gained from these in lessons, thereby bringing their work alive and enriching their project work. Fine art students recently visited London, the Robert Opie collection at Wigan Pier and Cadbury World. The National Theatre brought *A Threepenny Opera* to the college.

93. Advice and guidance for students are good. Individual needs are diagnosed early and provision arranged promptly. The learning plans for each lesson identify students who may need extra help. Large format worksheets are prepared and displayed on walls to help dyslexic students. Help with writing and word processing is available if needed. Students value the willingness of teachers to make themselves available to discuss curriculum and personal matters.

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

94. Senior managers give heads of subjects clear direction. Findings from quality assurance and self-assessment procedures are taken into account when planning ways of improving provision. Equality of opportunity is promoted successfully. The unique visual insights of art students who are dyslexic, are celebrated. The heads of music, performing arts, media and art and design operate independently of each other. They seldom share good practice, exchange ideas and work together to ensure excellence across all aspects of provision. For example, wall displays in art rooms are good but those in rooms used for media courses are poor. The deployment and use of learning resources are currently under review.

## Humanities - psychology, sociology, law and government



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

### **Strengths**

- very high pass rates in government and sociology
  
- good research skills of students
  
- effective use of good resources
  
- good support for individual students
  
- effective course management.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rate in GCE AS psychology in 2002
  
- some unsatisfactory teaching.

### **Scope of provision**

95. The college provides GCE AS and A-level courses in an appropriate range of humanities subjects. At the time of the inspection, the numbers of students on courses were as follows: psychology, 227; sociology, 90; law, 113; government, 65. The inspection covered these four subjects and also the GCSE sociology course, which has 18 students.

### **Achievement and standards**

96. The attendance rate during the inspection was 87%.

97. Pass rates in GCE A-level government and sociology are very high and above the national average for sixth form colleges. Pass rates in GCE AS law and GCE A-level psychology are at or

above the national average. In 2002, the pass rate for GCE AS psychology was significantly below the national average. Nearly half the GCE AS students in this curriculum area take GCE AS psychology. Retention rates are at or above the national average on all courses and are particularly high on the GCE A-level courses in psychology and government.

98. The standard of students' work is high. Many students were able to argue logically and evaluate competing theories to good effect in both written and oral work. Students are given research projects and assignments that require them to use recommended websites. This research element is well developed and students produce some outstanding work. In Sociology, students carried out a highly imaginative and challenging project comparing how congregations in the United States perceive male and female clerics. Some students on sociology and government courses were able to analyse data well and use source materials skilfully.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS government and politics	3	No. of starts	*	37	40
		% retention	*	92	95
		% pass rate	*	85	95
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	*	64	66
		% retention	*	92	79
		% pass rate	*	85	81
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	152	160
		% retention	*	88	89
		% pass rate	*	80	68
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	16	64	57
		% retention	100	75	89
		% pass rate	100	90	98
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	16	33	28
		% retention	100	**	100
		% pass rate	100	**	96
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	21	31	40
		% retention	95	**	93
		% pass rate	100	**	89
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	76	87	67
		% retention	82	**	100
		% pass rate	79	**	91
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	44	75	30
		% retention	73	**	97
		% pass rate	100	**	100

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

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

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

99. There was much good teaching. In the best lessons, students were challenged to apply their existing knowledge to new situations. In GCE AS sociology, students gave presentations, using overhead transparencies, on the positive and negative sociological and societal views of different family types. Students critically examined source material, drew conclusions and supported their judgements from sociological studies. They demonstrated maturity in their judgements and handled sensitive issues well. On law courses, the teacher questioned the students skilfully to check their understanding and gave them carefully structured tasks to help them extend their knowledge. Role-play was used to good effect in psychology lessons. In government, students' displayed a wide-ranging knowledge of current affairs and engaged in enthusiastic debate.

100. A small number of lessons were unsatisfactory. These lessons had not been planned well, and during them, the students were inattentive and learnt little. The learning activities were not tailored or modified to meet the needs of students of differing abilities. Teachers failed to ensure that students used their time in these lessons effectively.

