



Office for Standards
in Education

Bury College

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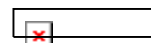
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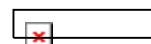
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Basic information about the college

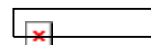


Name of college:	Bury College
Type of college:	Tertiary college
Principal:	Dr Helen Gilchrist
Address of college:	Market Street Bury Greater Manchester BL9 0BG
Telephone number:	0161 280 8280
Fax number:	0161 280 8228
Chair of governors:	Fred Bowen
Unique reference number:	130498
Name of reporting inspector:	Ruth James HMI
Dates of inspection:	12-16 May 2003

Part A: Summary



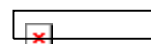
Information about the college



Bury College is a tertiary college situated in the borough of Bury. It was established in 1987. Bury has a stable population of approximately 180,000. Other post-16 providers in the area include a Roman Catholic sixth form college, two independent grammar schools and one high school sixth form. Bury is one of the more affluent boroughs of Greater Manchester. Unemployment is low. A significant percentage of the workforce work outside the local community, mainly in Manchester. Educational achievement in Bury is relatively high, as is the post-16 staying on rate (73.9%). Over 20% of college students aged 16 to 18 come from places outside Bury including Rochdale, Bolton, and North Manchester. Some 9.3% of current students are of minority ethnic origin compared with a borough average of 6.1%. Since the last inspection, there has been substantial investment in college accommodation including two new buildings and the refurbishment of the Woodbury Centre. The work of the college is now concentrated on a single site close to transport links.

The college offers courses in all 14 areas of learning. In 2001/02, there were 3,141 full-time students at the college. Of these 2,739 were aged 16 to 18 and 402 were aged 19 and over. For the same period, there were 8,863 part-time adult students and 417 part-time students aged 16 to 18. The largest proportion of adult enrolments is at level 1 (42%). Some 32% of enrolments aged 16 to 18 were at level 3, with a similar proportion at level 2. The gender profile of the college in 2000/01 was predominantly female (58.8%). A wholly owned subsidiary, BCE Mesnes, is responsible for work-based learning. In 2002/03, there were 561 work-based learners. Some work-based provision is subcontracted to other providers. In 2002, the college achieved a joint Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for early years development and childcare with Hopwood Hall College. The college mission is 'in the belief that learning pays, Bury College will promote and provide high quality learning for life focused on the needs of the individual.'

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged that the quality of provision was good in 12 of the 13 areas inspected. It was satisfactory in one. Work-based learning was judged satisfactory in two areas, and unsatisfactory in one.

Key strengths

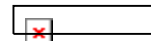
- high pass rates for courses for students aged 16 to 18 and adult students
- high retention rates for level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18 in 2002
- much good teaching and learning
- outstanding support for students
- effective tracking and progress monitoring systems for college students
- wide range of courses that meet community needs
- effective leadership and management
- good accommodation and facilities in many curriculum areas.

What should be improved?

- low retention rates for courses for adult students
- low retention and pass rates for work-based programmes
- inadequate library book stock
- insufficient analysis of data relating students prior attainment and potential to

outcomes.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

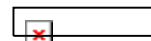


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science	Good. Pass rates for level 3 courses are improving and retention rates are satisfactory. There is much good teaching and learning, and effective monitoring of progress. Leadership and management are good. Support for students is excellent. Pass rates for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) science are low.
Mathematics	Good. There are high pass rates for GCSE and General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses. Teaching in GCSE and second year GCE A-level lessons is good. Support for students is very good. In GCE Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) lessons there is a narrow range of teaching styles.
Engineering	Good. A wide range of courses is provided. Teaching and learning are good. There are high pass rates for some courses. Curriculum management is good. There is a lack of practical equipment in the electrical and electronic areas.
Business	Good. Curriculum management of college-based courses is good. Teaching and support for students are good. Pass and retention rates are high for many courses. There is insufficient employer involvement in vocational college courses. Modern apprentices demonstrate good skills in the workplace, but retention and pass rates are poor.
Information and communications technology	Good. There are high pass rates for most courses and high retention rates for vocational courses for students aged 16 to 18. Much teaching is good and assessment is used well to monitor progress. Some learning environments are unsatisfactory and there are inadequate resources for some part-time students.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good. There are high pass rates for most courses. Retention rates for some courses are low. Teaching and learning in many lessons are good. Specialist resources in catering and sports therapy are very good. Support for level 1 students is very good. There are poor assessment practices on a minority of courses.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Pass rates for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) 1 hairdressing and NVQ 2 beauty therapy are high. Pass rates are low for NVQ level 2 hairdressing and several beauty courses. Some teaching is innovative. There is insufficient promotion of professional standards in beauty therapy teaching. Reviews of work-based learners are behind schedule. Key skills are well planned and delivered.
Health and social care and public services	Good. There are high pass rates for childcare courses and high retention rates for most childcare and public services courses, but retention rates for NVQ care courses are low. Student support, teaching and resources to support learning are all good. Progress towards the achievement of NVQs in care is slow. The use of

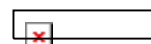
	information learning technology (ILT) in teaching is underdeveloped.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good. There are high pass and retention rates for most courses. Pass and retention rates for GNVQ intermediate art and design were low between 2000 and 2002. Teaching and learning are good and information and communications technology (ICT) is well integrated. Curriculum management is good. Some accommodation is inappropriate for some activities and group sizes.
Humanities	Good. Retention rates for most courses are high. Pass rates for most GCE AS and GCE A-level courses are high, but in some GCE AS subjects few students achieve higher grades. Pass rates for GCSE psychology are low. Student support is very good. Teaching is good.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. Retention and pass rates for GCE A-level English language and literature are high. Few students achieve higher grades at advanced level. Students are supported effectively and curriculum management is good. Accommodation and resources for learning are good.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Individual learning plans for basic skills students are very effective. Much teaching is very good and students are supported well. Pass rates for some courses are high. Key skills are well managed at level 1. Pass rates for key skills level 2 application of number and basic English are low.
Programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. There is a wide range of courses that meet community needs. Retention and pass rates for pre-entry level courses are good. Teacher-student relationships are very good and there is good teaching on practical courses. Some workshop facilities are unsuitable and the use of ICT in teaching and learning is underdeveloped.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management of the college are good. Governors, managers and staff share a clear sense of purpose. Pass rates are above the national average for colleges of the same type. Management is good in the majority of the curriculum areas inspected. Governors discharge their duties effectively. Financial management is good. The college has reliable management information. Self-assessment procedures provide a realistic picture of the college's strengths and weaknesses. The college invests to good effect in staff development. It has a strongly positive stance on equality and diversity. Overall retention rates for adult students are below national averages. Retention and pass rates for work-based programmes are low. There is insufficient analysis of data relating students' prior attainment to outcomes.

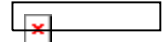
To what extent is the provision of the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. There is a strong commitment at all levels to widening participation. Bury is one of the more affluent boroughs of Greater Manchester, but the college also recruits students who live in less affluent areas. Courses are offered in outreach centres in order to attract students who might not otherwise attend the college. The college is fulfilling its duties under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act (SENDDA). The equal opportunities policy has been amended to meet the requirements of the

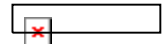
action plan to meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and is effectively fulfilling its obligations under the Act. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is higher than that of the local population. The college has had some success in recruiting members of staff of minority ethnic heritage. Effective partnerships with a wide range of individuals and groups from the local community help the college to widen participation and shape the development of educational provision in the area.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is outstanding. There are effective arrangements for providing advice and guidance about college courses to prospective students. The identification of additional support needs of full-time students is systematic and the provision of additional support is comprehensive. Special mentoring projects support two different groups of students aged 16 to 18, gifted and talented and those at risk of failing or dropping out. Tutorial provision and the use of individual reviews to monitor the progress of full-time students are very good. Subject teachers provide very effective individual support. Attendance is monitored rigorously and absence followed up quickly.

Students' views of the college



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

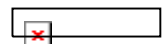
What students like about the college

- good accommodation and resources for many courses
- friendly atmosphere and mutual respect amongst students and staff
- approachable, dedicated and very helpful staff
- good tutorial support
- good support from student services
- accessible location and good transport links
- good teaching.

What they feel could be improved

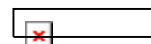
- expensive food which is not very good quality
- lack of information technology (IT) and drop-in facilities in some areas
- too few student parking spaces
- long gaps in timetables
- too little social space.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

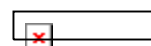
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better	Graded satisfactory	Graded less than satisfactory
	(grades 1 to 3) %	(grade 4) %	(grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	71	28	2
19+ and WBL*	69	24	7
Learning 16-18	66	31	3
19+ and WBL*	75	20	6

Key: The range of grades includes: excellent (grade 1), very good (2), good (3), satisfactory (4), unsatisfactory (5), poor (6) and very poor (7).

**work-based learning*

Note: figures do not total 100% as a result of rounding

Achievement and standards



1. Data on students' achievements were drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2001/02. Inspectors also used additional data held by the college, particularly in the area of work-based learning. The overall attendance in lessons observed by inspectors was 80%, which is higher than the national average of 76% for all inspections carried out in general further education (FE) colleges in 2001/02. Attendance was highest in mathematics at 90% and was lowest in engineering at 66%.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Overall retention rates were around the national averages in 2000 and 2001 at all levels. They improved at all levels in 2002 and at level 3 the retention rate rose by 5% and was significantly above the national average. Overall pass rates for levels 1 and 2 were significantly above the

national averages for the period 2000 to 2002. At level 3, the overall pass rate rose by 5% in 2002, and was significantly above the national average.

3. Overall pass and retention rates for GCE AS courses improved between 2001 and 2002 and were above the national averages in both years. The overall retention and pass rates for GCE A-level courses were just above the national averages in 2001, both having improved on the 2000 figures. In 2002, the retention rate for the second year of GCE A-level courses was 93% and the pass rate was also 93%. The proportion of students gaining higher grades at GCE A-level was high in 2002, a significant improvement on 2001.

4. On GCSE courses, the overall A* to C pass rates and the retention rates were around the national averages in 2000 and 2001 and improved to figures significantly above the averages in 2002. On GNVQ courses, the retention rates fluctuated around the national averages throughout the period from 2000 to 2002. GNVQ pass rates are high and the percentage of high grades achieved has generally been well above the national averages. The pass rates and proportions of high grades at foundation and intermediate level are particularly high. On NVQ courses, the overall pass and retention rates were generally around the national averages between 2000 and 2002 with the exception of the very high pass rate at level 1 in 2002. The overall pass rate for key skills rose significantly in 2002 and was well above the national average. However, the retention rate fell to well below the national average. Pass and retention rates on other courses, including short courses, are at least satisfactory overall and many pass rates are good.

5. Students show good attainment in most areas of learning. Students' work in visual and performing arts is good and creative. Some students' work is outstanding in the performing arts demonstrating high levels of acting skills. Good practical and individual learning skills are being developed in ICT. Students in hospitality, leisure and tourism effectively work independently, and have developed good research skills. In some areas of learning, the standard of students' work is lower than expected. In hair and beauty, students demonstrate poor use of sterilisation methods. Some written work in business is poor. There are high levels of progression to higher education (HE) in many curriculum areas.

6. The college has 508 work-based learners of whom 123 are advanced modern apprentices, 303 are foundation modern apprentices and 82 are on NVQ courses. The areas of learning include business administration, accounting and management, IT, care (elderly), child care dental nursing, hairdressing and beauty, customer service, sports and recreation, and catering. The completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor in all areas of learning in the past four years. Of the 1,206 apprentices who have started a foundation modern apprenticeship at the college since 1998, 17% have achieved the full framework, 57% have left and did not gain the full framework and 26% are still on the course. Of the 628 apprentices who have started an advanced modern apprenticeship since 1998, 26% have achieved the full framework, 52% have left and did not gain the full framework and 22% are still on the course.

