



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Lowestoft College

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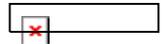
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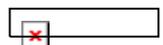
**Basic information about the college**



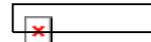
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Name of college:	Lowestoft College
Type of college:	Further education college
Principal:	Gwen Parsons
Address of college:	St Peters Street Lowestoft Suffolk NR32 2NB
Telephone number:	01502 583 521
Fax number:	01502 500 031
Chair of governors:	Robert Mee
Unique reference number:	130819
Name of reporting inspector:	Annella Mochan HMI
Dates of inspection:	24-28 February 2003

**Part A: Summary**



## Information about the college



Lowestoft College is a medium-sized general further education (FE) college serving the town of Lowestoft and the surrounding districts of Waveney and south Norfolk. Lowestoft is the most easterly town in Britain and originally developed as a fishing port. The major industries in northeast Suffolk are tourism, food manufacturing, offshore gas production and high-tech electronics. The town now suffers from the decline of the fishing and port activities. Unemployment in the area is relatively high at 4.1%. There is a high proportion of seasonal and part-time employment and wages are relatively low. The local ethnic minority population is below 1%. Waveney contains five wards in the top 10% of deprivation in England. Three of these are in the top 10% most deprived wards nationally for education training and skills. As a result, Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth attract additional government and European funding for a range of initiatives.

The college offers education and training in all 14 of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) areas of learning. Student numbers in some areas of learning are low and the largest areas of full-time equivalent provision are engineering, construction, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, foundation programmes, and health and social care. Most of the college's provision is at the main site in St Peters Street, Lowestoft. The college also has two centres about two miles away at Kirkley, one specialising in construction and the other providing a community facility for information and communication technology (ICT), catering and fitness. The college specialises in vocational education and training. The college does not offer a full-time General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) programme for students aged 16 to 18. There are three local high schools in the area that have sixth forms. In 2002, in one of the schools, 62% of Year 11 pupils gained five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A\* to C, but in the other two schools, only 39% and 31% gained high grades, which is significantly below the national average. The nearest alternative FE providers are Great Yarmouth college, Norwich City College and East Norfolk Sixth Form College.

The college's mission is to work in partnership to deliver high quality vocational education and training to meet the needs of the community of Lowestoft and Waveney.

## How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be inadequate as two of the eight curriculum areas inspected and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The quality of provision is unsatisfactory in engineering and literacy and numeracy, and work-based learning in engineering is also unsatisfactory. The quality of provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy is good. Education and training are satisfactory in construction, ICT, hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism, health and social care and childcare, and visual and performing arts and media. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

### **Key strengths**

- good personal support for students
  
- involvement in partnerships to promote social and educational inclusion

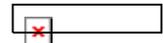
- established links with schools
- good links with employers and the community.

***What should be improved***

- quality of teaching and learning, particularly for students aged 16 to 18
- students' achievements
- curriculum management
- quality assurance arrangements
- provision in literacy and numeracy, engineering and work-based learning
- teaching and management of key skills
- tutorial provision
- assessment and monitoring of students' progress
- students' attendance
- monitoring of equal opportunities.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

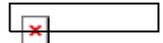


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Practical teaching and specialist resources are good. There is a good range of courses with progression routes. Links with employers, schools and the community are effective. Management of key skills and work-based learning is poor. Insufficient use is made of information learning technology (ILT).
Engineering	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Teaching is poor for students aged 16 to 18. Students' practical work in boat building is good. Retention and pass rates vary across the courses. Pass rates are high on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 engineering manufacture but low on NVQ level 1 motor vehicle. Management of the provision is poor.
Information and communication technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The provision is responsive to the needs of the community and employers. Teaching is good on programmes for adults and pass rates are high on level 1 courses. Retention and pass rates are low on integrated business technology (IBT). There is weak management and poor teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18.
Hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention rates are high on most courses. Practical teaching is good. Links with schools, the community and employers are good. Pass rates are low on some travel and tourism courses. Curriculum planning is poor.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Good.</b> Most teaching is good. Students' practical skills are good. Pass rates are consistently high. Support for students is effective. Retention rates are low in hairdressing. Monitoring of the progress of work-based learners is weak.
Health and social care and childcare	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Most teaching is satisfactory. Pass rates are high on many courses. The progression to further study or employment is good. Personal and academic support is effective. Some assessment and internal verification practice is weak. Attendance at lessons is poor.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Most of the teaching is satisfactory or good. Too much teaching for students aged 16 to 18 is unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates vary widely across the provision. There are good specialist facilities and equipment. Support for students is good. The range of provision is narrow.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The quality of teaching varies widely but too much of it does not meet the needs of learners. Students' achievements are

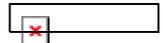
	mixed. Personal support for students is good. Target setting and reviews of students' progress are ineffective. There are insufficient specialist teachers. The management of basic skills across the college is weak.
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### How well is the college led and managed?



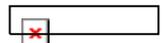
Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Several weaknesses identified at the last inspection have not been addressed. The management team has made progress in improving strategic planning, financial management and the reliability of management information. Curriculum management, however, is weak in many areas. The quality of teaching and learning for students aged 16 to 18 is well below the national averages for similar colleges. The pass rates on level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18 have been below national averages for the three years from 2000. Quality assurance arrangements lack rigour. Action plans to address weaknesses identified in curriculum areas are imprecise and are not rigorously monitored. The management of key skills and work-based learning is poor. The college does not monitor the implementation of its equal opportunities policies. The college does not provide value for money for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 provision.

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



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. In collaboration with other organisations, it plays an active role in initiatives for the economic regeneration and development of Lowestoft. Working with other agencies, the college is developing progression routes into education for people who are not in employment. Specific targets for widening participation in education and training have not been set. Work with employers is contributing to raising the occupational and basic skill level of their employees. The Prince's Trust volunteer scheme encourages disadvantaged young people to work on community projects that develop their citizenship skills. Nearly all volunteers progress to college courses or employment. Well-established partnerships with local schools are enabling year 10 and year 11 pupils to study for vocational qualifications. Work with disaffected pupils is encouraging them to remain in education. Programmes for school pupils with learning difficulties are giving them the opportunity to study on vocational courses to which they would not otherwise have access. Support for these students is good.

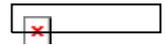
### How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



There is a good range of guidance and welfare services. Most prospective students receive comprehensive information about programmes. Initial guidance is generally effective. In many curriculum areas induction is well planned for full-time students and helps them to settle into their studies. There is no formal induction for students who begin their studies at a time other than the start of the academic year. The induction for part-time students does not provide a useful introduction to the college. Work-based learners receive an initial assessment and a helpful induction when they start their course. Some full-time and part-time students do not undertake an

need of additional learning support, the take-up is good. Learning support is mostly effective and valued by students. Students receive good personal support from their tutors. The quality of tutorials varies widely and for some students they are unsatisfactory. Part-time students have no formal tutorial programme but receive good support from course tutors. Students' absences are not routinely followed up. The monitoring and review of students' progress is not sufficiently rigorous. Targets set for students are often imprecise and do not help them to improve their performance. Reports are not issued to parents or guardians of students aged 16 to 18. Many reviews and progress reports for work-based learners are poor. Careers education and guidance for younger students is developing through links with the Connexions partnership.

### **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***

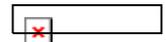
- good level of personal support
  
- friendly and approachable staff
  
- being treated like adults
  
- flexible timetables in ICT, care and hair and beauty.

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

- teaching and relevance of key skills
  
- car parking
  
- the refectory
  
- the number and condition of the toilets

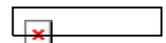
- provide a students' common room in the tower block
- the number of changing rooms and lockers.

### Other information



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

### Part B: The college as a whole



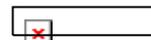
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	34	52	14
19+ and WBL*	69	28	3
Learning 16-18	31	52	17
19+ and WBL*	71	26	3

*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. Lowestoft College offers a wide curriculum and aims to meet local needs, with a focus on vocational education and training. All 14 of the LSC areas of learning are covered. The number of students studying on land-based courses is small. Work-based learning is provided in eight of the LSC areas of learning, chiefly in engineering, construction and hairdressing. The inspection covered eight areas of learning. In 2001/02, the college enrolled 4,153 learners, of whom 75% were adults. The majority of the 1,019 students aged 16 to 18 were enrolled on full-time programmes. Around 90% of adult learners attend part time or take short courses. Nearly three quarters of the enrolments are on courses at entry, foundation and intermediate levels. The overall attendance rate in lessons observed by inspectors was below the national average at 73%. It was high at 81% in hairdressing and beauty therapy, but low in health and social care and childcare at 66%.

2. Students' practical work is of a high standard especially in construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and catering. In most areas, students' occupational skills are developed effectively, which prepares them well for employment. The standard of students' written work, however, is much more variable. On most full-time courses, not enough attention is given to the development of students' key skills of number, communication and ICT. Many students at all levels do not make good use of ICT to complete their course work. Students in some areas such as hairdressing, hospitality and visual arts, take part in a good range of enrichment activities related to their main course of study.