101. Students are given good learning handouts and the departments have created case studies directly related to the syllabus. Departments have developed very good induction handbooks. In sociology, students used an innovative CD ROM induction programme to familiarise themselves with sociological concepts and topics. In psychology, there was a comprehensive examinations handbook for GCE AS students. There are very good intranet sites, which provide links to useful websites, course notes, conference notes, extension exercises and induction handbooks. Psychology tutors use e-mail to remind students of assignment deadlines and to offer advice on how assignments should be carried out and on data sources. All departments have good library provision, which students value and use extensively.

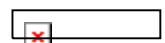
102. The assessment of students' work in all subjects is thorough. Targets are set and progress towards reaching them is monitored. Revised targets are set for those students who are not performing to expected levels. In Psychology, there are regular workshops to help students who are falling behind in their work. Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities. For example, students on law courses made a visit to a local police station to role-play the procedure for cautioning. Students on government courses go on an annual trip to Parliament. Rooms are spacious and there are attractive wall displays celebrating students' work.

103. Working relationships between staff and students are good. Students value the substantial amount of personal support and guidance staff give them.

### **Leadership and management**

104. Courses are planned and resourced effectively. The college's quality assurance procedures are followed and the self-assessment process is carried out thoroughly. There is comprehensive lesson planning and schemes of work are detailed. Students' work is marked and assessed carefully. Action is being taken to raise the low pass rates on psychology courses. There is insufficient dissemination of good practice especially in relation to teaching and learning.

### **Humanities - history, geography, religious studies, classical civilisations and archaeology**



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

#### **Strengths**

- very high pass rates and high grades on GCE A-level courses

- good retention rates
  
- highly effective teaching and learning
  
- outstanding work by students
  
- very good course management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient sharing of good practice between subject staff.

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

105. GCE AS and A-level courses are provided in history, geography, religious studies, classical civilisations and archaeology. Almost all learners are full-time students aged 16 to 18. Of the 549 students on these programmes at the time of the inspection, 346 were on GCE AS courses. Almost two-thirds of students were on history and geography courses. Over the past two years, the proportion of students who progress from GCE AS to A-level has been close to the college average and the highest proportion has been on classical civilisation courses. Enrolments on history courses have increased. Students receive good guidance and helpful information on course content. Courses provide successful progression routes to the professions and HE. Last year, seven adults started and completed courses in these subjects.

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

106. Pass rates and the numbers of students obtaining high grades are very high. Many students' examination results at GCE A-level are outstanding. In history, geography and classical civilisations pass rates have been consistently high. A very high number of students on GCE AS courses in all subjects achieve grade A or B. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses are very high. Of the 188 students who started courses in 2001, 182 completed them in 2002. The retention rate is very high on GCE AS religious studies and classical civilisations courses. Most students on most courses achieve examination results at, or above, their target grade. For the past four years, students on GCE A-level history course have achieved high value added scores, calculated by comparing the final examination grades students obtain with their GCSE grades on entry. In 2002, the value added scores of GCE A-level history students were the highest in the college. Students produce work of a very high standard. Investigative environmental coursework is very well researched and students use key skills well in its presentation. Students demonstrate outstanding writing skills in their personal studies in history. The extended written assignments of students on classical civilisation courses are perceptive and students have shown initiative in gathering evidence for these from unusual sources. Students are able to use information effectively, and analyse and evaluate concepts, ideas and developments well. In religious studies, for example, students explore the ethics of transplants in some depth and demonstrate the ability to think critically.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS archeology	3	No. of starts	*	29	26
		% retention	*	90	85
		% pass rate	*	81	77
GCE AS classical civilisation	3	No. of starts	*	47	50
		% retention	*	87	92
		% pass rate	*	98	93
GCE AS geography	3	No. of starts	*	101	117
		% retention	*	94	91
		% pass rate	*	82	88
GCE AS history	3	No. of starts	*	95	91
		% retention	*	96	88
		% pass rate	*	97	90
GCE A-level classical civilisation	3	No. of starts	***	***	39
		% retention	***	***	97
		% pass rate	***	***	100
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	80	84	70
		% retention	98	**	99
		% pass rate	96	**	97
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	94	72	71
		% retention	82	**	94
		% pass rate	95	**	99

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

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

\*\*\* data combined with GCE A-level history

**Quality of education and training**

107. Almost all the teaching is good or better. Teachers display scholarship and technical proficiency. Lessons are planned carefully. They have clear aims, which are shared with students. Lessons get off to a brisk start and quickly involve learners in activity. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging exercises. In some lessons, students require more time to digest what they are learning. There are policies on ways of meeting the different learning needs of students of all abilities. In lessons, students frequently work together in pairs, or small groups.