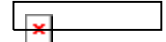
Adult learners

7. Adult retention rates at level 1 overall were just below the national averages for 2000 and 2001 and declined significantly to well below the national average in 2002. At levels 2 and 3, retention rates were well below the national averages in 2001 and 2002. There are indications that there will be improvements in these retention rates in 2003. Pass rates at level 1 are around or above national averages and at levels 2 and 3 they are high.

8. Approximately 100 students aged 19+ took GCE AS courses in 2001/02. The overall pass rate in 2002 was very high, as was the proportion of students gaining higher grades. Retention rates showed substantial improvement on 2001. At GCE A-level, with about 50 adult students, the pass rate for 2002 was 91%. A high proportion of adult students also gained higher grades. Overall retention rates for GCSE were low in 2001 and 2002, but A* to C pass rates rose significantly and were well above the national averages in both years. Pass rates are also good for GNVQ courses, and NVQ levels 1 and 2. Retention rates were low at NVQ levels 2 and 3 in 2002. Retention rates for other long courses of 24+ weeks at level 1 were very low in 2002, having fallen significantly from the 2000 and 2001 figures. Overall pass and retention rates are consistently around national

averages for short courses.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching is good across all areas of learning. Of the 247 lessons observed teaching was judged to be good or better in 70%, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in 3%. In just under 7% of lessons teaching was outstanding and in 22% it was very good. The profile of grades awarded for learning was slightly different. In 68% of lessons learning was found to be good or better, in 28% satisfactory and in 4% unsatisfactory. Learning was outstanding or very good in 23% of lessons. The teaching of students aged 16 to 18 was slightly better than that of adult students. Under 2% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18 were unsatisfactory compared with 8% for adult students. Learning was unsatisfactory in 6% of adult lessons and it was good or better in 73%. For students aged 16 to 18, learning was good or better in 66% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 3%. The biggest differences between adults and students aged 16 to 18 were in attainment. Adult attainment is significantly better than that of young people. Attainment was judged good or better in 59% of 16 to 18 lessons and 68% of adult lessons. Attainment was unsatisfactory in 5% of 16 to 18 lessons and 3% of adult lessons.

10. In all areas of learning at least 60% of lessons featured good or better teaching. The highest proportion of good teaching was in visual and performing arts and media. Examples of unsatisfactory teaching were found in seven of the areas of learning inspected. Most lessons are well planned and organised and include a variety of activities to stimulate interest and enable students to learn in different ways. Aims and objectives are clearly identified and shared with students. Teachers structure activities carefully. Good use is made of a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies including targeted questioning, presentations, handouts and other written materials, pair, group and individual work. Effective links are made between theory and practical work. Relationships between students and teachers are very good and teachers praise and encourage students and are extremely supportive of them. Teachers give freely of their time outside lessons. Students value the care and attention given by their teachers. In the less effective lessons pair or group work is not well structured, there is insufficient variety of activities, some students are not engaged and become bored, higher level skills are not developed, or the more able students are insufficiently challenged.

11. Teachers are well qualified for the work they undertake. Some 95% of full-time teachers, 80% of part-time teachers, and 43% of support staff who support direct learning have teaching qualifications and 51% of teachers are qualified as assessors or internal verifiers. Approximately 25% of teachers have received good industrial updating in the last two years. Opportunities for professional development are good. The college has a good mentoring system to support new staff. The level of technician support is satisfactory in all areas.

12. The new learning resource centres provide welcoming and purposeful learning environments that include access to modern IT facilities. The libraries, and the useful group and private study areas are of a design and size to meet students' needs. The total library book stock is low for the size of the college, but student use of the libraries is high. There is an appropriate number of well-qualified library staff available during the extended opening times that match student needs. In the last three years, the college has made significant investments in its IT facilities. The IT infrastructure is of a high standard and links the various centres. The computers are of an appropriate specification, the software applications are of an industrial standard. The overall ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students is good at 1:4. There are a large number of high standard computers for use by teachers and administrators.

13. The college has made many improvements to accommodation since the last inspection; the three main centres are in close walking distance of each other. It has invested over £15 million in the last eight years and a further amount of about £9 million was approved by the LSC in May 2003.

Most accommodation is of a high standard and meets the needs of students and staff. The Millennium and Prospect Centres are new modern buildings that provide effective and pleasant learning environments. Most of the Woodbury Centre has been extensively refurbished in recent years. There are, however, inadequate social areas for students and the college recognises the need to build a new refectory to meet student needs. The use of accommodation is most effective. There are a number of unsatisfactory temporary buildings, which are used as teaching accommodation. Buildings are well maintained, clean and welcoming. There is good wheelchair access to all areas of the main college site. The college is fitted with useful lifts and ramps to aid people with restricted mobility. However, there are parts of the community provision where access is restricted to the ground floor. Sport facilities are sufficient to meet students' recreational needs.

14. Assessment is well planned and rigorous. Work is set regularly and marked promptly. Written and verbal feedback is often detailed and helps students understand what they need to do to improve their work. Most areas of learning make good use of individual target setting for full-time level 3 students and some level 2 students. In some curriculum areas, teachers refer to students' individual target grades in their marking, but this is not standard practice in all areas. Good tracking documentation is used for many vocational courses. This enables teachers and personal tutors to ascertain quickly how a student is progressing in the different units that make up the course and helps to identify those who are struggling or falling behind. There is a comprehensive system for monitoring the progress of full-time students involving individual reviews by personal tutors. Effective systems are in place to identify those at risk of failing and to offer additional support. Parents are informed of progress through written reports and parents' evenings. There is an effective cross-college system for monitoring external moderator and verifier reports. Issues raised are noted and any action required is identified on a central record and this is followed up. There are occasional examples of external reports that are missed by this system. External reports show that for most courses the requirements of the awarding bodies are met and students' standards of work are appropriate.

15. The college offers a very wide range of courses at all levels that meet the needs of the local community. Most curriculum areas have a wide range of full-time, part-time, day and evening courses to meet the needs of students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Many courses have flexible timetabling arrangements to enable adult students to attend irrespective of their domestic and work commitments. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 can take a variety of additional qualifications alongside their main programme of study. Full-time students are also provided with opportunities for service to the college and the wider community and are involved in substantial charity work. An extensive programme of enrichment activities is available including many sporting activities, street dancing and a debating society. There are also specialist groups such as a young Asian women's group.

16. The college has secured European funding to develop specialist projects that support disadvantaged groups. The community outreach team works at over 35 community venues delivering a wide range of provision, in order to reach students including those in the Jewish, Asian and Polish communities. Programmes to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well planned and there are good links with social services departments. Local high school pupils aged 14 to 16 have the opportunity to study vocational GCSEs in college. In addition, there are master classes and summer schools suited to the needs of schools and pupils. There are good employer links in many curriculum areas, but in business and engineering there is a lack of work experience for full-time vocational students.

17. Student support and guidance are outstanding. The focus on meeting the needs of individual students is exemplary. Students take responsibility for their own and others welfare. Extensive initial advice and guidance are offered to prospective students. There are productive links with local high schools. Information about college courses is made available to local school pupils through open evenings, talks and literature distributed in schools, interviews in school or college, and introductory days in college during the summer term. In addition, lunchtime surgeries are provided for school pupils in Years 10 and 11. Information for adults is provided in many forms and at different locations. Community outreach workers effectively seek out students from minority ethnic groups, and the college provides evening guidance sessions for part-time students. Prospective full-time students are interviewed at college and this interview is used as an early opportunity to identify any

additional needs. Where appropriate, information is sought from partner schools. Early identification of student needs ensures that support arrangements are in place from the beginning of a student's course.

18. All full-time students undergo an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy support needs. Some part-time courses do not include an initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy skills, but many courses do include a specific assessment relevant to the course. All part-time students are made aware of the range of support services available and may self-refer. Teachers of part-time courses also refer students for support if a need is identified during the course through routine assessments. A comprehensive range of support services is available. Specialist support is available for students with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, weak literacy or numeracy skills, physical disabilities, sensory impairment, medical problems, and mental health problems. Support workers can provide help with personal care. Learning support needs are addressed quickly and sensitively. Some 8% of students were receiving additional learning support at the time of the inspection. The college has two projects to support particular groups of students aged 16 to 18. These are individual mentoring programmes for gifted and talented students and for students at risk of dropping out or failing. Experienced college staff act as mentors. 'Mentoring for excellence' is aimed at students with six A or A* grades at GCSE. This programme supports able young people and encourages them to aim high. 'Mentoring for success' provides additional one to one support for students having significant difficulties with their studies, to prevent them from leaving college or not achieving their qualifications. Students who have benefited from these mentoring projects speak very highly of the support they have received.

19. There is a full range of welfare services, including good childcare arrangements to help students with young children take advantage of educational opportunities. Induction for full-time students is well organised and effective. The college's comprehensive tutorial programme for full-time students offers opportunities for personal and social education. Tutorials are well attended. Full-time students have an entitlement to an individual review five times each year. These are structured to include information from subject teachers about the students' performance. They require the students to produce an action plan identifying appropriate short-term targets following discussion with their tutor. In many areas this process is effective, but there are occasional examples of inappropriate target setting by students. There is excellent communication between personal tutors, teachers and support staff. Attendance and punctuality are rigorously monitored and absences are followed up quickly. There are effective systems for teachers to communicate with personal tutors about any concerns about students that they may have. Senior tutors monitor the work of a group of personal tutors and advise on appropriate action or become involved when there are particular difficulties. There are frequent opportunities for students to discuss and plan future courses of study or employment. Advice and guidance on applying to university are very good. There is little course or career literature that is suitable for students with poor reading skills, but other resources are available such as videos. Subject teachers are very supportive of their students and give freely of their time outside lessons. In many curriculum areas, additional classes provide academic support, often at specific times such as the exam preparation period.

Leadership and management

20. Leadership and management are good. Governors, managers and staff share a clear sense of purpose. This is enshrined in the strategic plan, which is developed in consultation with the corporation and with staff. The college's mission and its strategic objectives are widely known. There is a common purpose directed at achieving targets for recruitment, retention and pass rates and for widening participation. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 have improved over the last three years and are now above the national averages for colleges of the same type. For students aged 19+, retention rates have declined over the same period and were below the national averages until 2002. The college is aware of this issue. There are indications that adult retention rates have improved for the current cohort. Pass rates for both students aged 16 to 18 and adult students are above national averages at all three levels.

21. Communications are effective within the college. Managers use the college intranet, a regular bulletin, the principal's surgeries, termly staff meetings and the Annual General Meeting to keep staff informed. Senior managers seek to involve staff in decision-making. They set high standards

for performance. The senior management team distinguishes between strategic and operational matters, focusing exclusively on the former on a monthly basis. In 11 of the 13 curriculum areas inspected, management is good and this manifests itself in terms of improvement in achievement, well-informed and well-motivated staff, clarity about responsibility and objectives and a culture of trust and openness. Where curriculum management is satisfactory there is a lack of consistency in management practice, and inadequate monitoring of agreed actions.

22. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They receive financial reports that enable them to see how the college is performing against agreed financial indicators. They have overseen investment in a substantial capital programme. Governors discharge their responsibility for academic oversight of the college. They receive appropriate reports. They know where the weaknesses lie and monitor managers' plans to deal with those weaknesses. Governors contribute through a strategic planning day to the determination or updating of the college's strategic direction. Attendance at governors' meetings in 2000/01 was poor. Action was taken to reduce the number of committees, to move from a corporation of 20 to one of 16 members and to vary times of meetings to suit members better. The rate of attendance at corporation meetings has improved to 80% so far in 2002/03. The clerk provides timely papers to the governors. Governors make a valuable contribution to the self-assessment process through their membership of validation panels. Governors do not, however, have an agreed set of performance criteria against which to judge how well they are doing. There is a longstanding vacancy for a business category governor. Membership of the corporation reflects the ethnic mix of the college's community.