3. Overall, the retention rates are good. In the three years 1999 to 2001, for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 programmes, the retention rate was broadly in line with national averages and at level 1 and level 2 it was well above. For adult students, the retention rate at all levels has been consistently above the national average. The college's data for 2002 show that the high retention rates were maintained on level 3 courses. The retention rates on level 1 and level 2 courses declined to around the national averages. In 1999 and 2000, the pass rates for students of all ages on level 1 and level 2 courses were well above the national averages. In 2000, the pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses were well below the national average and for adult students the pass rate was slightly above the national average. In 2001, the pass rates for students of all ages on courses at levels 1 to 3 fell significantly, to below the national averages. College data for 2002 show some improvement in pass rates on courses at level 1 and level 2, bringing them more in line with national averages. However, the pass rates on level 3 courses remained significantly below the national averages. The retention rates on key skills courses are high, but the pass rates have fallen in the three years from 1999. In 2001, only 19% of students aged 16 to 18 and 34% of adults achieved their key skills qualification.

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

4. In 2001/02, approximately 80% of full-time students and 6% of part-time students were aged 16 to 18. Nearly three quarters of students were enrolled on level 1 or level 2 courses. Most students studied vocational courses. For the four years from 1999, the overall retention rates on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 have been in line with, or slightly above, the national averages. The pass rates on level 1 and level 2 courses for 2000 and 2001 were well above the national averages. On advanced level courses, the pass rate fell from 73% in 1999 to 60% in 2000. The pass rates worsened on courses at level 1, 2 and 3 in 2001 and were well below the national averages at 62%, 58% and 63% respectively. In 2002, the pass rates rose to around the national average on level 2 courses, but those on courses at level 1 and level 3 remained well below the national averages.

5. Many of the students aged 16 to 18 who enrol on advanced-level qualifications have modest prior attainment and join with low GCSE grades. The retention rate on General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses is slightly above the national average, but on other level 3 qualifications such as the national diploma it is below. Students on GNVQ and AVCE courses do less well than students on other level 3 qualifications. In 2002, some 51% of students who completed their GNVQ/AVCE course gained the award and 80% of students on precursor qualifications achieved the award. For the small number of students aged 16 to 18 enrolled on NVQ level 3 courses, the retention and pass rates are high.

6. Retention rates on GCSE courses are broadly in line with the national average. In 2002, some 37% of students gained high grades at A\* to C which is well below the national average. Students on NVQ level 2 courses are more successful. The overall retention and pass rates are above the national averages. In 2001, about a third of the students aged 16 to 18 were enrolled on level 1 courses. The NVQ level 1 retention and pass rates were particularly good, at 91% and 86%, respectively. The high pass rate was maintained in 2002 but the retention rate fell to 69%.

### **Adult learners**

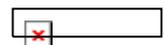
7. In 2001, nearly 91% of adult students studied on part-time or short courses. The retention rate for adults on courses at levels 1 to 3 has been consistently above the national average between 1999 and 2002. In 1999 and 2000, the pass rates on courses at level 1, 2 and 3 were broadly in line with, or slightly above, the national averages. However, in 2001, the pass rates at levels 1 to 3 fell to below the national averages. In 2002, the pass rates on level 1 and level 2 courses improved and rose to slightly above the national average but those on level 3 courses declined to 64%, which is below the national average.

8. For adults on level 3 courses such as AVCE and national diploma, pass rates are high. Many adult students do particularly well on NVQ level 3 courses. Retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 courses are consistently above the national average. However, there is wide variation in the achievement of adult students across the different curriculum areas. Pass rates are high for adult students enrolled on GCSE courses. In 2001, 66% gained high grades and this improved slightly to 68 % in 2002. The retention and pass rates are generally high for the small number of adult students on NVQ level 1 courses. In 2001, nearly 2,500 students enrolled on short courses of which 77% were adults. The pass rates for both adults and students aged 16 to 18 fell to 69% in 2001.

9. At the time of the inspection, there were about 210 work-based learners, about 80% of them in engineering, construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are approximately equal numbers of foundation and advanced modern apprentices, and 12 learners on NVQ programmes. Thirty-two are enrolled on programmes funded by Jobcentre plus including the New Deal and Longer Occupational Training. A high proportion of these learners do not complete their training. Of the 72 foundation modern apprentices who started training between 1998 and 2000 in engineering, sixteen transferred to the advanced modern apprenticeship and of the remainder only six completed the foundation modern apprentice framework. Between 60% and 70% of advanced modern apprentices complete their framework. The progress of learners through the framework is slow. In engineering for example, only 4% achieved within the planned duration. Many foundation modern apprentices fail to achieve the key skills element of their framework but advanced modern apprentices are more successful.

10. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about students' achievement and standards of work on particular courses.

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



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 123 lessons. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 44% of the lessons, satisfactory in 45% and less than satisfactory in 11%. There is much variation in the quality of teaching across the curriculum areas, with 64% graded as good or better in hairdressing and beauty therapy, but only 33% in ICT.

12. Much of the teaching and learning of students aged 16 to 18 was graded significantly lower than that of adults; only 34% of the teaching of younger students was good or better, compared with 69% for adults. In terms of learning, 31% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18 were graded good or better compared with 71% for adults. Inspectors judged 60% of the teaching on level 1 courses to be good or better compared with 39% on level 3 programmes. Some 15% of teaching was less than

satisfactory on level 3 programmes.

13. Across the individual curriculum areas inspected, there was considerable difference in the quality of teaching and learning. In hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and health and social care and childcare there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, a high proportion of the teaching was judged to be good or better. In engineering, ICT, visual and performing arts and media, and literacy and numeracy, the number of lessons graded less than satisfactory was significantly above the national averages. In construction, the number of lessons graded less than satisfactory was similar to the national profile, however, there was a higher proportion of lessons graded satisfactory rather than good or better.

14. Some teaching is well planned. In the more effective lessons, checking and consolidation of students' prior learning is good; the range of activities ensures all learners are involved and appropriately challenged. In many lessons, the working relationship between teachers and students is positive. In the better sessions, teachers use questioning effectively and have good quality handouts which supplement other learning materials. This is particularly so in health and social care where students' critical and analytical skills develop well in some lessons. Teachers provide a high level of individual support to students in literacy and numeracy classes. Flexible learning sessions for adults in ICT are well planned; students record in detail in their logbooks their individual learning for each session. Teaching in practical lessons is good in many areas. In the better lessons, there is a clear demonstration of tasks to be completed and a clear link between theory and practice. In practical lessons, most students apply themselves well and their progress is monitored effectively. Additional activities are given to challenge the more able students and broaden their experience. In the better practical lessons, students are working to commercial standards.

15. In the least effective lessons, the lesson plans do not contain clear learning objectives and do not address the individual learning needs of students. Much of the teaching is slow and unchallenging and fails to motivate the students to participate in the lesson. In some literacy and numeracy lessons, the learning is unsatisfactory with students working on tasks that are not appropriate to their prior attainment. Opportunities are sometimes missed to link new topics to previous learning and extend students' understanding and knowledge; often there is no assessment or consolidation of learning. Occasionally, more able students are allowed to dominate lessons resulting in the exclusion of others. Insufficient time is allowed in some lessons for skills development and practice. Target setting is often too general to give students a clear understanding of what they are aiming for. Some lessons rely on one teaching method for the whole lesson and students lose interest. In a number of lessons, students are not encouraged to take notes or record their answers. Some students are unsure of the technical terms associated with their work.

16. The teaching and management of key skills across the college are weak. The college is reviewing its approach to the teaching of key skills. Many students fail to see the relevance of key skills and are unclear about the assessment requirements. Attendance at key skills lessons is poor. In curriculum areas, key skills are insufficiently related to students' main course of study. Students' progress on key skills is not monitored effectively and students are not always given credit for work completed. In the lessons where key skills are integrated with vocational studies, assignments enable students to gather relevant portfolio evidence. The key skills provision for work-based learners is poor.

17. Teaching staff in most areas are generally well qualified and have relevant vocational experience. There are 98 full-time and fractional teaching staff and 139 part-time staff. Some 85% of the permanent staff and 43% of part-time staff have a recognised teaching qualification. Part-time teachers bring valuable current industrial and professional experience to the classroom, but some recently appointed teachers have little teaching experience. In engineering and care work-based learning, there are insufficient staff with appropriate assessor and verifier qualifications. The college has experienced difficulties in recruiting teaching staff in literacy and numeracy, care and childcare, and ICT. Until recently, appraisal had not been consistently practised across the college. A revised appraisal scheme is helping to inform professional development. Most staff have participated recently in a range of staff development activities related to the college's strategic objectives. There has been no overall evaluation of the impact of staff development in improving the quality of the provision.

18. The college's centrally managed learning resources are effective in meeting the needs of students. Facilities have been extended since the last inspection and the service is well managed. Access for people with restricted mobility has been improved by the installation of a lift. Learning resources are current and well matched to the needs of most curriculum areas. There is a good range of books and electronic and audio-visual learning materials which is systematically reviewed and updated. The careers library has been developed in consultation with Suffolk Connexions. The largest minority ethnic group attending college consists of students from the Indian subcontinent who are mostly enrolled on specialist commercial courses for the maritime professions. To support these students, the college has purchased a collection of Hindu films on video and subscribes to newspapers in Urdu and Bengali.