108. Resources are used skilfully and effectively in lessons. In a geography lesson on plate tectonics, the teacher used a video clip, the overhead projector, good learning handouts, material from the course handbook and a presentation by a student, to excellent effect. Students develop excellent learning skills. In history lessons on the investigation of the racial interpretations of the Holocaust and on the significance of Kristallnacht in 1938, the students carried out in-depth analysis



of theories and formed sound judgements substantiated by clear evidence.

109. The better lessons were those in which students were encouraged to debate and discuss. For example, in a lesson on a classical civilisation course, the students entered into an excellent discussion on the role of women in Athenian society. Teachers also prepared students well to answer examination questions. In a geography lesson using an analysis exercise of the conflicts involved in coastal management, students learned how to use new knowledge selectively. In a history lesson on the Rump Parliament, students practised the construction of key paragraphs. Students derive much satisfaction from their studies. They respond intelligently, often extensively, in class discussion. In a lesson on an archaeology course, the students enjoyed humorous moments examining the implications of gifts in marriage as part of ancient economy and they learnt a great deal. In few lessons, the teacher spent a disproportionate amount of lesson time talking and failed to engage the students in discussion, or question them to check their understanding.

110. There is a wide range of excellent learning resources. Specialist rooms are well equipped and have stimulating, curriculum-related wall displays. Students are provided with good texts and careful use is made of visual materials. There is extensive stock in the learning resources centre for all subjects. In addition, history has its own library. There is a good collection of artefacts and replicas of museum items to support the study of classical civilisation and archaeology. Students on history and geography courses mainly use IT in the learning resources centre. Teachers of history and geography have developed informative folders of learning materials on the college's intranet.

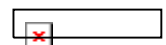
111. Students' progress is systematically assessed and monitored. Students with particular learning needs are identified in class lists and appropriate supporting action is taken to help those who are underachieving. In history, there is a department checklist to help staff detect students in need of assistance. Regular assignments are set and most are marked sensitively with detailed, constructive comment. Progress is measured against minimum target grades at half-termly intervals. Some lessons are planned to provide continuous monitoring of students' progress on a one-to-one basis.

112. Students speak very highly of the help and guidance they receive from their subject teachers outside lessons. There are additional lessons for the very able who are also directed to specific sources of information. Staff know their classes well and show sensitive awareness of the needs of students with learning difficulties. Some learners have helpers who assist them to make notes. Some students on history courses are linked with other students in their class who give them help and support.

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

113. There is highly effective course management. Subject leaders consult well with staff. Teachers work well together as a team. There is regular informal communication between subject teachers. Departmental meetings are held periodically. All staff work hard to improve provision. Well-kept subject files contain departmental policy statements on key issues. For example, students on the classical civilisation course debate issues raised by the equal opportunities policy which are relevant to the syllabus. The file for history contains a document on the need to ensure that students are provided with a range of different teaching methods and learning activities to suit their individual aptitude and ability. Records of staff development include induction policies for new staff. Analysis of performance data is well documented. Whilst there is much good practice, there is insufficient sharing of it between staff in different subject areas.

## **English**



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

### **Strengths**

- purposeful and stimulating teaching and learning
  
- very high pass rates and good retention rates on most courses
  
- strong team of well-led teachers
  
- very effective support for individual students.

### **Weaknesses**

- GCSE provision.

### **Scope of provision**

114. The English department provides GCE AS and A-level courses in English literature, English language, and English language and literature. Each course recruits well. GCSE English is offered as part of the foundation programme, and for two groups of students re-taking the subject while on a GCE A-level programme. Of those who enrol each September, a significant number resit GCSE English in November, while others do so at the end of the year. In each of the last three years, over 400 students have followed these courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

115. Students on all GCE AS and A-level courses do well. In 2002, all students who completed GCE A-level courses in English language and English literature passed. All students who completed GCE AS English literature and English language and literature passed. Other pass rates were in line with the national average. In 2002, many students on all courses, except GCE AS English language, obtained high grades. Most students on GCE AS and A-level courses, and especially those on English literature courses, achieve positive value added scores, calculated by comparing the final examination grades students achieve with their GCSE grades on entry. Some students with modest GCSE scores, however, do not achieve their predicted grades, although nearly all pass. In two of the last three years, the proportion of students on GCSE English courses who achieve grade C or above has been below the national average.