23. Financial management is good. The college has category A financial status, which it has maintained for the last five years. It has met its funding target for the last four years. There is a set of financial indicators against which the college regularly reports to governors. The most recent report showed the college to be ahead of all its targets. Significant, planned refurbishment (through capital expenditure) means that the college is forecasting an operating deficit for the financial year 2002/03, but a return to surplus is forecast for the year after. The deployment of resources is carefully monitored to ensure their efficient use. The college provides good value for money, for which it has a set of objectives under each of the headings of curriculum, resources, staffing and finance.

24. The college has effective and reliable management information. Much of this is available on the college's intranet providing staff with good access to a wide range of information. Managers at all levels have robust information to inform their decisions, having at their disposal reports, which enable them to keep track of, for example, budgets, student enrolments and attendance. Insufficient use is made of data that relates students' prior attainment to outcomes, as a measure of value added.

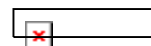
25. Self-assessment is an important element of the college's quality improvement procedures. Staff at all levels participate in the process. There is a central role for course teams. They are required to take account of performance against targets, of the views of students and of the outcome of classroom observation. The quality of course reviews varies, but is, in most cases, thorough and rigorous. The college self-assessment report is detailed. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the grades published in the college's 2001/02 self-assessment report. They graded two areas higher and one lower, by one grade in each case. In 2002/03 the internal observation scheme recorded the proportion of good or better grades for teaching, learning and attainment as 85%, 84% and 76%, respectively. Inspectors judged the proportions to be as follows: teaching 70%, learning 68%, attainment 62%. The college has a programme of training for its internal observers and a process of moderation. Nevertheless, the college has a more generous view of the quality of the classroom experience than inspectors found.

26. A performance review scheme has been in place for some time. It is an annual scheme of entitlement, which is open to all staff. The rate of participation in 2001/02 was 81%. Staff see this as means of helping them to identify what they need to do to improve their service to students and a useful channel of two-way communication. The scheme identifies staff development needs and informs the continuing professional development (CPD) plan. The CPD plan also takes account of the recently conducted staff IT skills audit, to which the college has responded with a series of training programmes. An identified need for training for existing and aspiring managers is being

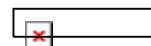
addressed through a postgraduate diploma in FE management.

27. The college has an equal opportunities policy that addresses staff and student issues. Governors approved a race equality policy in 2002. An equality and diversity steering group has day-to-day responsibility for implementation and monitoring of policy, informed by a variety of sub-groups including those covering the Disability Discrimination and Special Educational Needs and Disability Acts. The principal chairs the steering group. Between September and December 2002 the percentage of applicants from ethnic minority communities for advertised posts was 13%. Applicants of minority ethnic heritage were appointed to 19% of posts. The proportion of students of minority ethnic origin in the student population is higher than that in the borough. An equality awareness campaign was conducted in November and December 2002; equality and diversity notice boards serve to draw attention to relevant issues; in March 2003, an equality and diversity intranet site was launched. The college has a broad definition of equality and diversity, which includes not only disability, gender and race, but also gifted and talented students, those at risk of failure and 14 to 16 year olds. The level of awareness amongst staff of equality and diversity policy is high. The college has a policy of reaching out into the community. It is, for example, a member of the Bury Learning Partnership, the Bury Strategic Partnership and the North West Equality and Diversity Network.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science



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

Strengths

- improving pass rates for level 3 courses
- much good teaching
- frequent assessment that effectively monitors students' progress
- exemplary care for the needs of individuals
- effective leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for GCSE science
- missed opportunities to make better use of information.

Scope of provision

28. A wide range of courses is offered at level 3. GCE AS and A-levels are offered in biology, chemistry, environmental science and physics. There are 155 GCE AS biology students, 86 GCE AS chemistry students and 73 GCE AS physics students. The respective numbers of second-year GCE A-level students are 75, 52 and 32. Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and GNVQ intermediate science courses also run with 18 and 17 students, respectively. A GCSE science course is also offered. There are also access to FE and HE science courses for adults.

Achievement and standards

29. Retention rates are generally in line with national averages for colleges of FE. Pass rates for most GCE AS courses were below national averages in 2001, but these improved in 2002 and most are now above the national figures. The exception is physics where the pass rate remains low. Pass rates for GCE A-level subjects were also higher in 2002 than in 2001 and chemistry and environmental science both had 100% pass rates. The pass rate for the AVCE course in 2002 was 83%, an improvement on the figure of 75% for the advanced GNVQ course the previous year. GCSE science pass rates are very low. An attempt to improve the pass rate has resulted in a fall in the retention rate for the current cohort.

30. Students' written work is of a satisfactory standard and approximately at the levels expected for the stage of course. Practical skills are satisfactory. Students pay very high regard to health and safety issues. Students lack confidence in their technical abilities. Their ability to use technical language in discussion is not as good as would be expected. Progression to HE is good, and very good from the AVCE science course where five out of the six students who completed the course in 2002 went on to HE courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	35	30	53
		% retention	94	62	91
		% pass rate	28	17	15
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	**	79	94
		% retention	**	88	85
		% pass rate	**	58	73
GCE AS environmental science	3	No. of starts	**	26	23
		% retention	**	92	83
		% pass rate	**	50	79
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	*	61	60
		% retention	*	82	98
		% pass rate	*	50	61
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	88	95	64
		% retention	76	74	92
		% pass rate	86	83	86
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	55	45	35
		% retention	73	81	84
		% pass rate	89	77	100

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

* course not offered or did not run

** less than 15 students

Note: GCE A-level retention measured over 2 years in 2000 and 2001, and over one year in 2002

Quality of education and training

31. There is much good teaching. Most lessons are very well planned. A variety of teaching methods is used. Explanations are clear and ideas developed, in a systematic and sequential manner. Relationships are very good. In the best lessons the pace is fast without being rushed.

There are very good links between lessons and between theory and practical activity. Good use was made of research activities in observed lessons, although this relied heavily on written materials. Students exhibited high levels of concentration and learned effectively in most lessons. In some of the weaker lessons, there is insufficient attention to students' revision needs and ineffective questioning. For example, one teacher tried to revise too much of the biology syllabus and the rushed nature of the lesson resulted in students losing motivation. During practical work teachers missed opportunities to improve and develop some practical skills. Students do not use the science intranet extensively.

32. Teachers and technical support staff are well qualified and most have relevant experience. Staff vacancies have affected the learning experiences of students who have had to cover large amounts of material in a short time. Technicians support the practical activities and examinations well. Both staff and students have easy access to appropriate computing facilities. Laboratories are well designed and furnished and some have data projectors. There is a shortage of textbooks. This is exacerbated because textbooks were issued to students in some cases, but not others. For example, chemistry textbooks were issued at the start of the year on a first-come-first-served basis resulting in some groups not having textbooks other than shared copies. All science rooms are accessible to those in wheelchairs.

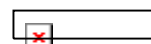
33. Assessment is frequent, thorough and used effectively to monitor students' progress. Homework is set regularly and marked and returned promptly. Teachers give good feedback. Minimum target grades are calculated from the students' prior GCSE scores. These are used effectively to motivate students. There are good reporting procedures to students and to parents. On GCE AS and A-level courses, teachers set common homework for each group studying the same subject and level.

34. The care and attention given to the needs of individual students is exemplary. Taster sessions for those who have applied and a coherent induction programme for each subject ensure that students are on courses that meet their needs. At the end of induction, assessments identify any additional support students might need. Tutors ensure that the support is then delivered. For example, a student with hearing impairment has received substantial support in note taking and structuring essays. If students are either having difficulty or are deemed as high achievers they receive additional help through the mentoring programmes. In addition, revision sessions are organised and are well attended. There is a weekly group tutorial and individual progress reviews five times a year.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are good. There are clear objectives for the development of science that are understood and owned by staff. Communications are good. Targets for retention and pass rates are set and generally met. They are accepted by teachers and form a good basis for monitoring progress. There have been opportunities missed to make better use of information. Data on value added, progression and achievements of key skills is either based on individuals or the whole of the GCE AS or A-level cohort. There is insufficient analysis of it for science. Quality assurance is robust leading to a thorough self-assessment report. Equality and diversity is promoted well. There is considerable respect and understanding between students from differing ethnic backgrounds, ages and disabilities.

Mathematics



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

Strengths

- high pass rates for GCSE and GCE A-level courses
- good teaching and learning in second-year GCE A-level and GCSE lessons
- effective and well-used intranet resources
- very good academic and personal support for students.

Weaknesses

- narrow range of teaching approaches for GCE AS students
- insufficient use of ILT in lessons.

Scope of provision

36. The college offers mathematics and further mathematics courses at GCE AS and A-level to full-time students aged 16 to 18. At the time of the inspection, there were 300 students on these courses. GCSE mathematics is available for students on advanced level programmes who have already achieved a grade D. Students either re-sit in November following a short intensive revision course or re-sit in June. GCSE mathematics is also offered to adult students during the day or in the evening, and there is also an open learning GCSE course. Some 250 students, of whom 70 are adults, studied GCSE mathematics in 2002/03. Full-time students who have not previously achieved a grade D at GCSE do level 2 key skill application of number for a year and are then offered the opportunity to progress to GCSE.

Achievement and standards

37. Pass rates for GCE A-level courses are high. In further mathematics, pass rates of 100% have been achieved for the three years to 2002. In mathematics in 2000 and 2001, pass rates were above national averages, and in 2002 the pass rate was 93%. The pass rate for GCE AS mathematics in 2001 was 28%, which was well below the national average. In 2001/02, the GCE AS course was extended into a second year and the overall pass rate went up to 74% when taking account of those students who sat GCE AS examinations during their second year. However, retention rates went down from 75% to 64% overall, partly because of students who decided not to continue with mathematics at the end of year one. The pass rates for GCSE mathematics are high. Retention rates for the one-year GCSE course are below the national average.

38. On GCE A-level and GCSE courses students have good knowledge of key concepts and techniques and their solutions show attention to detail. GCE AS students' levels of fluency in discussing mathematical ideas is generally low. A small number of students progress to maths courses in HE, but there is good progression to other HE courses such as accountancy, engineering and economics.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics (1 year)	2	No. of starts	246	271	213
		% retention	80	56	63
		% pass rate	39	49	51
GCSE mathematics (short course)	2	No. of starts	92	56	45
		% retention	92	93	91
		% pass rate	25	41	59
GCE AS mathematics**	3	No. of starts	*	134	132
		% retention	*	75	61
		% pass rate	*	28	74
GCE A-level	3	No. of starts	60	55	33

mathematics	% retention	68	65	88
	% pass rate	88	86	93

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

* course did not run or was not offered

** GCE AS mathematics course commenced September 2001 and completed in January 2003

Note: GCE A-level retention measured over two years in 2000 and 2001 and over one year in 2002

Quality of education and training

39. There is much good teaching and learning. Teachers are supportive of their students. Lesson planning is effective, with clear aims that are communicated to students. There are good notes and handouts. The majority of lessons observed were revision lessons for public examinations. In these, the individual attention given to students was very good. In the best revision lessons, teachers effectively draw out the students' knowledge and ideas to demonstrate to them how much they know and thus increase their confidence. This was particularly effective in a GCSE lesson in which the teacher used responses from students to explore solutions, bringing out good learning points and giving value to their contributions and ownership to their learning. In a good GCE A-level revision lesson on functions and transformations, the teacher skilfully used directed questioning to involve all the students and provided a very helpful summary handout with blanks to be completed as the discussion progressed. In many GCE AS lessons, however, teachers fail to vary the methods they use sufficiently and there are few opportunities for group work or investigative approaches.