19. There is a good strategy for the development of ICT and resources are satisfactory. Students have easy access to computers and the Internet. The college's intranet is well designed and provides online access to the library catalogue, web links, subject gateways, resource directories and an email service to staff and students. In most curriculum areas, however, ILT for teaching and learning is underdeveloped.

20. The quality of the accommodation is mixed. General classrooms are good in the newest buildings, but much of the teaching takes place in older buildings where many of the rooms are in need of refurbishment. Some rooms are too small for the classes using them, or are inappropriate for the learning activity that takes place in them. Attractive displays of students' work enhance some dull areas of the college. Rooms in engineering, construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy are drab and lack visual stimulation. The recreational and social facilities for students are limited. The main college refectory is cramped at peak times and is in need of refurbishment. Managers are preparing a new accommodation strategy which seeks to rectify accommodation problems and responds to the changing demands of the curriculum.

21. Access for people with restricted mobility is good. All entrances have electronic-opening doors and chair lifts have been installed in the main building. The student advice and guidance service and student common room have been relocated to attractive accommodation. There is a nursery on campus with 38 places and a holiday club operates during the Easter and summer vacations.

22. Working in partnership with the local authority, the college has extended its work in the community by managing a community learning centre in an area of the town identified for regeneration. Learning resources include a well-equipped ICT suite, a fitness studio and a bistro which is used as a realistic work environment for catering students. There is also nursery provision.

23. There is no overall policy for the assessment and monitoring of students' progress. Assessment practice and standards vary across the college. In many areas, the standard of assessment is satisfactory or good, but there are significant weaknesses in others. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, assessment is well planned and reviewed regularly. There is a good number of work-based assessors in hair salons who are used effectively to assess work-based learners in the work place. Feedback to students gives adequate detail for learners to improve. The verification of assessment practice varies considerably across the curriculum areas. It is weak in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in health and social care. The internal verification procedures are not effective.

24. There are frequent and effective reviews of students' progress on some courses. In other curriculum areas, however, reviews are not always carried out. Targets for students are often too vague to help students manage their learning or for effective review of progress. There is a general failure to link the review of students' progress with individual learning plans. Many learning plans are not individualised or updated as students' progress. Parents or guardians are not routinely informed of the progress of students aged 16 to 18. The overall progress of modern apprentices is not monitored or recorded well.

25. The college has made a strategic decision to focus on vocational education and training. However, the provision in some areas is narrow. For example, in travel and sports studies, there is no level 1 provision. For 2002/03, the college introduced a new foundation programme in service and craft industries. The aim is to cater for students with low prior attainment to enable them to sample a number of vocational areas whilst working to improve their basic and personal skills. In

construction, engineering and care and childcare, there are good progression routes from foundation to advanced level programmes. Work-based learning is available in eight of the LSCs areas of learning. There is no general enrichment programme for students across the college. Some curriculum areas such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, catering, and performing arts provide course related enrichment activities for their students.

26. Modular programmes and a variety of attendance patterns in some curriculum areas allow students to plan their learning at times to meet their individual needs and personal circumstances. The college offers a good range of information technology (IT) short programmes on its main site, at the Kirkley Centre, and for local employers. The college has little community-based provision.

27. Purposeful links with local schools have enabled the college to run successful taster programmes for pupils in Years 10 and 11. An attractive prospectus has encouraged 220 pupils to embark on a series of 10-week taster courses in 2002/03. Over 50% of students on taster courses in 2001/02 progressed to a course at the college. In addition, many pupils attend college one day a week and work towards vocational qualifications in many curriculum areas.

28. Students have ready access to a comprehensive range of guidance and welfare services. The guidance and information centre provides detailed information about courses and the range of support services available to students. Staff in the centre are well informed, although none has an appropriate qualification in guidance. The system of referral of enquiries and applications to course tutors in the college is generally effective, although there are instances of students being placed on the wrong level of course.

29. The college aims to assess all full-time, and most part-time, students at the beginning of their course to determine their key skills level and to see if they need additional help with literacy or numeracy. Some part-time students, and those joining programmes late or after the start of the academic year, miss the initial assessment and do not receive the extra support which they may need. Personal tutors and staff from the study support team liaise to organise additional support for students. The take up of additional support is good. Much of the learning support is effective and valued by students. Some curriculum areas such as catering and hairdressing have vocationally-trained learning support assistants. Specialist support for learners with dyslexia is limited. The accommodation used for the study skills workshop is inadequate. There is no drop-in facility and no learning support staff in the study skills workshop to help students.

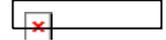
30. In some curriculum areas, induction is well planned for full-time students and helps them settle into their studies quickly. For many part-time students, induction does not provide a useful introduction to the college. Students who start their course after the beginning of the year do not routinely receive any induction. Most work-based learners receive a good induction to their programme.

31. The quality of tutorials varies widely. In some curriculum areas, for example, hairdressing and beauty, and care and childcare, students meet regularly with tutors, draw up action plans and receive routine reviews of progress which provide pointers for future improvement. In some other areas, tutorials are poorly organised, occur infrequently and provide little support for students. Individual learning plans are used in only a minority of curriculum areas. Individual target setting is unsatisfactory in many areas. The targets set are often imprecise and lack clear deadlines for completion. In some cases, targets relate to a whole group of students and do not focus on the work of the individual. Many reviews for work-based trainees are poor. The college has no policy of providing written reports for all students, and has not organised parents' evenings. There is no tutorial entitlement for part-time students, though many receive good support from their teachers. Attendance is poor on some courses. Absences and poor punctuality are not always routinely followed up.

32. Careers guidance for students aged 16 to 18 is being developed through the Connexions partnership, but many students are unaware of the Connexions presence in the college. A few tutors have invited Connexions staff to talk to students in tutorials. Most students applying to higher education (HE) institutions are generally well supported. The college has no capacity to offer adult careers guidance and these students are referred to the county council's careers adviser. The

college's careers library is based in the study skills workshop. It is not regularly staffed and students make little use of this facility. The college has no central record of the destinations of its students.

## Leadership and management



33. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection by the Further Education Funding Council in February 2000, the college has been through a period of financial and management instability. The financial position of the college deteriorated when the college failed to meet its recruitment targets. A recovery plan was agreed with the local LSC in June 2001. A strategic options review was carried out in 2001 and a new principal was appointed in March 2002. Since then, the college has been restructured. New senior and middle-management appointments have been made. Several managers, including the two vice principals, have only been in post since January 2003. The new senior management team has set a clear direction for the college. Management processes and quality assurance systems have been revised. Several weaknesses identified during the last inspection remain, but the clarity of strategic plans, the accuracy of management information and the financial position of the college have improved.

34. The strategic planning process is thorough. Governors, senior managers and staff revised the college mission in July 2002 to focus on improving courses and services for students, meeting the needs of the local community and maintaining financial stability. They consulted widely and used a range of information to identify clear strategic objectives and set targets to measure and monitor progress made. Senior managers have specific performance targets linked to the college's objectives. Progress towards these targets is reviewed and reported to governors each term. The college met its financial and recruitment targets in 2001/02 and is making expected progress towards meeting them for 2002/03.

35. Management information is accurate and reliable. Since the last inspection, the college has developed reliable systems for collecting, checking the validity of and reporting on, student data. All teachers and managers receive weekly reports on student numbers and withdrawals; staff have access to on-line data used to monitor student recruitment, and retention and achievement rates. The information is used by managers to judge the quality of provision and inform planning. In some curriculum areas, however, staff make insufficient use of data to monitor and evaluate their work.

36. Communications are generally good. Staff understand the new management structure, the revised mission statement and the college's strategic objectives. Regular schedules of meetings, the intranet and e-mails are used to inform and consult with staff. A weekly newsletter keeps staff informed of news from all areas of college. The principal holds regular 'surgeries', invites groups of staff for informal discussions and frequently visits groups of staff unable to attend whole college meetings. Staff describe senior managers as approachable and willing to listen and respond to their views. Links with the community are effective. The college is involved in an increased flexibility project and offers vocational courses for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils. A high proportion of these pupils progress to courses at the college. The college is also involved in raising skills in the workplace through providing ICT, management and basic skills training for local employers.

37. Curriculum management is weak in some areas. A small number of curriculum areas do not promote an adequate range of courses to allow students to progress from foundation to advanced level. In many curriculum areas, courses are not managed well. Curriculum development plans contain too little detail of actions to be taken to improve the provision. Plans do not identify milestones against which to monitor progress and timescales for the completion of the action. In a small number of curriculum areas, there are part-time teachers who are not appropriately qualified. Work-based learning is not managed well. Some managers are not aware of the number of apprentices on programme. Learning plans for apprentices are not always individualised. The progress review process is not thorough. Some apprentices do not have clear training and assessment targets. Employers are not all aware of the stage of training apprentices have reached.

The teaching, assessment and management of key skills for full-time students and modern apprentices are inadequate.