116. Retention rates have been consistently at, or above, the relevant national average on all courses for the past three years. In most lessons, students' work is of a high standard. Students make valuable contributions to class discussion, showing that they have acquired a good understanding of previous work and have prepared themselves carefully for the topics now being studied. Much of their written work shows that they have a deep interest in their studies, and are willing and able to develop their own ideas. The work of many students improves significantly during their courses. In particular, students become better at structuring and expressing ideas.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	23	23	37
		% retention	87	92	78
		% pass rate	45	63	45
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	*	85	80
		% retention	*	93	91
		% pass rate	*	95	100
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	*	63	75
		% retention	*	89	87
		% pass rate	*	100	94
GCE AS English language and literature	3	No. of starts	*	75	59
		% retention	*	92	88
		% pass rate	*	99	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	56	71	56
		% retention	93	**	96
		% pass rate	100	**	100
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	34	56	47
		% retention	100	**	96
		% pass rate	97	**	100
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	41	37	59
		% retention	85	**	100
		% pass rate	97	**	93

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

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

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

117. In all lessons, teaching and learning are purposeful. Teachers successfully communicate their enthusiasm for the subject to their students. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives, which are usually shared with students. Students are given scope to express and explore their ideas in class, exercise initiative in the way they learn, and work responsibly on their own. In one GCE AS English language and literature class some students had been asked to prepare two poems by Simon Armitage. During the lesson they led much of the discussion confidently showing good understanding of the ambiguities and subtleties of the poetry. In many lessons, there was productive group work. In two GCE AS English literature lessons, students spoke confidently about themes in the poetry of Christina Rossetti, and the importance of the roles and status of women in Victorian society in her writing. In many lessons, handouts, worksheets, and the teachers' effective use of the whiteboard help to give a clear focus and structure to the learning.

118. Students' written work is assessed carefully. Teachers provide students with clear guidance on how they may improve their work to ensure it is up to the standard required. The teachers' comments are recorded in the students' own handbooks, building up a complete record of guidance given and progress achieved. Many classes contain students with some learning difficulties, most

frequently relating to dyslexia. Teachers have full information about the problems these students have and are alert to their needs. Much help and encouragement is given to individual students both in timetables lessons and in extra sessions arranged in order that they may be given advice on a particular piece of work. The college's learning support unit and the department's own weekly workshop provide further effective support to individuals. Staff recognise that more than one workshop is needed to satisfy all demands for help. Teachers on English courses do all they can to help students through difficulties, both those associated with their work and also of a personal nature. Students value the assistance and guidance staff give them.

119. Learning takes place in a well-resourced and attractive accommodation. Each of the six specialist classrooms has very good and colourful display materials. In some rooms, these are vibrant and help to make the subject interesting, and also provide useful background material. Most rooms are spacious and a wide range of learning activities can be carried out in them. Two rooms, however, are much smaller and it is difficult for some activities, such as structured debate and discussion and group work, to be carried out easily and effectively in these. There are good links with the central learning resources centre. There has been extensive recent updating of the book stock, especially for GCE A-level English language. Students are encouraged to use IT. Their course handbooks and other handouts give guidance about relevant and useful websites. Students develop research skills in the learning centre where they use the intranet and Internet to gather information and ideas about particular topics and authors.

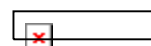
120. In a significant number of instances, the 45-minute lessons were not long enough to enable learning tasks to be completed effectively. For example, in some instances, exciting discussion or stimulating group work through which students raised important issues, had to be curtailed or rushed through.

121. Students benefit from regular curriculum enrichment activities, such as a weekly reading group and a debating society. There is also a student college magazine. Trips are made to varied locations, such as places associated with Philip Larkin in Hull, and the First World War battlefields. These are well supported and students say they find them very enjoyable.