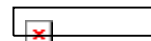
40. Assessment is rigorous, with a common policy across the department. Homework is set regularly, marked promptly and returned with constructive feedback which helps students rectify mistakes. There is a good induction process for GCE AS students which focuses on consolidation of GCSE topics. Any gaps in knowledge are identified and, if necessary, the student is referred for extra academic support. This support is provided for students of all abilities. Students also receive very good support from their teachers who are approachable and give up much of their own time to help. This is very much valued by the students. Students are given individual target grades to aim for and these inform the regular reviewing and action planning process.

41. Staff are well qualified and experienced and are up to date with awarding body examination requirements. Learning materials are good. There are effective and well-used intranet resources. Students are also directed to useful websites which are included in the schemes of work. However, insufficient use is made of ILT in lessons. There are no dedicated maths classrooms. Some of the rooms used are spacious and pleasant, but others are noisy or badly ventilated. No classrooms have any student work on display.

Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management are good. Effective management has led to consistent improvements in achievement. Action has been taken to improve the GCE AS pass rate. Plans are in place to develop the use of ILT in the classroom. Communication is good at all levels and there are regular minuted meetings. The department is socially inclusive and students from diverse ethnic backgrounds are well integrated. New teachers are mentored by the advanced practitioner in the department and receive good support from the manager. Course reviews draw on students' views and internal lesson observations and are assessed against clear benchmarks. Action plans and targets are followed up rigorously.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- much good teaching and learning
- high pass rates for GNVQ foundation engineering and City and Guilds 2301-04 computer-aided engineering competencies
- wide range of courses
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- lack of IT drop-in facility in technology
- insufficient industrial experience for full-time students
- lack of practical equipment in electrical/electronic areas.

Scope of provision

43. The college offers a wide range of courses. Full-time courses include the national diploma in operations and maintenance engineering (electronic), AVCE engineering, GNVQ intermediate and foundation engineering and a range of NVQ courses at levels 1 and 2. Part-time courses are offered in computer-aided design and papermaking. At the time of the inspection, there were 157 full-time students and 41 part-time students. There were also 16 school pupils under the age of 16 involved in a 14 to 16 pilot programme with three local schools.

Achievement and standards

44. Pass rates are generally in line with national averages or better and for some courses are high. GNVQ foundation engineering has consistently had high pass rates, including 100% pass rates in 2001 and 2002. City and Guilds 2301-04 computer-aided engineering competencies has had pass rates well above the national averages for the three years to 2002. Pass rates for NVQ level 2 engineering manufacture were above national averages in 2000 and 2001. The pass rate for GNVQ intermediate was low in 2002, but high for the preceding two years. Retention rates are generally in line with national averages or better. Retention rates for the GNVQ intermediate course were well above national averages for the three years to 2002. The retention rates for City and Guilds 2301-04 computer-aided engineering competencies were above national averages in 2001 and 2002.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	27	*	16
		% retention	74	*	94
		% pass rate	65	*	53
City and Guilds 2301-04 computer-aided engineering competencies	2	No. of starts	20	21	26
		% retention	55	100	85
		% pass rate	55	81	95
GNVQ advanced / AVCE engineering**	3	No. of starts	25	*	24
		% retention	76	*	62
		% pass rate	79	*	80

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

* less than 15 students enrolled

** GNVQ advanced engineering was replaced with AVCE engineering in 2002

Quality of education and training

45. The quality of teaching is good. Lesson plans and schemes of work are comprehensive. The practical lessons on all courses are well organised and structured with clear objectives. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods in classes and practical lessons and are responsive to the individual needs of the students. The theory lessons are linked to and support the practical workshop lessons. Students show aptitude and interest in the different subject areas and respond well to their teachers. There is good rapport between teachers and students. Assessment is well planned. Assignments are vocationally relevant and where appropriate they have clear guidance on what is required for the attainment of different grades. Additional tasks are set to stretch more able students. Clear feedback is given on marked work. On NVQ courses, the assessment and tracking documentation is not always completed

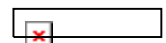
46. Staff are well qualified and participate in a well-planned programme of staff development. The learning support arrangements for all courses are good. Students value the additional support provided and speak highly of the help and support offered to them by teachers.

47. The standard of accommodation is good. The technology department is housed in a new specifically designed building. The computer-aided design workshops and the specialist paper-making workshops are well resourced with modern relevant up-to-date equipment. The computer maintenance laboratories are also well resourced with equipment that was constructed by students as part of their course. Students can purchase computers they have built at discounted prices and are involved in a range of repair activities on computer-based equipment throughout the college. The electronics, computer maintenance and mechanical science rooms are spacious and well furnished. There is a lack of practical demonstration equipment for electrical/electronic courses. Some equipment is outdated and broken and students are not always able to take the relevant readings for laboratory work. There is no drop-in IT facility in the technology building and students find it difficult to complete their work in the timetabled lessons. Other IT drop-in facilities within the college do not have all the specialist engineering software needed. There are insufficient industry links for full-time courses and students on the AVCE and GNVQ courses do not have any work experience, although this is included for some other courses.

Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are good. Courses are regularly reviewed to ensure relevance. Targets are set and monitored by staff and action taken to address weaknesses. For example, the sequence of delivery of AVCE units has been revised to address concerns about retention rates. Communications are good and staff are well informed. The teaching teams within mechanical and electrical work well together to develop programmes of learning and innovative assignments. There are good staff development opportunities. Teaching staff are involved in course reviews which contribute to the self-assessment process.

Business



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

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

Strengths

- much good and very good teaching
- high pass rates for many courses
- high retention rates for many courses
- effective management of college-based courses
- good support and monitoring of students' progress
- good progression within college and to HE
- good personal and vocational skills demonstrated by modern apprentices.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates for some courses
- poor standard of students' written work on AVCE business
- insufficient employer involvement to broaden student experience
- low retention and pass rates for work-based learning
- slow progress on modern apprenticeships.

Scope of provision

49. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time business courses. There are 1,300 16 to 18 year-old and 2,500 adult enrolments. Courses include GCE AS and A-level courses in business, economics and accounting with vocational business and administration courses available from foundation to advanced level. Many full-time students can access additional qualifications to widen their employment skills. Management and professional courses are available part time. Over 200 students study on specialist courses that include management and accountancy, taught either in college or on employers' premises. BCE Mesnes, the college's subsidiary, provides work-based modern apprenticeship training. Most apprentices attend day-release training at BCE Mesnes or the college and there are 42 apprentices on distance learning programmes. There are 14 advanced modern apprentices and 113 foundation modern apprentices on administration programmes. In accounting, there are 11 advanced and 6 foundation modern apprentices and 11 learners on NVQ training programmes.

Achievement and standards

50. Pass rates for most courses are at or above national averages. Pass rates and retention rates are high for GCE AS and A-level business, GNVQ foundation and intermediate, and Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) administration courses. For GNVQ advanced business in 2000 and 2001, and the AVCE in 2002, both retention and pass rates were significantly below the national averages. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 and 3 accounting are low. On NVQ level 4 accounting, pass rates are significantly above the national averages. Students' work on GCE AS and GCE A-level courses is good and students' written work is well presented. All students demonstrate good use of IT in their assignments. Written work by many students on advanced vocational business courses is poor and their command of written English is weak. They are unable to explain business concepts or apply business terminology effectively. There is good progression within college on to higher-level courses. Many advanced level students progress on to HE and most advanced vocational students gain employment.

51. Modern apprentices demonstrate good personal and vocational skills in the workplace. They communicate well and take on increasing responsibility. Retention and pass rates of modern apprenticeships are poor. Since 1999, the overall retention rate is 33%. In the same period, the framework pass rate is low at 22%, with a further 8% gaining an NVQ. Current apprentices are making slow progress. Trends indicate increasing numbers who continue past their expected completion date. Since 1999, 55% of retained learners have continued beyond their expected completion dates. Many apprentices spend between 5 and 12 months training before achieving their first NVQ unit.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
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GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	*	15	17
		% retention	*	87	76
		% pass rate	*	92	85
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	66	63	61
		% retention	85	78	79
		% pass rate	75	82	100
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	31	41	35
		% retention	90	95	91
		% pass rate	71	38	53
GCE AS business studies	3	No. of starts	*	147	171
		% retention	*	86	82
		% pass rate	*	90	82
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	82	101	83
		% retention	87	81	96
		% pass rate	97	90	100
GNVQ advanced / AVCE business**	3	No. of starts	75	90	70
		% retention	76	70	64
		% pass rate	71	68	53
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	22	32	30
		% retention	100	91	97
		% pass rate	95	86	97

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

* course not offered or did not run

** GNVQ advanced business was replaced with AVCE business in 2002

Note: GCE A-level retention measured over 2 years in 2000 and 2001, and over one year in 2002

Quality of education and training

52. Most teaching is good or very good. Teachers are enthusiastic, confident and caring. Lessons are well planned and often take account of students' individual learning styles. Students work effectively both in groups and independently. Lessons start with clearly explained objectives. Most teachers set challenging tasks appropriate for the studied topic. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of teaching methods to engage and sustain student interest. In one successful lesson, an expertly used mind mapping technique introduced the global economy. From this, students gained the confidence to identify, explore and explain complex business issues in a clear and logical way. Students are also encouraged to develop a broad range of skills that includes team working, analytical methods, self-evaluation, note-taking and presentation. In less successful lessons, teachers fail to engage students' interest or develop effective skills of analysis and critical evaluation. In these lessons, the attainment of students is unsatisfactory. A few teachers fail to make sufficient links to current affairs and contemporary business practice. Students receive constructive feedback from teachers. Off-the-job training is good in work-based learning, but learners receive insufficient feedback on their written work. Modern apprentices receive good on-the-job training and active support from most employers. However, some employers lack detailed knowledge of off-the-job training and are unable to effectively contribute to the co-ordination of training.

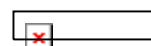
53. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Many staff have updated their skills in modern business practice. Teaching takes place in well-equipped, clean and tidy classrooms. Excellent use is made of student work and display materials to create a vocational identity within base rooms. Students have access to industry-standard IT and make good use of their IT skills in coursework. Progress is being made in developing ILT resources.

54. Individual student target setting and progress monitoring on full-time courses are very good. Homework and coursework are set regularly. Marking is consistently good and teachers take care to correct grammatical and spelling errors. Teachers maintain meticulous records of progress. Teachers are successful in ensuring full-time students receive a high standard of pastoral care. Effective arrangements support students at risk of not completing their course. Pastoral support for modern apprentices is good. For modern apprentices target setting is weak in reviews and action plans following assessment. Targets are insufficiently specific and many lack timescales. Work experience is not available on GNVQ and AVCE courses and students have few opportunities to contextualise their learning.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum management is effective and efficient, and communications are excellent. Staff clearly understand their roles. There is trust and openness between teachers and managers. Self-assessment and the sharing of best practice are effective. However, there is no analysis of the overall value added by each course. Use of target setting and action planning is highly developed. There is good access to management information. Staff understand what they need to do to improve the quality of the provision. There have been improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, particularly on advanced vocational courses. Course files are exemplary and administration is thorough. Plans to improve employer links are underdeveloped and employers are not involved in curriculum planning or delivery. In work-based learning, many initiatives seek to improve retention and pass rates and the learners' experience, but these have not yet had sufficient impact. Improved induction has helped students to settle quickly into their learning programme and has raised awareness and understanding of equal opportunities.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on GNVQ, AVCE and European computer driving licence (ECDL) courses
- high pass rates on most courses, and excellent pass rates on full-time vocational courses
- much good teaching and learning
- good use of assessment to monitor and promote progress.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory learning environments
- inadequate access to resources for part-time students on flexible programmes.