38. Strategies to improve teaching are not effective. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is below that of similar colleges. The grades awarded to teaching in lessons for students aged 16 to 18 is significantly below the national average for all age groups. Too much teaching is unsatisfactory, dull and uninspiring. Lesson observations carried out by college staff do not focus on the progress that students make. Not all teachers have been observed. The quality of teaching has not recently been discussed at senior management team meetings.

39. The college has not made progress in improving the pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on programmes at level 1 and level 3. The pass rates on these courses are below the national averages for colleges of a similar type.

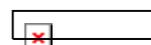
40. The arrangements for assuring the quality of provision are not effective. All curriculum areas review their courses at least twice a term during course team meetings and more formally through the mid-year and end of year course review process. These reviews lack rigour. Many course reviews are superficial. Action plans contain too little detail. Heads of centre receive and discuss course reviews with curriculum teams but they do not always take appropriate action to improve the quality and consistency of reviews. Students' views inform course reviews but students are not clear about the action taken to address the issues that they have identified. The quality assurance arrangements for work-based learning are not effective.

41. Governors are knowledgeable about the college and the regeneration strategies within the Lowestoft area. They bring a wide range of skills to the college and are appropriately involved in reviewing the college mission and updating the strategic plan. They use their detailed knowledge of the college and community partners to inform the planning. Governors regularly monitor the progress the college is making towards its strategic objectives and the targets set within the plan. They review their own performance and have made improvements to the composition of the governing body and the operation of governors committees as a result of the review.

42. The college has a range of policies on promoting equal opportunities. They are currently being updated to incorporate race relations. There is no equal opportunities or race relations action plan. A good disability statement has been produced and the college complies with the requirements of the disability discrimination act. Buildings have been adapted to meet the needs of wheelchair users. The composition of the student profile is analysed and the college works hard to address gender imbalance on courses. The implementation of the equal opportunities policy is not monitored effectively.

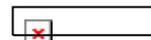
43. The college generally manages resources to support learning in a satisfactory way. In a small number of curriculum areas, poor resources detract from the quality of the provision. Financial management is satisfactory. Systems for budgeting, financial management and control in curriculum areas are well understood. The average class size is below the average. The quality of the provision across the curriculum areas is inconsistent. The quality of teaching and learning for students aged 16 to 18 is well below the national averages. For students in this age group on level 3 programmes, pass rates have been consistently below the national averages for the last three years. Overall, the college does not provide value for money for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 programmes.

## **Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas**



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## **Construction**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on electrical installations level 1
  
- good standards of practical teaching
  
- good resources for practical teaching
  
- excellent links with employers, the community and schools
  
- wide range of courses with progression opportunities.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor management of key skills
  
- poor health and safety practice in painting and decorating and carpentry and joinery
  
- weak management of work-based learning
  
- insufficient use of ILT for teaching and learning.

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

44. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time construction courses from foundation to advanced level. These include craft courses in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, and electrical installation. At the time of the inspection, there were 512 students, of whom just over half were aged 16 to 18. Nearly three-quarters of students were on part-time courses. Almost 12% of students were on work-based learning programmes.

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

45. The retention and pass rates are generally satisfactory. They are particularly good on electrical installation at level 1, well above the national average. On electrical installation level 2, the pass rates were low at 50% in 2001 and 2002, but they were still above the national average which is also low. The retention and pass rates are good for bricklaying and painting and decorating level 3 but only a small number of students are enrolled on these courses. Some 70% of advanced modern apprentices complete their framework. However, the achievement, of foundation modern apprentices is low with just 25% being successful. The progression rate from full-time programmes into employment and foundation modern apprenticeships is good and most students progress well relative to their prior attainment. A significant number of school pupils who attend courses at the college progress to NVQ programmes.

46. The standard of students' work in practical lessons is good and some students produce work to industrial standards early in their programme. For example, in brickwork, the full-time intermediate construction students built a house front with door and window openings together with paths and garden wall features. Students have been successful in craft competitions with a brickwork student gaining second place in the 2002 skillbuild olympics.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installations	1	No. of starts	*	81	57
		% retention	*	88	91
		% pass rate	*	81	95
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	17	26	11
		% retention	88	73	64
		% pass rate	64	89	86
NVQ painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	23	13	7
		% retention	91	38	85
		% pass rate	44	100	50
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installations	2	No. of starts	17	36	45
		% retention	88	94	88
		% pass rate	21	50	50

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

\* course not running

***Quality of education and training***

47. Overall, the majority of teaching is satisfactory, but in practical lessons across all crafts, it is good. Students are well motivated and display a good knowledge of the technical features of their work. They are able to work without direct supervision at a pace that suits them individually. The work produced is of a good industrial standard. In the better theory lessons, well thought-out learning objectives are shared with students. The sessions are well planned with a range of teaching strategies to engage students and maintain their interest. In the less effective lessons, objectives are poorly defined, few checks on learning take place and students are insufficiently challenged. There is little interaction with some students who remain passive throughout the lessons. There is insufficient sharing of good teaching practice and the use of ILT is minimal.

48. Training programmes are well developed with students learning good practical skills. Students' progress is recorded well during practical work using job record sheets linked to the NVQ qualification. Where project work does not cover the full range of the NVQ, students spend time with

a major, national, house-building company and a range of local building companies to enable them to gain work experience to complete their NVQ units. This applies particularly to the carpentry NVQ units in roofing.

49. Key skills have not been effectively implemented. Some students are unsure about the key skills requirements of their programmes and many think key skills are irrelevant to their work. Many learners' key skills are being developed in occupational areas, but they are not effectively monitored and recorded. Some students are repeating work they had covered during their secondary education. In an unsatisfactory session observed by the inspectors, objectives did not identify clear outcomes, there were few checks on learning and the tutor had no records of students' progress. There was limited student involvement and little effective learning took place. Students' portfolios are poor with a range of incomplete learning packs which students are unable to relate to their main programme of study.

50. There is a good range of specialist equipment in all occupational areas. Some workshops, because of their shape and layout, have blind spots that make it difficult for tutors to observe all students. In painting and decorating and carpentry and joinery workshops, students work without appropriate protective footwear. Some classrooms are too small, poorly decorated and poorly furnished. Some rooms have inadequate ventilation and little natural light. Some workshops are filled to capacity and students have limited space to work. In one electrical installations practical session, there were 23 students with one lecturer. Most workshops are well supported by technicians, some of whom are following teaching qualifications.

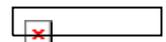
51. Links with the local community and schools are excellent. The department works with a number of local schools and pupils attend vocational courses at the college. Recently, in conjunction with Suffolk Heritage and a local housing association, NVQ carpentry and joinery students worked on the refurbishment and renovation of three Victorian houses. Currently, students are engaged on a major building refurbishment and a number of kitchen installation projects in the community. Links with employers are good, including a major national house builder and a number of local building companies. These companies provide site-based opportunities for students to complete parts of their NVQ qualification.

52. Work-based learning is poorly managed. Learners' progress reviews lack rigour and have few realistic NVQ-related targets. Some progress reviews are missed. Employers have little knowledge or understanding of the NVQ process. There is little co-ordination of on and off-the-job training and there are insufficient checks on the quality of learning in the work place.

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

53. Management of some aspects of the provision is weak. There are regular course team meetings and course reviews. Information from these meetings is used to inform the self-assessment process. All staff have computers and e-mail is used to assist communication across the college and in the department. Staff appraisal is used to inform staff development. Currently, only one third of the construction staff have been appraised. Managers make effective use of management information to analyse performance on courses. There has been recent high staff turnover in brickwork, carpentry and joinery and painting and decorating. Newly appointed staff have recent industrial experience but limited teaching experience. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the strengths of the area but understates some of the weaknesses

### **Engineering**



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on NVQ level 2 engineering manufacture
- good practical work in yacht and boat building
- good workplace training opportunities.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on level 1 motor vehicle
- low pass rates on level 2 yacht and boat building
- poor teaching on full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18
- ineffective initial assessment
- poor curriculum management
- slow progress towards framework achievement
- poor management of key skills.

### **Scope of provision**

54. There is a wide range of engineering provision, including training in the workplace. Courses are offered from foundation to advanced level in mechanical, electronic, motor vehicle, welding and maritime engineering. A small range of evening classes allows employed students to update their skills whilst attaining national qualifications. At the time of the inspection, there were 239 students, of whom a third attended full time. Approximately half the learners were adults. There were also 46 work-based learners on foundation modern apprenticeships and 35 on advanced modern apprenticeships. In motor vehicle, there are links with schools to work with disaffected pupils. A few

of these students have progressed to courses at the college.

### **Achievement and standards**

55. The retention rates are generally at or about the national averages. There are high pass rates on NVQ level 2 engineering manufacture. In 1999/2000, all learners who completed their course achieved the qualification and the pass rates remained well above the national average in subsequent years. The pass rates on the City and Guilds 2450-3 yacht and boat-building and ship joinery part 2 programme are poor, although most learners achieve part of the qualification. The pass rates on motor vehicle level 1 awards are consistently low, well below the national averages. Modern apprentices make slow progress. Only 4% of advanced modern apprentices who started their programme between 1997 and 1999 completed within the planned duration. Just 1% of foundation modern apprenticeship frameworks started during the same period were completed on time but 30% of these learners achieved their NVQ. In most cases, key skills attainment of learners is low. Student attendance is slightly below the national average.