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

122. Curriculum leadership is strong and effective. There is a clear emphasis on developing teamwork. All staff know the standards required of them and their students and they are willing and keen to improve provision. Teachers enjoy working together and readily take on individual responsibilities within the department. Teachers sharing classes frequently discuss the work of students within these groups with one another. Meetings of all departmental staff take place regularly and at these, essential decisions are taken and key developments are planned. Staff carry out effective analysis of the value added to students' achievements across different courses and teaching groups. Appropriate measures are taken to rectify weaknesses. There is some unsatisfactory GCSE provision. The two GCSE English groups contain students who have different and conflicting aims. Some are preparing to resit the examination in November and the rest plan to do so in the following June. In addition, it is difficult for teachers to meet all these students' aims in time allocated for GCSE English each week. The self-assessment report for the curriculum area covers a number of subjects without making it clear what their strengths and weaknesses are. The English department's own annual analysis of performance, however, identifies issues clearly.

### **Foreign languages**



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

### ***Strengths***

- very good high retention and pass rates in French and Spanish GCE A level
- very good teaching
- excellent facilities for teaching of modern foreign languages
- very good use of foreign language assistants.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low value added scores in GCE A-level German
- many low retention rates for adult evening classes
- insufficient sharing of good practice between teachers of languages.

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

123. The college offers full-time GCE AS and A-level courses in French, German and Spanish. In September 2002, 163 students enrolled on these courses. One-year GCSE courses are offered in French, German and Spanish, but this year, the only one of these to run was French with seven students. A one-year foreign languages at work programme has not run since 2000/01. There is a separate evening provision of language courses for part-time students. And currently, 40 students are taking level 1 and 2 courses in French, German and Spanish.

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

124. Pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses in French and Spanish are consistently very high. The proportion of students on the French GCE AS and A-level courses who obtain high grades is above the national average. The value added scores of students on French courses places the college in the top 10% of all colleges. Retention rates are good across all GCE AS and A-level courses. The scores of students on GCE A-level German courses have been low for the past two years. Retention rates on many evening courses for adults are low and in 2001/02 were as follows: Spanish level 2, 17%; Spanish level 1, 41%; German level 1, 43%; French level 1, 50%. At 60%, the average retention rate of all adult language classes over the past two years is very low. Over the past three years, the retention rate on the French GCSE course has been high. Last year, however, the proportion of students who gained grade C or above in GCSE French was slightly below the national average.

125. The standard of students' work in modern foreign language classes is satisfactory and often it is high. For example, students on the GCE A-level course worked confidently and successfully through

a computer activity on the correct use of relative pronouns while a class of Spanish level 1 students showed excellent comprehension of numbers and times and demonstrated good accents and fluency in role plays. In some classes, the students have a poor grasp of grammar.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS French language	3	No. of starts	*	60	58
		% retention	*	85	90
		% pass rate	*	94	87
GCE AS German language	3	No. of starts	*	24	17
		% retention	*	92	88
		% pass rate	*	95	87
GCE AS Spanish language	3	No. of starts	*	37	33
		% retention	*	100	88
		% pass rate	*	86	93
GCE A-level French language	3	No. of starts	37	31	31
		% retention	78	**	94
		% pass rate	93	**	97
GCE A-level German language	3	No. of starts	6	10	16
		% retention	83	**	100
		% pass rate	100	**	88
GCE A-level Spanish language	3	No. of starts	15	18	23
		% retention	100	**	100
		% pass rate	87	**	100

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

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

***Quality of education and training***

126. The teaching in most lessons was good or better. Where lessons are very good, teachers have high expectations and make demands of their students, both linguistically and conceptually. In one lesson, the teacher introduced a topic on 'the future' with specific reference to science and technology. Accurate use was made of the future tense as students were challenged to offer their vision of the future. Many interesting views were given, including perspectives on the potential conflict with Iraq.

127. Teachers plan and manage their lessons effectively. They ensure that the language being learnt is used all the time in lessons. Many students respond very well to this and make real efforts to keep to the foreign language in the classroom. However, in group work in some classes, students revert to using English. There are good working relationships between staff and students and humour is often used to good effect. In some lessons, the pace is too slow and there is insufficient involvement of all students in the learning activities. In many lessons, the teacher made sure that the various needs of students of different abilities were met appropriately. For example, for oral work,

students were divided into groups according to their ability and the teacher had adapted tasks to ensure that all students could benefit from them.