Scope of provision

56. The college offers an extensive range of courses from introductory level to level 3. Full-time courses are available at the main college site and include GNVQ foundation and intermediate,

AVCE in ICT, and GCE AS and A-level courses in computing and ICT. There are currently 679 students on full-time courses, most being aged 16 to 18. Many part-time computer applications courses are available at the main college site, and at community venues. There are currently 1,271 part-time students, most of whom are adults. A few part-time courses are based on individual open learning workshops supported by tutors. There are good opportunities for progression up to level 2 for part-time students and up to level 3 for full-time students.

Achievement and standards

57. Pass rates are high for full-time vocational courses and most other full-time courses. For example, the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses had pass rates of over 95% in 2001 and 2002, and the AVCE double award had a pass rate of 100% in 2002. The proportion of students attaining high grades is also above national averages for full-time vocational courses. GCE AS ICT had pass rates well above the national averages for 2001 and 2002. Retention rates for most full-time courses are also high. However, for GCE AS computing, the retention rate fell significantly between 2001 and 2002, when it was over 10% below the national average. Retention rates for some part-time courses are low. The one-year ECDL course had high retention and pass rates in 2001 and 2002. Retention rates for many of the City and Guilds 7621 IT, diploma in computer applications courses were low in 2001 and 2002. For example, only 29% of the 823 students who started on one of these long courses were retained in 2001/02.

58. Most students show interest in and enthusiasm for their subjects. They develop good learning skills and practical IT skills. Students on the GNVQ intermediate course successfully use different software to design room layouts and documents. Part-time adult level 1 students can produce charts and graphs from spreadsheets. Full-time students have good on-line learning skills. They are successful in their use of the virtual learning environment. Attendance during the inspection was high at over 85%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	***	25	23
		% retention	***	76	78
		% pass rate	***	95	100
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	487	487	213
		% retention	79	81	80
		% pass rate	75	74	75
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	58	55	52
		% retention	90	85	85
		% pass rate	88	100	98
ECDL	2	No. of starts	***	129	110
		% retention	***	91	86
		% pass rate	***	80	87
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	*	51	119
		% retention	*	82	79
		% pass rate	*	86	76
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	71	80	28
		% retention	79	69	86
		% pass rate	82	73	75
GNVQ advanced/ AVCE	3	No. of starts	59	62	55

ICT**	% retention	80	87	84
	% pass rate	74	93	100

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

* course not offered or did not run

** GNVQ advanced ICT was replaced with AVCE ICT in 2002

*** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Note: GCE A-level retention measured over 2 years in 2000 and 2001, and over one year in 2002

Quality of education and training

59. Most teaching is good. Few lessons were judged to be very good or outstanding. Most teachers have good relationships with students who are well supported. In the better lessons, there is a variety of teaching methods, such as group work and presentations. In some lessons, there is skilful use of whole class and group tasks to maintain student interest. For example, in one lesson, the teacher helped students to assess their preferences in team working. She led a discussion of what needs to be considered when building a team. Students gained a better understanding as a result. In a key skills class, tasks had been devised well to meet individual student needs. Each student was developing good skills at different levels of complexity. Teachers monitor the progress of students on flexible programmes well. In the less effective lessons, teaching is dull, with insufficient student activity. In a few lessons, there was insufficient work to keep more able students busy, and they became bored. In others, the teachers' estimations of the time students would need for tasks was poor, and there was insufficient time to consolidate learning.

60. All students have access to computers and up-to-date software. Full-time students have good access outside lessons to computers and the Internet for independent work in college. Most learning materials are good, but a few contain errors which interrupt learning. Access to learning resources for part-time students on flexible programmes is inadequate. Many students report that they are not allowed to take workbooks or disks with their saved work home. Use of the library is poorly promoted. There is insufficient promotion of safe working practices such as the use of footrests, wrist rests and anti-glare screens. Teaching accommodation in the college is generally good, but there are some unsatisfactory classrooms. In some lessons, the students' views of the teachers' screen presentation is obstructed. In one multimedia lesson, learning and teaching were impeded because the teacher did not have the equipment to demonstrate the sound-editing techniques being taught. Workstations in some community classrooms are poorly laid out and have insufficient desk space for students learning materials and notebooks.

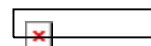
61. Most teachers have appropriate qualifications and skills. A virtual learning environment is in use for full-time courses. This allows access to the small amount of good interactive online learning material. Some students use it to exchange tips and information. There is a consistent approach to assessment. The procedures are followed rigorously and they are in line with awarding body requirements. Initial assessment is effective. Full-time students are set targets. Progress is reviewed regularly and assessment is used well to monitor students' progress and to plan their learning. Staff provide 'catch-up' sessions for those full-time students who are experiencing work difficulties. Students have easy access to good advice and guidance in relation to both their courses and their careers. There is a very good rapport between teachers and students, and students are well supported in their work.

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management are good. There has been success in raising the pass and retention rates for full-time vocational courses. Action has been taken to address the low retention rates on some adult courses. At the time of the inspection in May 2003, retention rates had improved for the current cohorts. The management of the community provision is good. The workshops are well organised and have common policies which provide good learning opportunities

in each centre. The learning environment in some community venues has been improved. The quality assurance arrangements are adequate. Although the performance of individual students is analysed, there is insufficient analysis of these results against national norms. Insufficient attention is given to the fact that many students do not achieve their target grades. Staff appraisal is adequate. Managers observe teachers twice a year; there is feedback on the lessons seen and this is linked to in-service training requirements.

Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning
- very good support for level 1 students
- good specialist resources in catering and sports therapy.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on NVQ 2 food preparation and AVCE leisure and tourism courses
- poor assessment practice on some courses.

Scope of provision

63. The college offers a range of courses in catering, travel and tourism and sport. This includes GCE AS and GCE A-level physical education, AVCEs in leisure and recreation, and travel and tourism, intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism, the diploma and advanced diplomas in sports therapy and NVQs in food preparation and food service. There are 445 students aged 16 to 18 and 412 adult students. There is no full-time, sport-specific provision at level 1 for students aged 16 to 18. Additional qualifications offered include first aid, community sports leaders award, fitness instruction, food hygiene, and travel agency certificates.

Achievement and standards

64. Pass rates for most courses are high and above national averages. For example, the pass rates for GCE A-level physical education in 2001 and 2002 were 96% and 100%, respectively. Pass rates of 97% and 100% were achieved for the sports therapy diploma for the same years. Pass rates are also significantly above national averages for GNVQ foundation and intermediate leisure and tourism and NVQ level 1 food preparation. Students make good progress on vocational courses at levels 1 and 2 in relation to their level of attainment on entering the college. However, the proportion of students attaining higher grades on GCE AS and A-level courses is low. For example, only 5% of GCE AS students, and 11% of GCE A-level students gained A or B grades in 2002.

65. Retention rates are in line with national averages for many courses. However, they are low on AVCE and NVQ level 2 courses. Both these courses also have low retention rates for the current cohort. There are 9 students currently on AVCE leisure and recreation where 19 enrolled and in catering 22 students remain on NVQ level 2 from 46 enrolments. Attendance during the inspection averaged 78%, but punctuality was poor in some lessons.

Most coursework is well presented and provides clear evidence of effective organisation,

planning and evaluation. Students demonstrate good research skills and the ability to work independently. Some level 2 students produce work of a higher standard than required. Good use is made of IT skills in assignments.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	52	60	38
		% retention	75	72	95
		% pass rate	87	88	100
NVQ food preparation and cookery 2 year	2	No. of starts	39	52	38
		% retention	59	73	44
		% pass rate	65	88	87
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism / AVCE (double award) leisure and recreation and travel and tourism*	2	No. of starts	81	65	53
		% retention	67	60	65
		% pass rate	98	92	100
GCE A-level sport and physical education	3	No. of starts	32	36	39
		% retention	71	81	95
		% pass rate	73	96	100
Diploma in sport therapy	3	No. of starts	48	34	39
		% retention	54	94	77
		% pass rate	85	97	100

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

* GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism was replaced with AVCE (double award) leisure and recreation, and AVCE (double award) travel and tourism in 2002

Note: GCE A-level retention measured over 2 years in 2000 and 2001, and over one year in 2002

Quality of education and training

66. In over two thirds of the lessons observed, teaching was judged to be good or better. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed. Relationships between students and their teachers are excellent. Teachers use a good range of learning activities that successfully motivate students. Students are encouraged to contribute through question and answer and discussion. There is good development of analysis and evaluation skills through practical activity. Teachers make good use of IT. In an advanced leisure and recreation lesson good use was made of digital imagery to record, analyse and evaluate individual coaching performance. In a catering lesson, the teacher used a powerpoint presentation including photographs of the students present to demonstrate good body language for customer service skills. In some lessons, students preferred learning styles are not taken into account. In the less effective lessons, teaching does not inspire students who are easily distracted and fail to give their full attention to tasks set. A limited range of learning strategies are used and questioning techniques in these lessons fails to challenge the more able students. Students' behaviour was immature in some classes.

67. Specialist catering and sports therapy resources are good. Travel and catering classrooms are comfortable and well maintained. Staff qualifications are good and some newer staff in catering and travel have good up-to-date industry experience which they use to good effect in lessons. Some experienced teaching staff have little recent industry experience. Sports therapy staff are particularly

well qualified and are active in the industry.

68. Assessment practices are not consistent. Internal verification in catering is good and there are meetings to standardise assessment decisions and share good practice. In catering and leisure and travel lessons, students are given immediate and helpful verbal feedback on their work. Some written feedback on work is too brief to be of value, but some includes in-depth and constructive comments. Students are not always told the assessment criteria. In sports therapy, some assessment practice is poor. Internal verification is not carried out until a late stage of the course. There is an over dependence on portfolio evidence for internal verification and no evidence of observation of assessment. Portfolios are poorly referenced, there is no recording of oral questioning and student responses, and there are examples of students being assessed as competent on the basis of teamwork to which they have contributed very little. Some aspects of the practical spas and steam units are not assessed in a practical working environment.

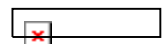
69. Formal links with employers are underdeveloped. Leisure and tourism courses do not include work experience. Within most courses, there are opportunities for students to undertake visits or residential trips to enhance the curriculum. External visits are used to aid development of research skills in leisure and tourism courses. There are good external links with local schools, and local authority sport facilities.

70. Support for students is good. In-class support for NVQ level 1 students is particularly good. In practical and theory lessons, qualified staff support students with basic skills and interpretation of vocational instructions. In addition, these students all have detailed and up-to-date record books to show their progress. In travel, students attend subject workshops to help them with their coursework. Effective use is made of visiting speakers as well as subject teachers and careers advisers to provide broad and specific careers advice.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. Communication is good and curriculum managers meet weekly to share college information. Course teams are involved in setting and meeting targets. An advanced practitioner, who is also a member of the management team, helps teachers in the area to improve effectiveness and to develop new classroom strategies. However, there are some inconsistencies in practice across course teams. Minutes of meetings vary in quality and lack detail. Actions agreed in meetings are not monitored effectively. Some student behaviour, attendance and attainment issues have yet to be addressed effectively. There are also inconsistencies in internal verification practices. Recent management changes have not yet had an impact, but plans are in place to bring about improvements. Equality of opportunity and social inclusion practices are good and course teams are working to address the under representation of students of minorities ethnic heritage by promoting courses more widely. Staff development activities are linked to business objectives and have been effective in improving standards of teaching and learning.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

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

Strengths

- some innovative teaching which motivates students
- high pass rates for NVQ level 1 hairdressing, NVQ level 2 beauty therapy, advanced nail technology certificate and the diploma in aromatherapy

- effective and well-planned delivery of key skills.