56. The practical work of some students is of a good standard. Students on the yacht and boat-building qualifications courses produce practical work of a high standard throughout the three-year programme, designing and building sailing craft. Two welding students successfully progressed to the final of the national skillweld competition in 2002. One of these students was awarded second place in the competition. A statue inspired by Lowry's artwork, designed to demonstrate the various skills used in the welding industry, was built by the finalists and is to be displayed outside the Lowry museum in Manchester.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
City and Guilds 6956 progression award: motor vehicle servicing and repair (light vehicle)	1	No. of starts	*	11	22
		% retention	*	64	59
		% pass rate	*	43	54
City and Guilds 2450-1 yacht and boat building and ship joinery part 1	1	No. of starts	*	8	20
		% retention	*	63	90
		% pass rate	*	80	67
City and Guilds 2450-3 yacht and boat building and ship joinery part 2	2	No. of starts	*	10	15
		% retention	*	70	87
		% pass rate	*	43	0
NVQ engineering manufacture	2	No. of starts	20	18	42
		% retention	95	83	69
		% pass rate	100	87	90
National certificate engineering	3	No. of starts	21	28	10
		% retention	76	71	90
		% pass rate	80	94	77

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

\* course not running

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

57. The quality of teaching and learning on courses for full-time students aged 16 to 18 is poor. Too

much of the teaching is unsatisfactory. Most of the teaching on courses for adult students is good or better. Schemes of work and lesson plans vary in style, level of detail and usefulness. Many theory lessons are uninspiring and do not contain sufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all learners. There is often insufficient variety of activities, few checks on learning and an over-reliance on undirected questions. Overhead transparencies and handouts are not used effectively. The teaching of key skills is poorly planned and managed. Key skills are not vocationally focused and students do not understand their relevance. Achievement of key skills is low. Some students are removed from vocational classes, disrupting their studies, in order to address shortfalls in their key skills portfolios.

58. Teachers give good support to individual learners. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate high levels of technical competence and form effective working relationships with students. They enthuse students with well-planned practical projects. For example, in boat-building practical lessons, students participated enthusiastically demonstrating high levels of industrially relevant skills. The high level of practical ability gained by students is valued by major local employers, who offer or support a wide variety of additional training opportunities.

59. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. There are, however, too few qualified assessors and internal verifiers for some areas of work. General accommodation is uninspiring. There is satisfactory specialist equipment in many areas but much of the hardware in computer-aided design is inadequate. There is limited equipment in motor vehicle, which affects practical lessons. The book stocks and journals in the study centre are adequate.

60. Assessment feedback to students is insufficiently detailed. The written feedback to students on their practical work tends to be confined to tracking documents retained by staff. Student progress is not sufficiently reported to employers or parents. The progress of modern apprentices is not adequately monitored or reported.

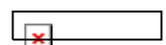
61. All full-time students receive a basic skills assessment but this is not always effective in leading to appropriate additional support. There is no initial assessment for many part-time students. Learners often lack sufficient numeracy skills to undertake tasks in theory lessons and they do not receive adequate support. Additional timetabled-support sessions have recently been introduced for national certificate students after they all failed their mathematics assessment.

62. Most student reviews do not have sufficiently detailed action plans or targets. Individual learning plans are often not updated or discussed. Many contain dates that are already overdue. Most employers are not effectively involved in student reviews. Students' feedback is collected and analysed but is not used sufficiently to influence improvements. Student progress is monitored but is not always adequately recorded. Tutorials are offered on full-time programmes but not on most part-time courses. Many students do not appreciate or attend tutorial sessions. Student attendance and punctuality is not checked frequently enough.

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

63. Leadership and management are poor. Course teams have little understanding of the performance of the provision against the national average. Targets for retention and achievement rates are not used to monitor performance. Course reviews are infrequent, ineffective and do not adequately inform the self-assessment process. Course planning and organisation is poor in some areas. There are few course team meetings and formal communications are poor. Internal verifiers and assessors do not routinely meet to plan or standardise assessment. Staff appraisal has only recently been reintroduced and does not lead to effective staff development. Annual classroom observations have not taken place in the current academic year. The management of work-based learning is poor.

### **Information and communication technology**



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

**Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates on AVCE course
  
- high pass rates on level 1 programmes for adults
  
- good management of learning on flexible courses for adults
  
- responsiveness to the needs of the community and employers.

**Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on intermediate GNVQ course
  
- low retention and pass rates on IBT courses
  
- much teaching does not meet the needs of students aged 16 to 18
  
- weak management of the 16 to 18 curriculum.

**Scope of provision**

64. The college offers a good range of courses from introductory to advanced level. Over the last year about 800 adults have been enrolled on a range of short and one-year part-time programmes from entry to intermediate level. Courses include Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), European computer driving licence (ECDL) and Open College Network (OCN) introductory courses. There are 23 students on the full-time GNVQ Intermediate course, 45 students on the AVCE in ICT and 18 students on the part-time national certificate in computing.

**Achievement and standards**

65. The pass rates are high for adults on the level 1 computer literacy classes, well above the national average for the past three years. The retention and pass rates on the intermediate and advanced CLAIT are less satisfactory. On GNVQ intermediate courses, the pass rates have been

below the national average for the past two years. The retention rate is also low on the GNVQ intermediate course. The retention rate is high on the AVCE and although the pass rate declined in 2002 it is still above the national average. The progression rate from entry-level provision to CLAIT is high at 90%. Some 25% of students progressed from the GNVQ intermediate to AVCE courses in 2002.

66. Most students demonstrate an appropriate level of practical skills. Attendance on adult courses varies and the attendance and punctuality of some AVCE students is poor. Overall, the attendance in the curriculum area is below the national average.

67. The department works well with local employers. Approximately 120 employees are involved in IT training at the college or on employers' premises. Short taster and introductory courses in college and the community attract a good number of learners. Around 90% of these learners progress to CLAIT courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT (one year)	1	No. of starts	225	195	124
		% retention	93	90	79
		% pass rate	72	74	83
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	13	16	27
		% retention	77	94	74
		% pass rate	70	40	55
Integrated business technology	2	No. of starts	55	53	51
		% retention	78	72	76
		% pass rate	53	66	64
Integrated business technology	3	No. of starts	15	12	14
		% retention	67	64	64
		% pass rate	56	29	44
AVCE IT	3	No. of starts	*	24	37
		% retention	*	88	86
		% pass rate	*	86	63

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

\* course not running

***Quality of education and training***

68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers make good use of digital projectors to demonstrate functions. In one lesson, on the creation of macros, questions were directed to each learner to draw on previous knowledge and check learning. In a lesson for adults in a local community centre, the teacher created a relaxed atmosphere and enabled students to develop confidence in using computers. In poorer lessons, activities are not planned to meet students' needs. Variety in teaching methods and style is lacking. In workshops, some students become frustrated waiting for the teacher's attention. Teachers rely too much on network resources. They do not set clear targets for assignment completion or indicate how better grades or key skills could be achieved. In two lessons, students could not explain the function of a primary key in their

database. For some lessons, two groups are taught in the same classroom, which inhibits teachers from giving presentations. AVCE students do not understand the relevance of key skills and attendance at lessons is poor.

69. Staff are suitably qualified and have appropriate vocational qualifications or experience. Many are working towards teaching and key skills qualifications. A small number of staff are inexperienced. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning. There are very good workbooks for learners on part-time computer courses and good resources on the intranet for full-time students. The slowness of the network and the number and reliability of printers sometimes inhibit learning. There are few CD drives. There is not enough technician support for students attending evening classes. Computer rooms are frequently too hot.

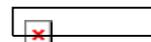
70. The monitoring and recording of students' progress are satisfactory. All students complete individual progress sheets. There is regular monitoring of students' progress on part-time courses and this is discussed at course team meetings. Reports on progress, attendance and achievements are sent to employers. Feedback on marked work is detailed and constructive. For some AVCE and GNVQ intermediate programmes monitoring is too informal.

71. Support for students is satisfactory. All full-time students have a basic and key skills diagnostic test. Adult learners complete a checklist to assess their prior experience of ICT. Learning support is offered individually or within key skills sessions. Learning support, however, is not monitored consistently. Students find the tutorial process helpful. Targets are agreed, monitored and recorded. Target setting does not always challenge learners to achieve higher grades. Poor attendance and punctuality is not systematically followed up.

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

72. The management of part-time courses is good. Course files are comprehensive. There are few opportunities for staff to share good practice. Course team meetings vary in frequency and not all address student progress. Course team leaders do not set targets for retention and achievement rates. Staff appraisal is not used effectively to inform staff development activities. On programmes for adults, staff are involved in the course reviews which are comprehensive and accurate in their judgements. Actions are taken in response to student evaluations, such as improved written feedback on assignments. Not all staff are involved in the self-assessment process and the report lacks rigour. Some actions have been taken to address issues raised, such as the refurbishment of some rooms and the introduction of level 1 and level 4 courses.

### **Hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching in practical lessons
  
- high retention rates on most courses

course

- o good links with schools, the community and industry.

