



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Inspection report
Plymouth College of Further Education

Dates of inspection: 23 February–4 March 2004

© Crown copyright 2004. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

A report from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) under section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Reference:

Contents

Section	Page
Basic information about the college	v
Part A: Summary	1
Information about the college	1
How effective is the college?	1
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas	3
How well is the college led and managed?	6
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?	6
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?	6
Students' views of the college	7
Other information	8
Part B: The college as a whole	9
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors	9
Achievement and standards	9
Quality of education and training	11
Leadership and management	15
Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas	19
Science and mathematics	19
Construction	23
Engineering	27
Business administration, management and professional	31
Information and communication technology	35
Retailing and customer service	39
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	43
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	47

Health, social care and public services	51
Visual and performing arts and media	55
Humanities, English and modern foreign languages	59
Foundation programmes	63
Literacy and numeracy	66
Part D: College data	69
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age	69
Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age	69
Table 3: Retention and achievement	70
Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level	71
Notes	72

Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Plymouth College of Further Education
Type of college:	General further education
Principal:	David Percival
Address of college:	Kings Road Devonport Plymouth Devon PL1 5QG
Telephone number:	01752 305300
Fax number:	01752 305343
Chair of governors:	Mr Christopher Owen
Unique reference number:	130649
Name of reporting inspector:	Noelle Buick
Dates of inspection:	23 February–4 March 2004

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

Plymouth College of Further Education is concentrated on two main sites at Kings Road and the Goschen Centre. In addition, there are two neighbourhood colleges, at Martin's Gate and Camel's Head, where the college provides accessible education in the community. This supports the college's mission to provide excellent courses and services for personal development, to meet the needs of the local and wider community and for the social and economic regeneration of the city. At the time of inspection there were 3,500 students aged 16 to 18 and nearly 14,800 adult students. Approximately 77% of students are part time. Students from minority ethnic groups are some 4% of the student body, which is above that of the local population at 1.6%. Just over 50% of students are female.

The college offers a substantial range of provision at all levels in the 14 areas of learning, although provision in agriculture is very small. Construction and health, social care and public services have the highest number of enrolments. For students aged 16 to 18, most enrolment is at level 3, while for adults it is at level 1. There is a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in high technology engineering. The college has a large volume of work-based learning. It recently took over two local training providers: City of Plymouth Training and Employment in September 2003 and Plymouth Engineering Group Training Scheme in December 2002. Modern apprenticeship training is offered to nearly 1,000 learners, mainly in construction and engineering but also in hairdressing, administration, catering, and health and social care. As a result of taking over the two providers, the college acquired the use of a site in Devonport and one in Estover. The management and some teaching of the college's work-based training occur at these two sites. The college has recently formed a separate department to manage work-based learning, adult re-training and entry to employment (E2E). The college has significant franchised provision. There are 28 franchise partners with about 12,000 enrolments, covering most areas of learning.

There are approximately 241,000 residents in the City of Plymouth, with another 99,000 in the travel-to-work area. Over the last 10 years, the manufacturing industry has experienced a period of growth, followed by decline. Out of Plymouth's 20 wards, 10 are in the top quartile of the most deprived wards in England. Three are in the top 10%, with St Peter being the third most deprived ward in the South West of England. Plymouth's unemployment rate is 2.9%.

How effective is the college?

The inspection graded the quality of provision in 13 curriculum areas. Inspectors judged teaching, learning and attainment to be good in three areas and satisfactory in seven, including literacy and numeracy, where a contributory grade was awarded for good adult provision. Three areas were unsatisfactory. The quality of work-based learning was good in one area, satisfactory in three and unsatisfactory in one. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- wide range of provision to meet students' diverse needs
- good access to provision in the community
- accommodation and resources for learning
- links with employers and effective partnerships
- pass rates on short courses
- provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and E2E
- discrete provision in literacy and numeracy for adults
- commitment to equality and diversity.