Weaknesses

- insufficient promotion of professional standards in beauty therapy teaching
- low pass rates for NVQ level 2 hairdressing and several beauty courses
- inadequate review of work-based apprentices.

Scope of provision

72. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy and other related therapies. There are 44 students aged 16 to 18 and 72 adults on hairdressing courses. In beauty therapy and other related therapies, there are 239 students aged 16 to 18 and 340 adults. Courses include NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3, the Indian head massage certificate, diplomas in aromatherapy, reflexology and holistic therapies. All beauty therapy and hairdressing courses are available full time and part time. The college has useful links with 37 employers who provide work placements. There are 39 apprentices on foundation modern apprenticeship programmes and one student on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme. The beauty therapy advanced modern apprenticeship programme has four apprentices.

Achievement and standards

73. Pass rates are above national averages on NVQ level 1 hairdressing, NVQ level 2 beauty therapy, advanced nail technology and the diploma in aromatherapy. There are low pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing, NVQ level 3 beauty therapy, Indian head massage, manicure certificate and the certificate in body massage. Retention rates on some courses were below national averages in 2002. These include NVQ level 1 hairdressing, body massage certificate, theatrical and media make-up. Retention rates have improved during the current year for both college students and work-based students. Apprenticeship framework achievements are improving in work-based learning. Good standards of work are displayed in most practical hairdressing lessons. Students' skills are well developed in advanced nail techniques. Level 3 hairdressers demonstrate advanced foil highlight techniques plus innovative and creative cutting techniques.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	*	19	32
		% retention	*	79	72
		% pass rate	*	67	91
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	43	31	53
		% retention	53	71	70
		% pass rate	100	73	73
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	39	33	47
		% retention	59	76	74
		% pass rate	96	75	91
Diploma in advanced nail technology	2	No. of starts	38	34	18
		% retention	100	94	89
		% pass rate	87	81	88
Manicure certificate (short)	2	No. of starts	37	33	17
		% retention	100	100	94
		% pass rate	86	79	75
Body massage	2	No. of starts	35	45	32

certificate (1 year)		% retention	83	71	75
		% pass rate	90	97	83
Diploma in aromatherapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	48	32	20
		% retention	71	88	75
		% pass rate	82	86	100
Diploma in reflexology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	31	30	28
		% retention	87	87	82
		% pass rate	70	84	87

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

* less than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

74. Most teaching is good or very good. Some is innovative and stimulates students' interest and understanding. Most lessons benefit from well-planned teaching. In a small number of lessons, the plans refer to differentiation but this is not incorporated into the teaching. Key skills are taught effectively using vocationally relevant learning materials. Full-time and work-based students are well informed of the key skills requirements and work on different key skills in turn. However, lesson plans and schemes of work do not always identify further opportunities for reinforcing key skills learning within the curriculum. Work-based hairdressing apprentices value off-the-job training and enjoy attending college. Professional practice in beauty therapy is not reinforced or effectively promoted. Some students are unkempt, and demonstrate low standards and poor sterilisation practice.

75. Teaching staff are well qualified and use opportunities available for staff development. The specialist accommodation is dated and in a poor state of decoration. There are plans to refurbish this. Storage for learners' belongings and for clients' clothing is inadequate. There are insufficient workstations for students in some lessons. The large hairdressing salon and a media make-up room are too small for the number of students in classes.

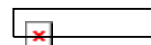
76. Students have individual progress reviews. These are used to action plan, set targets and plan for assessment. Unit achievement is monitored through a student tracking record, which is held in student portfolios and is reviewed at each tutorial. Parents' evenings are held twice a year. At the time of the inspection, work-based reviews were behind schedule as a result of staff shortages. Employers are poorly informed of the requirements of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Employers receive schemes of work, but are not guided and supported in understanding the students' education and training requirements.

77. Course enhancement is good with students undertaking a variety of additional qualifications alongside the main programme. All students have an induction supported by a useful induction booklet. Initial assessment of students takes place during induction and identifies the additional support needs of students. The tutorial programme is well planned and includes individual reviews. Students feel well supported by teachers and see their personal tutors as caring and supportive.

Leadership and management

78. Leadership and management of hair and beauty therapy are satisfactory. Many staff, including managers are new. Action has been taken to address the low retention rates for some courses and there are signs that these are improving. All students are surveyed at three points during their course and are given feedback on the findings through tutorials and on notice boards. Lesson observations are conducted by trained hairdressing and beauty therapy team observers. Staff performance reviews take place annually and these identify staff development needs. Equal opportunities are an effective feature of college-based programmes. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process through annual course reviews, which inform the self-assessment report.

Health, social care and public services



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates for childcare courses and GNVQ foundation in health and social care
- high retention rates for most full-time childcare and public service courses
- high grades for the certificate in childcare and education course
- much good and very good teaching
- good college-based resources to support teaching and learning
- good academic and pastoral support to improve students' performance.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates for some NVQ care programmes
- slow progress towards the achievement of NVQs
- underdeveloped use of ILT to support teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

79. The area offers courses at different levels in health and social care, counselling, childcare, preparation for entry to the uniformed services and access to nursing. In partnership with Hopwood Hall College in Rochdale, the college has gained Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for childcare. Staff have established effective links with Bury's early years development and childcare partnership. Health and social care staff and students are involved in an innovative pilot scheme with the local NHS Trust which has been used as a model for a multi-disciplinary cadet schemes in Greater Manchester. Approximately 500 students, mostly aged 16 to 18, are enrolled on full-time courses. Another 500 students are working towards NVQs in early years, oral hygiene, playwork, and care. Of these, approximately 240 are work-based learners. The college's subsidiary, BCE Mesnes, provides and manages the work-based learning.

Achievement and standards

80. There are high pass rates for childcare courses and GNVQ foundation in health and social care courses, significantly above national averages. The certificate in childcare and education course has a high proportion of high grades. Most full-time childcare, counselling and public service courses have good retention rates. Retention rates for NVQ level 2 care (direct care) and NVQ level 3 care (continuing care) were low in 2002. There are signs that these have improved for the current cohort. Of those retained in work-based learning, most complete their full framework. Some apprentices are on programme too long before the first assessment takes place and others do not know their target completion date.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	36	30	40
		% retention	75	73	78

		% pass rate	81	100	97
Introductory counselling skills	1	No. of starts	70	71	65
		% retention	94	93	98
		% pass rate	83	88	89
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	58	56	72
		% retention	71	73	77
		% pass rate	83	76	69
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	18	19	26
		% retention	89	84	88
		% pass rate	88	87	100
NVQ care (direct care)	2	No. of starts	*	389	96
		% retention	*	42	32
		% pass rate	*	86	84
GNVQ advanced / AVCE health and social care**	3	No. of starts	*	16	62
		% retention	*	88	64
		% pass rate	*	64	74
Diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	64	59	49
		% retention	78	75	94
		% pass rate	100	93	96
NVQ childcare and education	3	No. of starts	22	31	41
		% retention	59	77	64
		% pass rate	100	86	100

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

* course not offered or did not run

** GNVQ advanced health and social care was replaced with AVCE health and social care in 2002

Quality of education and training

81. There is much good and very good teaching and learning, which meets individuals' needs and course requirements. Some outstanding and inspirational teaching enthuses students on childcare courses. Well-planned teaching builds on students' previous learning and experiences. Many effective links are made between knowledge and practice resulting in good skills development across all courses. Good use is made of assignment work and preparation for external examinations. Lessons are well planned, demanding and incorporate relevant practical elements. The use of ILT in teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Some low class numbers weaken the learning experience.

82. Good resources help support teaching and learning in the college. Effective use is made of physical and human resources to support students' practical and vocational learning. There are well-prepared and high-quality teaching materials. Work-based learning outside the college is less well resourced. Staff are well qualified with relevant vocational experience which is regularly updated. Most classrooms are pleasant and spacious with good displays of students' work. Road traffic noise is intrusive in some classrooms.

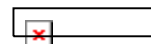
83. College-based assessment is rigorous. Students receive clear and helpful assignment briefs. Feedback on work is helpful to students in improving their grades. In work-based learning, there are few qualified assessors in the workplace and assessment is carried out by college staff, sometimes

using evidence from employers' witness statements.

84. The wide range of courses meets local and employer needs. Good use is made of students' work experiences in lessons. Childcare placements are well organised and co-ordinated. Public services tutors have established good links with local uniformed services. Residential experiences for AVCE and public service students promote the skills of problem solving and working with people. However, there are limited work experience opportunities for health and care students. Good opportunities exist in college for students to progress.

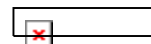
85. Student support is effective in improving student performance. Students benefit from regular tutorials and they speak highly of the commitment given by their teachers and personal tutors. Initial assessment is effective and informs lesson planning. Target setting is used well to guide students to improve their grades. Tutors are proactive in identifying and meeting students' learning needs.

Leadership and management



86. Leadership and management are good. There are clear lines of communication and clear roles and responsibilities within the curriculum areas. Regular meetings are held. Staff have a commitment to raising achievement and supporting learners. Equality of opportunity is well integrated into teaching, learning and assessment. The findings of the inspection team concur with the findings of the self-assessment report. Staff have devised an action plan which accurately reflects the areas of concern.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses
- much good teaching and learning
- effective integration of ICT
- good use of formative assessment
- effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate art and design between 2000 and 2002
- lack of appropriate accommodation for some activities and group sizes.
- underdeveloped use of personal target setting for students.

Scope of provision

87. The college has a wide range of courses for students aged 16 to 18. Approximately 470 students are studying at level 3 on courses such as GCE AS and GCE A-level art and design, drama, media, AVCE media, and national diplomas in art and design, music and performing arts. There are 126 students enrolled on courses at levels 1 and 2 including foundation GNVQ art and

design, first diploma in performing arts, GNVQ intermediate art and design, and media. There are also adults enrolled on courses in visual and performing arts, including evening courses.

Achievement and standards

88. Many courses now have retention and pass rates that are significantly above national averages. In 2002, first diploma in performing arts, GNVQ intermediate media, GCE AS drama, and national diploma in drama all had 100% pass rates and in the same year there were seven courses where at least 50% of students attained high grades. AVCE (double award) media also had a pass rate of 100% in 2002, but the retention rate was very low at 46%. GCE AS art studies/fine arts had pass rates significantly above the national averages in both 2001 and 2002 and the retention rate improved significantly in 2002. GNVQ foundation art and design has had consistently high pass rates for the three years to 2002, and the retention rate improved from 47% in 2001, to 81% in 2002. Pass rates for GNVQ intermediate art and design were at least 30% below the national average in 2001 and 2002. The retention rate was significantly below the national average for two out of the three years to 2002.

89. Students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and potential. The standard of students' work is mostly good or better. Some is outstanding.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Art and craft studies	1	No. of starts	180	353	253
		% retention	77	77	79
		% pass rate	91	90	91
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	18	20	19
		% retention	50	75	84
		% pass rate	67	100	100
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	41	31	38
		% retention	61	77	68
		% pass rate	60	42	46
Diploma foundation studies art and design	3	No. of starts	26	15	19
		% retention	85	93	95
		% pass rate	100	100	94
National diploma performing arts / drama	3	No. of starts	54	40	39
		% retention	83	58	79
		% pass rate	84	96	100
GCE AS art studies / fine arts	3	No. of starts	*	157	164
		% retention	*	69	83
		% pass rate	*	84	87
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	*	80	76
		% retention	*	80	83
		% pass rate	*	95	87

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

* course not offered or did not run

Quality of education and training

90. There is much good teaching and learning. Lesson plans and schemes of work are detailed and well structured and some have clear evidence of differentiated activities. There is much good one-to-one teaching and effective support and encouragement is given to students in classes. Many teachers are skilled, highly motivated and enthusiastic. Students show good individual responses to creative problems through research, exploration and development of their own ideas. Visual arts students' observational drawing skills are significantly improved by the inclusion of life drawing in their programme. Music and media students have a good understanding of key concepts and themes. Some outstanding work was observed in performing arts in confident performances. Students display mature and sensitive approaches to peer feedback and evaluation. Students are confident to discuss their work and have a good understanding of the process and wider context of their work. Students aged 16 to 18 find the language of critique difficult and some tutors have developed helpful lists of appropriate vocabulary to support their development. Some teachers do not use whole class teaching sufficiently for discussion or evaluation of work. Journals are not always effectively used as working documents and some students produce neat finished copies at the end of a project rather than showing developments throughout the process.