### **Weaknesses**

- o low pass rates on AVCE travel and tourism and the intermediate certificate in retail travel operations
- o poor curriculum planning
- o insufficient resources for travel and tourism.

### **Scope of provision**

73. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses in hospitality, catering, leisure, tourism and travel. Courses in hospitality include those leading to NVQ levels 1 to 3. Courses in leisure, tourism and travel include those leading to the diploma in travel operations (leisure travel) and travel operations (business travel), ABTAC primary and advanced, air cabin-crew qualifications and the AVCE travel and tourism and progression awards at level 1 and 2 for the sports and leisure industries. There are approximately 145 students enrolled on full-time courses with some 200 on part-time courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

74. The retention rates on most courses have been above the national average for each of the last three years. The pass and retention rates of students on the ABTAC primary certificate are high. In 2001, two students on the airfares and ticketing course gained awards for achieving the highest examination grades in the country. The pass rates on the AVCE travel and tourism, the NVQ level 2 serving food and drink, and the intermediate certificate in retail travel operations have been well below the national averages for the last three years.

75. Most students on hospitality and catering courses have good professional cookery and food and drink service skills. Students on the NVQ catering courses produce work of a good standard and perform well in practical working situations. Students work well in teams in the college's kitchens, restaurant and bistro. Good attention is paid to health and safety and hygiene in practical lessons. Students on all courses develop good social skills which prepare them well for employment. The standard of students' written work is mostly satisfactory. Students' portfolios are well organised and presented. Attendance and punctuality at most lessons is satisfactory. Overall attendance, however, is slightly below the national average.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, catering and leisure and tourism, 2000 to 2002**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
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NVQ food preparation and cooking	1	No. of starts	36	24	7
		% retention	94	96	86
		% pass rate	73	100	100
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	71	24	70
		% retention	86	79	87
		% pass rate	70	84	70
Intermediate certificate in retail travel operations	2	No. of starts	33	24	34
		% retention	85	92	79
		% pass rate	4	0	53
ABTAC primary certificate	2	No. of starts	12	35	18
		% retention	83	97	89
		% pass rate	100	97	100
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	30	23
		% retention	*	90	76
		% pass rate	*	41	38

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

\* course not running

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

76. Much of the teaching in practical lessons is good. Teachers provide supportive guidance to students to help them improve their cooking skills and restaurant service techniques. In some theory lessons, however, tasks are not demanding enough and fail to challenge students sufficiently. Lessons are generally well planned with a good mix of teaching and learning activities. Aims and objectives of lessons are clear. In practical kitchen and restaurant lessons, students are well briefed. Job roles are well defined and students are clear about what they are required to do. During a busy restaurant dinner service, students worked competently and confidently preparing and serving flambé dishes to customers. In a sports lesson, students gained good industrial experience running a practical water-safety activity in the local swimming pool. The teaching in a British sign language lesson for students on the air cabin-crew course was well paced and students' understanding was checked regularly.

77. Teachers hold appropriate professional and teaching qualifications and have up-to-date industrial experience. On the main college site there is an adequate range of specialist catering equipment but some of it is old and the restaurant is in need of refurbishment. Other teaching accommodation is satisfactory or good. The Kirkley Centre has a well-resourced bistro and kitchen. For travel and tourism courses there are insufficient up-to-date reference materials and textbooks. Not enough use is made of ICT for teaching and learning. There are well-established links with local schools and pupils are able to work towards vocational qualifications. Hospitality and catering students gain good industrial experience by working at prestigious events such as air shows and film award ceremonies. Links with the hospitality and travel industries are good.

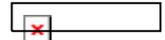
78. The assessment of students is well planned. Students have individual assessment plans and targets to work towards. Students' work is marked fairly. Most teachers provide constructive comments on students' marked work and give clear direction to students on what they need to do to improve. Internal verification procedures are generally sound. Students appreciate the academic and personal support they receive from their teachers. Learning support assistants work effectively with vocational teachers to provide students with a good level of support in practical and theory catering lessons. Students' progress is carefully monitored and personal records are generally well

maintained. Absences are routinely followed-up and poor student behaviour is appropriately challenged and corrected. There are no full-time level 1 courses in travel and tourism. The narrow range of hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism courses at level 3 limits the progression opportunities available to students. The teaching time allocated to the AVCE double award in travel and tourism is insufficient to meet the needs of most students on the course.

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

79. Standard documentation is used for course management and course files are well maintained. Teaching teams meet regularly and communications across the curriculum area are good. Action has been taken to monitor student retention and pass rates more closely. Managers have set targets for improvement and progress towards them is being monitored. Course reviews identify weaknesses in the provision and in most cases teaching teams are taking appropriate action.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- consistently high pass rates
  
- high standard of students' practical skills
  
- good teaching and learning in most lessons
  
- good range of enrichment activities
  
- effective tutorials and support for students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on level 1 and level 2 hairdressing in 2002
  
- weak monitoring of the progress of work-based learners

- some inappropriate accommodation.

### **Scope of provision**

80. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty and sports therapies. Courses allow progression from NVQ level 1 to level 2 in hairdressing, and from NVQ level 2 to level 3 in beauty therapy. There is an extensive range of complementary therapy programmes including holistic therapies, reflexology, aromatherapy, cosmetic make-up, manicure and pedicure, body massage, Indian head massage, and sports therapy and massage. There are 121 full-time hairdressing and beauty therapy students and 258 complementary therapy and other part-time students. Two thirds of the students are adults. There are 15 work-based learners on foundation modern apprenticeships, working towards NVQ level 2 in hairdressing and key skills qualifications. Most of the students in beauty therapy are female, however, 12% of sports therapy students are male.

### **Achievement and standards**

81. There is good achievement on most courses in hair, beauty and complementary therapies. The pass rates are consistently high, well above the national averages on the majority of courses. The pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and NVQ level 3 beauty therapy were 100% in 2002. The retention rates on NVQ level 1 and level 2 hairdressing fell to below the national averages in 2002. College data for the current academic year indicate improved retention rates on these programmes. Attendance is above the national average at 81%. Achievement of the foundation modern apprenticeship framework is low. There has been a lack of emphasis on the need to achieve key skills.

82. Most students display a higher level of practical attainment than that expected for the stage and level of their course. Portfolios and assignments, together with responses to oral questioning, indicate that most learners have a good knowledge and understanding of key concepts. Challenging opportunities are available to students. For example, this year a beauty therapy student won at regional and national skills competitions and will represent England at the world's skill event in 2005. Students participate in a good range of enrichment activities.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	25	29	27
		% retention	100	97	59
		% pass rate	100	89	88
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	36	44	17
		% retention	64	93	65
		% pass rate	88	95	100
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	33	24	30
		% retention	70	83	73
		% pass rate	87	100	77
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	10	10	19
		% retention	100	90	84
		% pass rate	88	100	100

NVQ body massage	3	No. of starts	24	29	26
		% retention	79	79	92
		% pass rate	95	100	100
Diplomas in reflexology and aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	27	20	25
		% retention	78	90	84
		% pass rate	100	89	100
Diploma in holistic therapies	3	No. of starts	23	19	20
		% retention	83	89	100
		% pass rate	89	94	95

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

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

83. Teaching and learning are good or better in most lessons. Lessons are planned to take account of individual student needs. Course teams have developed students' profiles that indicate their preferred learning styles. In a theory lesson in hairdressing, activities effectively checked underpinning knowledge and related learning to the work place. Questioning was directed to ensure that all students were engaged in the lesson. The questions were phrased to be challenging to the more able students and to encourage weaker students and build their confidence. In a holistic therapies lesson, the emphasis was on active learning. Learners completed a series of tasks in small groups and discussed the outcomes in a whole group setting. This was followed by practical application to relate the theory to practice when working with clients.

84. Teachers work effectively with students with a wide range of prior attainment. Group work, discussion and question and answer sessions are used to promote learning. Students gain in confidence and are motivated to succeed. Demonstration techniques are effective and clear explanations relate theory to practice. Real working environments are created within practical lessons and good use is made of teachers' commercial experiences to illustrate key points in theory lessons. Little use is made of learning packages to encourage students to take control of their own learning. ILT is limited to key skills IT and completion of some assignments in beauty and complementary therapies.

85. Teachers have appropriate commercial qualifications and relevant experience. Specialist accommodation provides a real working environment for learners but it is in need of refurbishment. There is some inappropriate use of accommodation. For example, a group of 15 students in a small hairdressing salon were undertaking cutting and working too close to each other creating a health and safety issue. A practical beauty therapy lesson on pedicure was delivered in a classroom. There were no hygiene facilities, learners were using ordinary chairs and ventilation was poor for using beauty chemicals.

86. There are effective assessment procedures. Course tutors carefully monitor students' progress through their portfolios. In work-based learning, all employers hold assessor awards and carry out assessments in the work place. The initial assessment of students does not influence assessment planning and individual learning plans are not linked to the review process in work-based learning. The internal verification process does not ensure that verifiers record decisions in a structured format.