What should be improved

- teaching and learning
- retention and pass rates on many courses
- provision in science and mathematics, construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy
- self-assessment and quality assurance
- the rate of modern apprenticeship achievement
- management response to identified weaknesses.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates are low on many courses. Teaching is good in biological sciences, but there is much unsatisfactory teaching in other lessons. Quality assurance procedures are ineffective and weaknesses identified at the last inspection remain. Resources are good and external links are strong.
Construction	Unsatisfactory. Work-based learning contributory grade: unsatisfactory. Pass rates are low. Teaching in practical lessons is good but theory teaching is often unsatisfactory. Resources for practical work are good. Reviews and assessments for work-based learners take place infrequently, and progress is slow.
Engineering	Satisfactory. Work-based learning contributory grade: satisfactory. Pass rates are high at level 1, but at levels 2 and 3 a significant number of students do not achieve their qualifications. Teaching is good. Students learn effectively and produce work of a high standard. Resources for practical work are good, except for automotive engineering. Modern apprentices are slow to achieve their qualifications and the co-ordination of a few aspects of work-based learning is ineffective.
Business administration, management and professional	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on professional management courses but low on a significant number of other courses. Students develop good occupational skills. Teachers make good use of adults' work experience in lessons and flexible provision attracts a wide range of students. Curriculum management is unsatisfactory.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on full-time courses but low on level 2 part-time courses. Students develop good technical skills in lessons, but the pace of learning is slow in many theory lessons. Teaching is good in telecommunications lessons. Monitoring of part-time students' progress is good. A wide range of accessible courses is offered.

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Retailing and customer service	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on the foundation customer care award but low on level 4 programmes. Students following national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes in the workplace are well supported. Learning resources are used effectively to carry out training and assessment in the workplace. A significant number of students are working towards an inappropriate level of qualification.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good. Work-based learning contributory grade: satisfactory. Pass rates are high on many courses, but are low on advanced subsidiary level (AS-level) sports, games and recreation. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Students' work is of a high standard but some assessment practices are unsatisfactory. Work-based learners benefit from good links between on-the-job and off-the-job training and close monitoring of progress.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Unsatisfactory. Work-based learning contributory grade: satisfactory. Pass rates are low on NVQ beauty therapy courses. Much teaching is dull and uninspiring, and the quality of students' practical work is poor. Resources for practical work are good for beauty therapy but poor for hairdressing. Curriculum management is ineffective. Retention and pass rates for work-based learners are high.
Health, social care and public services	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on many courses, but pass rates for key skills are low. Most teaching is good. External links and partnerships are strong. Teachers carry out assessments effectively and curriculum management is good.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on many courses, but retention rates are low on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate media. Teaching is good on performing arts and students demonstrate good performance skills, but teaching in art, media and the franchised music provision is uninspiring. Practical resources for teaching are good in performing arts and the franchised music provision.
Humanities, English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. Pass rates are satisfactory or better across most subjects, but many students do not reach the standards predicted for them. There is much good teaching. Provision is responsive to local needs and support for adult students is very good.

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Foundation programmes	Good. Work-based learning contributory grade: good. Students develop very good personal and social skills and those on E2E programmes achieve a range of additional qualifications. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Management of E2E is good, and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from effective external partnerships. The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is not well planned, and reviews of their progress lack clear targets.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Discrete adult provision contributory grade: good. Retention rates on adult programmes are high, and students develop good personal and learning skills. Teaching is good and students use information and communications technology (ICT) effectively. Asylum seekers receive a good induction, but teaching is unsatisfactory in a minority of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and key skills lessons. Arrangements for additional literacy and numeracy support are effective where received.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and governing body provide firm leadership. The strategic plan provides a clear vision of the college's planned range of activities and how it will evaluate its success. Pass and retention rates have improved overall during the last three years, although students' performance on many long courses is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, quality assurance procedures have been either ineffective or too slow in addressing significant weaknesses in curriculum provision. Some weaknesses identified at the last inspection remain, and provision is unsatisfactory in three curriculum areas. Self-assessment is both insufficiently rigorous and insufficiently coherent. Financial management is satisfactory and firm action has been taken to address financial difficulties. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Governors give good support to the principal in securing the future of the college. However, senior managers are not sufficiently held to account for addressing weaknesses in academic performance.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Tolerance and respect for diversity are encouraged. Staff and governor training on equal opportunities are very good. The college's extensive provision provides access for a wide range of social groups including those traditionally under-represented in further education (FE). Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Literacy and numeracy provision is satisfactory overall, and is particularly good for adults. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is higher than that in the city's population. Data on the performance of different groups are analysed thoroughly. The college has complied with recent legislation on disability discrimination and race relations, and clear action plans are used to ensure that progress is made. Access for students with disabilities is very good on the main sites, and action is being taken to improve access in satellite centres. The composition of the senior management team does not reflect the diversity of the college.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Students and trainees generally receive satisfactory support. Arrangements for students' initial guidance and support are appropriate. Students' suitability is satisfactorily assessed through analysis of the application form and interview. Induction is effective in introducing them to their courses and the college. Careers information and guidance is good.