91. There is effective use of ICT in all stages of the creative process, including research into artists and wider contexts, experimental manipulation of personally developed images in development work and in final resolved images. The well-equipped mac-suite is well used and provides a good range of computer software to create and manipulate imagery.

92. Some accommodation is inadequate. There is insufficient space in some rooms for the number of students in the classes. There is insufficient space for rehearsal and performance in performing arts. In some art lessons, there is inadequate space for the large scale of student work towards the end of the course. A small number of lessons take place in temporary accommodation. There is an effective assessment strategy which is designed to ensure that students achieve their full potential. Good use is made of formative assessment. Feedback to students is detailed, clear, and developmental. Clear guidance is provided about what needs to be done to raise grades at the final assessment stage. Internal verification is well planned, and there are arrangements in place within the department and with a nearby college which support standardisation.

93. The college uses individual target setting and action planning to help students make best use of their formative assessment feedback, but many students set themselves unrealistic or vague targets or none at all. Few tutors fully explain the principles or give students practice in setting and measuring realistic targets for themselves. In some cases, targets are set and written by the tutor and there is a lack of ownership of the action plan by the student.

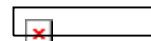
94. Students are effectively supported. Good support is provided for students with disabilities and for those with other specific needs. For example, there is a carer to support mobility for a student with a disability, and support for students with dyslexia. Information and guidance about the programme area and courses is satisfactory. Some information is not sufficiently student focused in either language or presentation.

Leadership and management

95. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong emphasis on continuous improvement. Staff are fully involved in self-assessment and action plans are monitored. The self-assessment report is detailed and accurate. Strategies are in place to address identified weaknesses. There are plans to improve the accommodation through a capital project. Action has been taken to address the weaknesses in retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate art and design. On this course, the current in-year retention rate is 94% and the standard of students' work indicates that students are likely to achieve the qualification. Links with the wider business and local community influence some provision, and there are good examples of classes and projects that have been arranged in response to specific identified need. Communications are good with regular meetings which the majority of staff attend. Informal communication is also very good. Staff have good awareness of key issues affecting the department and college. Teachers have a range of good staff development opportunities including professional updating. Classroom observation is systematic, rigorous and developmental. Student views are sought in a number of ways, and students are informed of action taken to address their concerns. Success in all forms is celebrated,

and the area maintains a high profile in the college through the display of high-quality student work and performance.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high retention rates
- high pass rates for GCE AS and A-level courses
- very good academic and pastoral support
- well-devised revision teaching closely matched to examining body requirements.

Weaknesses

- underachievement of higher grades in some GCE AS and A-level subjects
- low pass rates in GCSE psychology.

Scope of provision

96. The college offers GCE AS and GCE A-level courses in geography, history, philosophy, general studies, psychology, sociology and law. At the time of the inspection in May 2003, there was also GCSE provision which the college plans to discontinue. There are nearly 2,000 enrolments on GCE AS and GCE A-level courses. Most students are aged 16 to 18. Most full-time, second-year GCE A-level students take GCE AS general studies. This is taught through the tutorial programme, supported by additional special lectures. Most students take two years to complete a GCE A-level programme, but in special circumstances, students are able to take the GCE AS and A2 course in one year. There is very limited evening provision for adults.

Achievement and standards

97. Most pass rates and many retention rates are high. Retention rates have been consistently high for GCE A-levels. Many GCE AS subjects had pass rates well above the national averages in 2001 and 2002. Many GCE A-level subjects also have high pass rates. For example, in 2002, the pass rate for history was 98%, and for geography it was 95%. In 2001, many GCE A-level subjects had low proportions of higher grades, but for many subjects the proportion of high grades rose significantly in 2002. GCE AS law and psychology both had high proportions of A and B grades in 2002 while for sociology and geography the proportions of high grades were low. Pass rates for GCSE psychology are low and were significantly below national averages for the three years to 2002. Student work is of a good standard. Progression to university is good. Student attendance is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	41	42	49
		% retention	80	76	78
		% pass rate	30	16	24
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	243	282

		% retention	*	82	79
		% pass rate	*	80	88
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	*	122	153
		% retention	*	84	79
		% pass rate	*	87	79
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	79	85
		% retention	*	72	79
		% pass rate	*	86	82
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	124	135	146
		% retention	64	77	95
		% pass rate	85	90	94
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	39	62	70
		% retention	64	76	97
		% pass rate	76	89	91
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	36	52	59
		% retention	86	83	93
		% pass rate	84	79	98
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	71	49	49
		% retention	82	88	98
		% pass rate	93	91	95

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

* course not offered or did not run

Note: GCE A-level retention rate measured over two years in 2000 and 2001, and over one year in 2002

Quality of education and training

98. Much teaching is good. All the lessons observed during the inspection were appropriately focussed on preparing students for their forthcoming examinations. Teachers use their experience as examiners for the awarding bodies to remind students of examination techniques and to help students revise key topics effectively. In psychology, students took part in quizzes, which prompted them to recall important definitions. In one history class, students were helped to understand the concepts of change and continuity by preparing a graph representing the rise and decline over time of the influence of the president of the United States. In a geography class, students were encouraged to develop their ideas through carefully targeted questioning, and group work was well managed. The expectations of students are high. Some teaching lacks pace and there is insufficient variety in the teachers' approaches. Teaching does not take sufficient account of individual student learning styles or ability. There is little use of ILT in the classroom.

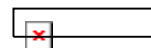
99. Teachers are well qualified. Classrooms are bright, modern, and well decorated with useful posters and student work. There are no computers or interactive whiteboards in the classrooms. Library book stock is limited. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Teachers support and praise students. They carefully monitor the progress of their students in relation to the performance predicted when they start the course. Students identified as needing extra support receive extra help from the learning support team. Some students of very high potential are allocated a mentor under the mentoring for excellence scheme. Teachers' feedback to students is thorough and helps them to progress. A homework and marking policy is in place.

100. New students are invited into college to try out the courses which they may wish to follow, and make informed choices. They receive specialist advice. All students who are progressing from GCE AS on to the second year of the GCE A-level course start their teaching year in June so that they are well prepared for their second year of study. Students speak highly of the support they receive from teachers.

Leadership and management

101. Leadership and management are good at all levels and managers work well together. They successfully communicate their high expectations for students to their staff. There is an ethos of encouraging students to which all staff subscribe. All teachers are committed to setting demanding targets for their students. Self-assessment is thorough, involving all staff. Some weaknesses identified have already been addressed. For example, a policy for homework and marking is now in place, after the self-assessment report identified this as an area of weakness. Course teams set challenging targets. New approaches are piloted, and after evaluation, adopted by others. One example is a lesson review sheet completed by students at the end of lessons in psychology. Changes are made in response to student feedback. The advanced teaching practitioner is helping other teachers to develop classroom practice, and this is beginning to have an impact.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for GCE A-level English language and literature
- good and effective support for students
- good learning resources
- successful management intervention to improve pass rates.

Weaknesses

- low numbers of students achieving higher grades at advanced level
- some low levels of student skills and understanding at advanced level.

Scope of provision

102. The college offers English language, English literature and English language and literature at GCE AS and GCE A level. Over 500 students take these qualifications during the day. GCSE English is offered both during the day and in the evening. French, German, Spanish and Urdu are offered at GCE AS and GCE A-level during the day. Over 200 adults study Spanish, French, Italian and Greek as evening courses, mainly at introductory level.

Achievement and standards

103. Retention rates are high particularly for GCE A-level English. Pass rates have improved steadily at GCE A-level and in GCSE English. Achievement has not shown the same improvement for GCE AS courses. Pass rates are mainly around the national average with the exceptions of GCE AS English language and literature which is significantly above the national average and GCE AS French which is significantly below. In most subjects at GCE AS and GCE A level, the proportions of students attaining higher grades are low. For example, only 14% of students gained grades A or B in English literature in 2002. A significant minority of students do not demonstrate the skills and knowledge expected for their level of study. For example, modern foreign language students are

hesitant in speaking the target language.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Foreign languages - basic level	1	No. of starts	101	190	110
		% retention	83	84	67
		% pass rate	58	40	85
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	298	184	179
		% retention	70	79	75
		% pass rate	24	39	54
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	49	39	32
		% retention	51	87	97
		% pass rate	84	91	94
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	83	74	62
		retention	76	78	98
		% pass rate	70	79	95
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	61	45	38
		% retention	79	76	92
		% pass rate	73	76	97
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	24	17	22
		% retention	79	65	100
		% pass rate	74	82	82

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

Note: GCE A-level retention rate measured over two years in 2000 and 2001, and over one year in 2002

Quality of education and training

104. Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned. In the best lessons, teachers give clear guidance and are able to support students' understanding of the task across the full range of ability in the group. In a lesson analysing the language of texts by Poe and Chandler, students' knowledge and understanding were carefully developed by sensitive questioning. In an English language lesson, there was exemplary pre-examination coaching to a large group in a well-paced lesson, consolidating student contributions and providing a very helpful checklist. In a literature class, students were carefully guided through analysis of literary texts from a number of perspectives and were encouraged to relate the texts to their social contexts. In a minority of lessons, pair and group work lacked structure. Some students did not participate and little learning was evident.

105. There is a good range of resources to support students' learning, both in classrooms and in libraries and resource centres. There are good language laboratory and video making facilities. In modern foreign languages, staff have developed intranet-based materials to support students' wider learning which students can access from home. Foreign language assistants enhance students' learning in all the major languages. Teaching accommodation in a new building is bright and comfortable. Staff are well qualified.

106. Most students are expected to do regular homework. This work is marked accurately and often contains detailed feedback explaining the reasons for errors. Feedback is particularly good in modern foreign languages. However, assessment criteria are not routinely attached to marked work.

107. There are low and declining numbers of students aged 16 to 18 studying GCE A-level modern languages. Managers at all levels are working actively to address this decline. For example, there is a summer taster programme to encourage progression.

108. Students speak very highly of the levels of support they receive from subject teachers, personal tutors and the college's support services. There are good processes in place for monitoring student attendance and progress. Students value their individual reviews. Mentoring systems are effective in supporting students across the ability range. Much attention is paid to individual learning needs within lessons and additional classes are provided prior to examinations.

Leadership and management

109. Leadership and management are good. Action has been taken to improve the quality of courses. For example, in GCSE English the pass rate has improved significantly. In GCE A-level English language and literature, one group of students with low entry scores was targeted through team teaching, and achieved better than expected grades in the January module examination. Communications, both formal and informal, are good. There are regular course team and curriculum area meetings. These are used for giving information and discussions about potential improvements. Staff also meet on a voluntary basis to coach and tutor one another. They value feedback from lesson observations which encourages them to reflect on, and improve, their teaching performance.

Literacy and numeracy

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

Strengths

- very effective individual learning plans for primary basic skills
- much very good teaching
- effective support embedded within curriculum provision
- good management of key skills at level 1
- high pass rates on some courses.

Weaknesses

- insufficient development and assessment of literacy and numeracy with full-time entry level students
- low pass rates for key skills application of number level 2 and basic English.