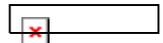
87. The flexible range of programmes meets local needs. The needs of those with childcare commitments are addressed through individual-negotiated timetables. Family-friendly courses start at 9.30am and a gateway course in hairdressing only runs in the mornings. Students can select a range of modules to create courses appropriate to their own needs and at times to suit their personal circumstances. Support for students is good, particularly for those with learning difficulties. Weekly group tutorials focus on personal ability in relation to the wider key skills of working with others,

improving own learning and problem solving.

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

88. The curriculum area is well managed. Teamwork is effective and communication is good. There is a commitment to continuous improvement and students' performance is monitored regularly. Curriculum development is shared within the team and all teachers are actively involved in reviewing and evaluating courses and the effectiveness of the curriculum. Action to address weaknesses has been effective. For example, a revised approach to the delivery of key skills to improve achievement for work-based learning has been successful and led to most of the foundation modern apprentices completing their portfolios early.

### **Health and social care and childcare**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on many courses
- good development of students' critical and evaluative skills
- effective support for students
- good progression to further study, related employment and professional training.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- declining retention on some courses in 2002
- poor assessment and internal verification on NVQ courses
- low attendance at many lessons
- insufficiently clear learning objectives and challenge in many lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

89. The college offers a good variety of full-time and part-time early years and health and social care programmes ranging from foundation level to level 4. These include a foundation level course in care and childcare and an intermediate level course in practical care and childcare skills. In health and social care, there are NVQ level 2 and level 3 in care and NVQ level 4 in residential care management. NVQ level 2 and level 3 is offered in early years. Also offered is the national diploma and certificate in early years care and education, the AVCE health and social care, NVQ level 3 in oral health, counselling and sign language programmes. Progression is possible to the higher national certificate and higher national diploma in childhood studies.

### **Achievement and standards**

90. Pass rates on many courses are high and have been consistently well above the national averages for the past three years. The most outstanding are the foundation in care and childcare and the practical care and childcare skills courses, with pass rates over 30% above the national averages. The diploma in childcare and education and its predecessor, the national in diploma nursery nursing, have pass rates of 93%, 100% and 83% in the last three years, well above the national average of 75%. The AVCE health and social care has achieved better pass rates than its predecessor and is well above the national average. An exception to this pattern is the national diploma in childhood studies and its successor, the national diploma in early years care and education. The pass rate dropped from 93% in 2000 to 58% the following year. Although the pass rate improved to 79% in 2002, it is still 10% below the national average. The retention rates for 2000 and 2001 are generally good but on some courses declined to below the national averages in 2002. The practical care and childcare skills and AVCE health and social care courses fell to just below the national averages in 2002. While retention rates on the foundation in care and childcare remained just above the national average at 75%, in 2002 it dropped from 91% in the previous year.

91. Progression to the next level of study, to related employment and to professional training or HE is good. All students who completed the foundation course moved on to either the practical care and childcare skills or NVQ level 2 in early years. About 90% of students on the intermediate-level course progressed to other courses in the college. Nearly half of those on advanced-level courses progressed to HE or professional training, while a good proportion of the rest found related employment.

92. The majority of students' work is of a satisfactory standard for the level of their course. Students' contributions in several lessons are good. They willingly use their personal experiences, linking them to the theory being taught. In some lessons, students focus well on the task when working in small groups. They produce good work and show the development of analytical skills. The teaching of key skills is becoming more closely linked to students' vocational study and assessment has started to be integrated into vocational assignments. Attendance is well below the national average at 66%.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Foundation in care and childcare	1	No. of starts	20	11	16
		% retention	80	91	75
		% pass rate	85	91	93
Practical care and childcare skills	2	No. of starts	10	40	28
		% retention	80	87	75
		% pass rate	100	73	95
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	18	29	16

early years care and education		% retention	78	69	94
		% pass rate	93	58	79
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	33	20	19
		% retention	97	85	63
		% pass rate	93	100	83
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	19	18	*
		% retention	68	72	*
		% pass rate	69	77	*
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	*	18	20
		% retention	*	83	70
		% pass rate	*	87	79

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

\* course not running

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

93. Most of the teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, there is some imaginative teaching which sustains students' interest and develops their learning more quickly. In one lesson, the teacher used a variety of memory tests to illustrate different theoretical perspectives. Students were enthusiastic and wanted to learn. They related the content to learning acquired in earlier parts of the course and asked searching questions for clarification or to test their understanding. In another lesson, the teacher introduced a new theory on psychosocial development and engaged students in a discussion on its application to child development with particular reference to their experiences on work placement and comparison with other theorists they had covered. Students asked many questions. The teacher gave comprehensive but clear answers and provided further challenge with more questions. The teacher continually checked and reinforced learning. Students worked well in small groups and demonstrated good critical and evaluative skills in their feedback. Many of the other lessons were well planned, but the learning objectives were unclear. Students were given tasks to complete but there was little checking or reinforcement of learning and little challenge to their thinking. Progress was slow with students losing concentration and becoming distracted. Group discussions were sometimes allowed to be diverted from the main focus.

94. There has been a high turnover of teachers in the last year. Recently appointed staff have current vocational experience but few have teaching qualifications and experience. Most teachers do not have appropriate assessor and verifier qualifications for the NVQ provision. Overall, learning resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Classrooms have been enhanced with displays of students' work. A few rooms are rather small for the size of group. Some of the textbooks are dated. Access to computers for teaching and learning is satisfactory.

95. Assessment and internal verification for the NVQ provision is poor. Students on the first intake in 2001/02 were required to produce further evidence and have yet to receive final verification of their work. Assessment on other courses is generally fair and accurate and subject to regular internal verification. Students receive detailed feedback which mostly indicates how they might improve their work to gain higher grades.

96. Links with local health, social-care and early-years providers produce a good range of work placements for students. Regular meetings with placement supervisors help to inform curriculum developments. Membership of local and regional consortia ensures that the college can participate in and influence any new developments in training.

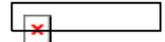
97. Tutorial support is extensive. Individual tutorials are good. Tutors assist students with plans for

future education, training or employment, giving sound careers advice. Students' understanding of how assignments are graded is checked and target dates and grades are negotiated with students. They are made well aware of their progress, and appreciate the accessibility of their tutors and value the support they provide. Punctuality and attendance is monitored carefully but absence is not always followed up quickly.

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

98. Course teams hold regular meetings on curriculum planning and development and to plan work experience for students. Communication across the curriculum area is good. Understanding of the future direction of the provision, however, is insufficiently specific following the recent introduction of skill-based courses to replace more academic ones. There is a lack of formal policies or agreed strategies to address poor attendance and to improve retention rates. Courses are reviewed annually and include a mid-year review. Action plans to address key issues are not specific enough to be able to measure their success. Staff appraisal and performance reviews are still in the early stages of development.

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



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on the diploma in foundation studies in art and design
- high pass rates on the national diploma drama in 2002
- well-designed assignment briefs
- good specialist facilities and equipment
- good academic and personal support for students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on the national diploma in popular music in 2002
- some unsatisfactory teaching for students aged 16 to 18

- narrow range of provision.

### **Scope of provision**

99. The college offers a range of level 3 programmes including the national diploma in popular music, performing arts and drama, and graphic design. The diploma in foundation studies in art and design and a range of certificate and diploma courses in art and design are offered as one-year full-time courses. Two courses are offered at level 2, one in art and design and the other in graphic design. There is no level 1 provision. About 90 students aged 16 to 18 and 20 adults are enrolled on full-time programmes. Progression is available at the college to a degree and higher national and certificate programmes. Most of the provision is located at the main college site, but performing arts and much of the popular music programme takes place at The Seagull Theatre in Lowestoft town centre.

### **Achievement and standards**

100. The retention and pass rates on the diploma in foundation studies in art and design have been consistently above the national averages for the three years to 2002. The retention and pass rates on other courses are more mixed. In 2002, the pass rate was high on the national diploma in drama, but on the national diploma popular music it was well below the national average. Adult students achieve well on level 3 courses and 95% progressed to HE in 2002.

101. The performance skills of national diploma popular music students are good. Many of them perform professionally in bands or work as disc jockeys. They are able to market their own products and services, preserve their copyright and earn royalties. Students produce a high standard of work in their craft skills, such as three-dimensional studies with wood, metal, plastic and ceramics. Demanding standards of precision cutting are set and students aim to assemble their pieces without the use of glue. Photography students produce good standards of photographic print and imaginative interpretation of assignment briefs. Students make good use of IT to illustrate their work. Many who do well with practical work struggle with written assignments. Attendance is well below the national average at 68%. Punctuality is poor on the national diploma popular music course.