128. There are excellent teaching and learning facilities for modern languages. These include a modern suite of rooms with good wall displays, a 24-booth language laboratory and a resource area containing books, magazines, audio and video cassettes, dictionaries and information on HE courses. The college's learning resources centre also has a good selection of language materials, including an expanding range of networked computer resources.

129. Most language teachers are native speakers or speak the language they are teaching with fluency. Particularly effective use is made of the team of three language assistants. Each assistant meets weekly with the teachers of her language and detailed lesson plans are drawn up for the conversation sessions. All students have an obligatory weekly 20-minute session with the assistant and absences are followed through rigorously. During the session, students are given additional help or carry out extension work. They attend the session individually or in groups made up of other students of the same ability. Students find the weekly sessions extremely useful and expressed their appreciation for them. For instance, the sessions afforded them an opportunity to practise being interviewed for a university course, using the language they were learning. Currently, the GCSE students do not have access to the French assistant.

130. There is very good monitoring of students' progress in lessons with sensitive correction of grammatical errors. Teachers mark students' written work clearly and provide positive and encouraging written comments. However, there is no common marking scheme across the department. Students have a list of the topics to be covered and are informed of coursework deadlines. They are not given a detailed scheme of work to enable them to plan how they will carry out their assignments and also meet commitments relating to other subjects.

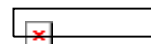
131. There is an extensive curriculum enrichment programme. The college funds exchange visits to France, Germany and Spain and numerous study visits to films, plays and conferences.

132. Students speak highly of the additional learning support they receive and the responsiveness of staff to their needs. They also recognise that there is ample extension work available to them in the form of audio and ICT packages that they can work through on their own, and additional reading materials. Students appreciate their induction to modern languages courses and say that it helps them to make a successful transition from GCSE to GCE A-level work. They also value the tutorial system and the arrangement whereby their tutors are also their language teachers and are able to help them problems they may have with their work.

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

133. The department is managed thoughtfully and with considerable skill. The self-assessment report for modern languages is thorough and detailed. At the last inspection, it was identified that some students on French courses were taken by the same teacher all the time. The practice has now been introduced of making more than one teacher responsible for French classes and it is proving beneficial to the students. This was an issue identified in the last inspection. Team meetings are held regularly. Minutes are clear and relate to the promotion of equality of opportunity, the monitoring of progress towards achievement of departmental targets and the provision of support for individual students. Discussion does not focus on the identification and sharing of good practice in teaching and the head of department does not observe the teaching of daytime staff. He has been involved in the appointment of evening staff and has observed their lessons.

## **Part D: College data**



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

Level	16-18	19+
1	0	24
2	2	21
3	98	1
4/5	0	0
Other	0	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in spring 2002

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	219	0	13.0
Land-based provision	0	0	0.0
Construction	0	0	0.0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	7	0	0.0
Business administration, management and professional	57	245	19.0
Information and communication technology	58	586	39.0
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0.0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	0	178	11.0
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0.0
Health, social care and public services	8	273	17.0
Visual and performing arts and media	115	0	7.0
Humanities	718	127	52.0
English, languages and communication	563	40	37.0
Foundation programmes	0	0	0.0



<b>Total</b>	1745	1449	100.0
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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
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	230	328	0	2	20	20
	Retention rate	90	88	n/a	n/a	90	80
	National average	80	81	83	70	74	74
	Pass rate	79	78	na/	n/a	56	0
	National average	62	70	66	61	65	66
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	280	374	200	40	0	124
	Retention rate	91	86	91	78	n/a	90
	National average	80	81	81	71	75	74
	Pass rate	88	76	82	71	n/a	15
	National average	81	79	83	68	68	67
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	2179	2141	5995	6	20	8
	Retention rate	81	85	**	83	95	**
	National average	78	80	84	65	70	71
	Pass rate	89	88	**	20	84	**
	National average	85	85	85	61	63	66

\*too few students to provide a useful calculation

\*\*data not available

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

Sources of information:

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

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

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

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	79	18	2	131
Level 2 (intermediate)	100	0	0	8
Level 1 (foundation)	100	0	0	1
Other sessions	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>140</b>

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