Scope of provision

110. The college offers a wide range of literacy and numeracy courses for adults and young people. These include courses at pre-entry, entry level, level 1 and 2 as well as key skills at levels 1 and 2. The majority of literacy and numeracy students are working towards qualifications and national awards. Others work towards individual targets. The college has very good links with the local community and works in a range of venues including community centres, a rehabilitation unit, mental health day centres, community allotments, in partnerships with other voluntary organisations and with employers. There is a range of imaginative courses developing literacy and numeracy through IT, cookery and horticulture. A three-hour, one-to-one diagnostic assessment is available on demand. Full-time students receive opportunities to further develop literacy and numeracy skills as part of their main programme. Additional support in literacy and numeracy is available to students on all college courses.

Achievement and standards

111. Pass rates on some courses are high. The City and Guilds 3611 communication skills level 2

and 3750 numeracy level 1 have had consistently high pass rates, well above national averages, for the two years to 2002. Basic English, however, has had pass rates significantly below the national average for three years. Most retention rates are in line with national averages or better. For example, the retention rate for City and Guilds 3611 has been consistently above national averages. Key skills pass rates are better at level 1 than at level 2. At level 1, the pass rates for communications in 2001 and 2002 were 75% and 76%, respectively, and for application of number 51% and 60%, respectively. At level 2 the pass rates for communications were 21% and 42% and for application of number 13% and 21%, respectively. The retention rate for application of number level 2 was also low in 2002. Students demonstrate high levels of individual learning and study skills. They work independently and with purpose.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Basic English	pre-entry	No. of starts	16	17	154
		% retention	88	71	85
		% pass rate	29	73	71
City and Guilds 3750 numeracy stage 1	1	No. of starts	76	37	48
		% retention	54	76	81
		% pass rate	49	82	87
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	*	134	226
		% retention	*	85	82
		% pass rate	*	75	76
City and Guilds 3611 communication skills	2	No. of starts	38	19	15
		% retention	87	89	67
		% pass rate	91	100	70
Key skills application of number	2	No. of starts	**	697	497
		% retention	**	94	55
		% pass rate	**	13	21

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

* course not offered or did not run

** less than 15 starters

Quality of education and training

112. The quality of teaching is very good, with a high proportion of lessons graded very good or outstanding. Where teaching is outstanding, the planning is rigorous and based on clear identified targets for individual students using a wide range of teaching activities, together with a multi-sensory approach. In these lessons, students are fully engaged in activities and demonstrate high levels of personal learning and study skills. In one lesson concerned with developing understanding of descriptive language, the lesson involved whole group and small group discussion about the pros and cons of mobile phones. Individual tasks followed and students accessed the Internet to carry out research. Finally, students produced a piece of free writing that ensured they practised their spellings. Students could explain the techniques they had learned to improve their spelling and could describe which technique worked best for them. All this was captured within the individual learning plans and students' progress informed the planning for the next lesson. In another lesson where students were learning about a pagan festival, the activity was differentiated to allow two students to use a dictionary, another student to do research on the Internet and other students to discuss the topic in a small group to develop their speaking and listening skills. Classroom management is very good, with younger students demonstrating maturity in their responses and

behaviours. Where classes are mainly adult or where there is a mix of age ranges, students demonstrate respect and support for each other. In the satisfactory lessons, planning lacked the rigour seen elsewhere and the lessons lacked appropriate pace.

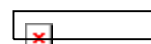
113. Initial assessment is very effective within the primary basic skills provision. It is used to identify individual learning targets, often leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Individual learning plans are comprehensive and include records of progress and achievement. Verbal and written feedback on work is constructive, clearly informing students how to improve. Within the full-time provision at entry level, literacy and numeracy targets have been set for many students, but not all, as part of their individual learning plans. These are only addressed within specific literacy and numeracy lessons. There are missed opportunities to develop and assess literacy and numeracy skills within practical and vocational contexts. Literacy and numeracy support are strengths in many of the curriculum areas. Students talk positively about the support they receive from their tutors. Curriculum teams take responsibility for initial assessment and the initiation and delivery of support where appropriate. There is very good specialist support available through the additional support team, who work very closely with curriculum areas ensuring that support is strongly embedded in the curriculum provision. Personal support and guidance is very good with caring and interested staff with high expectations of students.

114. Accommodation is good and includes 'Skills.com', a well-resourced, high-quality specialist accommodation for the delivery of literacy and numeracy which offers adults a welcoming environment.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management are good. Managers set a clear direction and have high expectations. Targets are set for retention and pass rates and progress towards these is monitored. There is effective cross-college management of key skills at level 1. Managers have responded proactively to the basic skills quality initiative and inclusive learning quality initiative and there has been comprehensive staff training on these. Communication amongst staff is good and the different teams hold regular meetings. Staff are fully involved in self-assessment. The internal observation process, staff performance reviews and the sharing of good practice have been used to effect improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Development plans are carefully monitored.

Programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on pre-entry level courses
- wide range of courses which meets community needs
- good teaching on practical courses
- very good working relationships between staff and students with effective student support
- good progression from pre-entry to entry level courses.

Weaknesses

- some unsuitable workshop facilities
- underdeveloped use of ICT in teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

116. The college offers a broad range of discrete courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This provision includes six full-time specialist courses at pre-entry and entry level. There are currently 180 students. A number of school link courses are also offered and there is an increasing amount of work with younger students under the age of 16. Community-based courses have been established for people who would not normally be able to access full-time courses at the main college site. Students take external qualifications where appropriate. These include MENCAP essential skills award, skills for working life, and team enterprise. Student achievement is measured against individual targets set following initial assessment.

Achievement and standards

117. Students make very good progress on the majority of courses, and most are able to move on to a higher-level course or to employment. Most retention rates are high. For example, all pre-entry courses in 2002 had high retention rates. Students gain confidence through their lessons and activities. They have high levels of motivation, and speak positively of their progress. Coursework is of a high standard and demonstrates good progress. Punctuality and attendance are good. Students achieve challenging personal targets and excellent use is made of practical activities to develop personal, social and learning skills. Team enterprise students have a working company that produces products including bird feeders, notebooks and pot stands. These are sold in the college and at young enterprise exhibitions. One group of students has produced a book of poetry, and taken part in local poetry readings. Students have won local awards for their achievements in 2002 and 2003.

A sample of retention and pass rates in programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Independent living skills / life skills / towards independence	pre-entry	No. of starts	19	25	19
		% retention	95	100	95
		% pass rate	100	96	94
Community links preparation for life	pre-entry	No. of starts	60	51	53
		% retention	96	80	87
		% pass rate	94	100	100
Vocational access / work preparation	entry	No. of starts	*	22	23
		% retention	*	86	87
		% pass rate	*	68	85
Skills for working life	entry	No. of starts	25	33	28
		% retention	84	67	68
		% pass rate	100	100	95

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

* less than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

118. Teaching and learning are good. Almost two thirds of the lessons observed were judged to be good or better, and over one third were very good or outstanding. The best teaching challenges and inspires students. Teachers develop resources to match individual students' requirements and provide challenges which stretch the students. All teachers are supportive and encouraging and have a good knowledge and understanding of each of their students. Teachers use good examples linked to students' lives to illustrate points, and imaginative practical activities to involve them in learning. Students are effectively questioned about their learning. In most lessons, learning support staff encourage individual students to attempt new tasks. Teachers use praise and constructive

comments to acknowledge students successes. Students have opportunities for team working, problem solving and decision-making. For example, in one lesson in which students were producing soft toys for a community project, the teacher carefully supervised some students using a sewing machine and allowed them to have increasing control of the machine as they gained confidence. Other students were encouraged to make choices about the materials they would use and the shape of the toys that they would make. Students on vocational courses do part of their course in the well-equipped vocational departments in the college, including catering, business studies, engineering, and hairdressing. Learning opportunities in the vocational areas are used effectively to develop practical work skills and social skills. Students work well during these lessons and make good progress. Insufficient attention is given to the development and assessment of literacy and numeracy skills in practical and vocational lessons. Few teachers make effective use of specialist ICT to increase learning opportunities and there was little use of augmentative communication. ICT was seldom used in observed lessons, and there was too much copy writing by students with low literacy skills. The college has recently acquired a range of additional hardware and software for use by students with additional needs. There are missed opportunities to use these resources.

119. Staff feedback on student work is constructive and seeks to develop confidence. Good use is made of photography to provide supporting evidence in student portfolios. There are effective internal verification procedures and reports from external verifiers are positive. Initial assessments are matched to the students' individual needs. During initial interviews, teachers complete an assessment based on student responses. Information is also obtained from partner special schools, to help identify students' strengths and areas for development. Further assessments are made by observation throughout induction, and where necessary the induction process is extended to meet individual need. The results of these assessments are used to devise students' individual learning plans. Short-term and long-term goals are set. The quality of some individual learning plans is unsatisfactory and the targets are not sufficiently clear. Some students have no specific targets relating to literacy and numeracy.

120. Students speak highly of the support they receive. Weekly tutorials are integrated with other aspects of the curriculum. Support arrangements are well planned and well managed. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed. Classrooms have displays of student work and photographs of students participating in activities. The facilities on the main college site for horticulture are poor. The poly tunnel is too small and it is poorly sited. Workbenches are not adequate for students with mobility problems. Students are provided with the opportunity to work on an allotment at a site elsewhere in the town. The teaching area for the team enterprise programme is inadequate and better woodworking facilities are needed.

Leadership and management

121. Leadership and management are good. Managers provide clear direction and set high standards. Staff work well together as a team and there is a culture of commitment to student success and achievement. Communications are effective and managers support their staff well. Course team meetings take place regularly and are well attended by both teachers and support workers. Targets are set and monitored at course level. Quality assurance procedures are well established. Course reviews are carried out and all staff are involved in the self-assessment process. Action has been taken to address weaknesses identified through self-assessment. Managers and staff show a strong commitment to continuing professional development. Links with community partners ensure that prospective students have appropriate progression routes. This enables students to continue their personal and social development in an appropriate environment at the end of their course at Bury.

Part D: College data

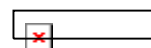


Table 1. Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18	19+
	%	%
1	15	42
2	33	17
3	32	10
4/5	0	1
Other	20	29
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2. Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	2,208	429	8
Land-based provision	43	0	0
Construction	17	64	0
Engineering	174	223	1
Business administration, management and professional	1,306	2,451	11
Information and communications technology	1,973	5,804	23
Retailing, customer service and transportation	13	28	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	910	601	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	323	311	2
Health, social care and public services	988	1,550	8
Visual and performing arts and media	1,286	326	5
Humanities	4,745	1,159	18
English, languages and communication	2,154	368	8
Foundation programmes	1,668	1,818	10
Other	14	511	1
Total	17,822	15,643	100

Source: Provided by the college in 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long courses)	Retention & pass rate	16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
		1	Starters excluding transfers	931	837	997	1,308
Retention rate (%)	79		81	82	77	75	58
National average (%)	80		79	*	78	78	*
Pass rate (%)	71		81	77	73	70	70
National average (%)	65		68	*	66	68	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,631	1,468	1,546	1,286	1,627	1,178
	Retention rate (%)	75	74	80	75	70	71
	National average (%)	76	76	*	79	78	*
	Pass rate (%)	79	80	81	74	77	80
	National average (%)	66	69	*	65	69	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,072	4,156	4,667	1,452	1,277	988
	Retention rate (%)	76	79	84	73	71	71
	National average (%)	76	77	*	78	78	*
	Pass rate (%)	77	79	84	76	75	78
	National average (%)	74	76	*	66	69	*

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 1999 to 2002: College ISR.

* data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	68	29	2	136
Level 2 (intermediate)	70	23	7	56
Level 1 (foundation)	65	35	0	17
Other sessions	79	18	3	38
Totals	70	27	3	247

Note: figures do not total 100% as a result of rounding

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