### **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>
Diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	17	10	25
		% retention	88	100	88
		% pass rate	100	90	100
National diploma graphic design	3	No. of starts	*	10	21
		% retention	*	90	85
		% pass rate	*	89	77
National diploma popular music	3	No. of starts	34	20	12
		% retention	41	25	73
		% pass rate	69	80	25
National diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	18	11	*
		% retention	78	64	*
		% pass rate	100	71	*

National diploma drama	3	No. of starts	*	*	19
		% retention	*	*	68
		% pass rate	*	*	100

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

\* course not running

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

102. Some teaching in practical lessons is good. The better lessons are well planned. Teachers explain learning outcomes carefully. Teaching and learning materials are well prepared. Teachers set achievable targets for students while demanding high standards of finished work. Tasks set are challenging and encourage students to produce work beyond their expectations but within course requirements. Teachers ask appropriate questions to check students' knowledge and understanding. In a first diploma art and design three-dimensional studies lesson, students made a simple card-creasing tool to exacting standards out of either wood or perspex, to introduce them to the safe use of three different machine tools. There is, however, too much unsatisfactory teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18. Lesson plans do not pay sufficient attention to the individual learning needs of students. Teaching often fails to engage students and they become distracted. Discussion groups are not always well managed. The teaching of key skills is poor

103. There are good specialist facilities and equipment for photography, fashion and textiles, three-dimensional design, ceramics, and graphic design and printmaking. Some accommodation for graphics and art is shabby and poorly lit. Popular music and performing arts students benefit from being able to study in a professional theatre. The recording and performing studios improve students' understanding of industry practice and standards. Some graphic design staff and most popular music staff have recent industrial experience. Many teachers are practising professional musicians and disc jockeys who enrich the students' practical programmes with their references to industry.

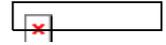
104. Well-designed, detailed assignment briefs accurately relate to professional working practices. Assessment of practical and written assignments is carried out according to the specifications of the examination boards. Teachers provide constructive feedback, particularly on students' practical work, which helps them resolve design problems. In performing arts, assignments are carefully marked, spelling and grammar is corrected and students receive prompt feedback on their work. Following assessment on most courses, actions for improvement are discussed with students but the targets set are not specific enough. Students' progress files are not always completed well.

105. Learning support for students is good. On level 3 courses, many students with good portfolios of work do not have the published academic entry qualifications for the course are nevertheless enrolled. These students receive high levels of academic and personal support and most successfully achieve their qualification. There is good support for students with learning difficulties. A learning support assistant helps students in class and equipment is adapted to meet the needs of individuals. Students progressing to HE receive good guidance and advice.

### **Leadership and management**

106. Management in this area provides clear direction for the provision. Staff are involved in decision making and have a positive attitude to proposals for future developments. Communications across the curriculum area are generally good. Course and programme reviews show a realistic assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment process lacks detailed analysis with regard to specific actions and targets to improve retention and achievement rates. Equal opportunities are not promoted sufficiently.

## Literacy and numeracy



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

### **Strengths**

- good retention rates on entry-level and level 1 literacy and numeracy programmes
- high pass rates on entry-level programmes
- good personal support for students.

### **Weaknesses**

- teaching which does not meet the needs of learners
- insufficient experienced specialist basic skills teachers
- ineffective target-setting and review of students' progress
- inadequate literacy and numeracy support for some learners on vocational courses.

### **Scope of provision**

107. Literacy and numeracy provision is managed by the centre for education and life skills, which includes work-based learning, key skills, discrete literacy and numeracy courses and literacy and numeracy additional learning support. At the time of the inspection, about 180 students on vocational programmes were receiving literacy and numeracy support to help them achieve their vocational or key skills qualification. Approximately 100 students were studying literacy and numeracy as part of their main programme at pre-entry or entry level 1. Nearly 20 work-based learners were receiving literacy and numeracy support. The majority of learners on literacy and/or numeracy programmes are full-time students aged 16 to 18.

### **Achievement and standards**

108. The retention rates are high on one-year entry-level and level 1 literacy and numeracy qualifications and have been significantly above the national averages over the past three years. In

2002, the pass rates on entry-level qualifications in literacy and numeracy were well above the national averages at 85% and 91%, respectively. Learners make good progress on discrete courses and on courses for people with learning disabilities or challenging behaviour. Students develop in confidence and in their ability to learn. Personal and social skills are further developed as a result of the listening and speaking requirements of the literacy core curriculum. Some learners receiving additional learning support make slow progress and do not develop the literacy skills of spelling and punctuation sufficiently to become independent of support. Attendance and punctuality at lessons are good.

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

109. Teaching does not fully meet the needs of all learners. Some lessons are not well planned. Teachers do not always set up systematic spelling and punctuation activities or break tasks down into manageable stages. In many additional learning support lessons, insufficient time is allowed for students to develop and practice their skills. In one lesson, the teacher confused the editing process of writing a job application letter with the drafting process. Students were unclear about the task and were not sure if they were doing spelling work, using a dictionary to extend their vocabulary or devising the content of the letter. Some learners do not have an individual learning plan at an early stage in their courses. Goals and targets in individual learning plans are too general for learners to focus on particular skills and to measure their progress towards these. Differences between learners' needs and abilities are catered for in many group lessons by using the same activity for all with differential amounts of support. Teachers do not devise different tasks around the same subject at levels that individual learners can manage independently. ILT is seldom used to help develop students' literacy or numeracy skills. Classroom management is sometimes poor, with teachers reluctant to move chairs or ask learners to move to facilitate group work or reduce noise disturbance. Most teachers have good techniques to help learners who find discussion difficult to develop verbal communication. They encourage learners to think beyond the correct answer to why it is correct, in order to reinforce learning. Teachers know their students well and use their individual interests and problems to motivate them to learn.

110. There are insufficient experienced specialist basic skills staff. A significant proportion of trained staff have left the college. Several newly appointed staff have no experience or training in teaching literacy or numeracy. Learning resources are satisfactory but the full range of learning materials, including some good ILT resources, is not used by many teachers. The college is in the process of bringing the resources together in a central location.

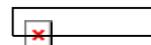
111. The study skills team support curriculum areas in the initial assessment of students. Personal tutors have the responsibility of ensuring that students are assessed and receive additional support. Many students who start their course late or start their studies during the academic year are not assessed. Some assessment results are not relayed to the additional support service. Some learners on vocational courses are not receiving the literacy and numeracy support that they need.

112. Teachers provide constructive and encouraging feedback to learners' on their work. Reviews of learners' progress are not carried out regularly on all courses or in many of the additional learning support sessions. Where reviews take place, comments on review forms sometimes do not relate to the targets set. Targets are not always reviewed and set at a more realistic level where the original targets have proved too ambitious. Learners receive helpful personal support on literacy and numeracy programmes from learning support assistants and their teachers.

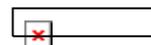
### ***Leadership and management***

113. Management and co-ordination of literacy and numeracy across the college are weak. Lesson observations do not take place regularly. Some courses do not have regular course reviews and staff are not fully involved in the self-assessment process and in action planning for improvement. The planned development of literacy and numeracy on employers' premises is not taking place. Equal opportunity practices with regard to disability rights are well promoted. Gender and race issues have a low profile and are not often used in teaching material or to inform the choice of learning resources.

## Part D: College data



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



<b>Level</b>	<b>16-18</b>	<b>19+</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	31	18
<b>2</b>	40	25
<b>3</b>	20	23
<b>4/5</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	9	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>

*Source: provided by the college in spring 2003*

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



<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>16-18</b>	<b>19+</b>	<b>Total Enrolments</b>
	<b>No.</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Science and mathematics	170	305	7
Land-based provision	13	7	0
Construction	109	121	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	166	313	7
Business administration, management and professional	330	758	16
Information and communication technology	184	162	5
Retailing, customer service and transportation	36	836	12
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	683	506	17
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	121	198	5
Health, social care and public services	327	577	13

Visual and performing arts and media	154	113	4
Humanities	116	164	4
English, languages and communication	48	81	2
Foundation programmes	201	209	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,658</b>	<b>4,350</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in spring 2003

**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	366	365	613	705
	Retention rate	94	92	87	94	92	91
	National average	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate	81	72	62	61	68	64
	National average	59	65	68	60	66	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	815	748	717	911	764	934
	Retention rate	91	85	87	93	84	86
	National average	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate	70	75	58	63	65	64
	National average	65	66	69	62	65	69
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	403	451	552	885	773	777
	Retention rate	77	78	76	93	84	83
	National average	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate	73	60	63	65	69	67
	National average	72	74	76	62	66	69
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1	2	0	81	43	15
	Retention rate	*	*	*	89	77	100
	National average	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate	*	*	*	37	52	100
	National average	64	66	55	56	56	53

<b>Short (excluding key skills)</b>	Starters excluding transfers	438	741	571	2,584	2,427	1,928
	Retention rate	89	93	98	95	96	98
	National average	**	**	**	**	**	**
	Pass rate	71	79	69	68	83	69
	National average	**	**	**	**	**	**
<b>Key skills</b>	Starters excluding transfers	70	425	1311	29	171	369
	Retention rate	61	99	91	86	100	93
	National average	85	82	80	86	85	80
	Pass rate	61	33	19	80	52	34
	National average	46	53	31	47	54	30

*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)*

*\*numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

*\*\*not applicable*

*Sources of information:*

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

*2. College rates for 1999 to 2001: College ISR.*

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

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Teaching judged to be:</b>			<b>No of sessions observed</b>
	<b>Good or better %</b>	<b>Satisfactory %</b>	<b>Less than satisfactory %</b>	
Level 3 (advanced)	39	46	15	52
Level 2 (intermediate)	43	52	5	44
Level 1 (foundation)	60	33	7	15
Other sessions	50	33	17	12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>123</b>

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