Full-time students receive good pastoral and personal support in tutorials, in their lessons and in the workplace. Teachers and workplace supervisors are responsive to individual students' needs. There are two child protection officers in post, and staff have good information on child protection. Full-time students' tutorials help to prepare them for examinations and progression to employment and higher education (HE). However, the quality of tutorial provision for part-time students is inconsistent.

The assessment and provision of additional learning support is satisfactory. Students' needs are assessed using basic skills, other tests, and by self-referral. However, arrangements for evening class students are unsatisfactory. The provision of whole-college learning support lacks cohesion and clarity. Where it is identified as a need, students are well supported, but the co-ordination and monitoring of provision is unsatisfactory.

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

- adult atmosphere
- friendly and helpful staff
- flexible arrangements for learning
- good and accessible support from teachers
- access to ICT and internet facilities
- learning new skills and gaining valuable qualifications
- the chance to go on trips and expeditions.

What they feel could be improved

- better group work, and more practical work in lessons
- timetable planning to give longer refreshment breaks
- better maintenance of equipment
- refreshment facilities at all sites
- areas for socialising
- parking.

Other information

The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole

Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16–18	61	29	10
19+ and WBL*	63	30	7
Learning 16–18	58	34	8
19+ and WBL*	66	26	8

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards

1. Data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 2001 and 2002 were provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2003.
2. The overall attendance rate in lessons was 77%, which is similar to the national average of 76% for colleges inspected in 2002/03. The average class size was 9.5. The best attendance rates were in business administration, management and professional, ICT and foundation studies, at over 80%.

16 to 18 year olds

3. Currently there are 3,500 students aged 16 to 18, accounting for 24% of the total number of students. In 2003, overall retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses fell, but were still at or slightly above national averages.
 4. In 2003, overall pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were broadly similar or slightly below national averages. Since 2000, pass rates have broadly remained the same at levels 1 and 3, and increased at level 2; although they are still below the national average. Pass rates on NVQ courses have been low over three years, particularly at level 2.
 5. Retention and pass rates are high on a range of courses; for example, first and national diplomas in public services, GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism and AS-level English literature. Retention rates are low on a number of courses, for example, AS-level
-

human biology and mathematics, and some hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. Pass rates are low in a few areas; for example, science and mathematics, construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy.

6. Students develop good practical skills in engineering and construction, but do not acquire satisfactory technical and professional skills in hairdressing and beauty therapy. On E2E programmes, students develop good personal and social skills. Drama and music students' performance skills are good, but in art and media, the development of specialist skills is unsatisfactory. In a number of AS-level and GCE A-level subjects, for example, English and philosophy, students are able to express themselves clearly and carry out critical analysis with confidence. Students' written work on most courses is at least satisfactory. Overall, most students make satisfactory progress and build on their prior achievements. However, at AS-level and GCE A-level students have consistently failed to achieve the results predicted for them. The college is part of a value added project for GNVQ intermediate courses. This shows students are performing better than expected for ICT but at around the level expected on the other GNVQ courses.

7. Of the 835 work-based learners, the majority, 598, are advanced modern apprentices. Retention rates are high for retail and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is good in hairdressing and beauty therapy, but progress is slow in construction and engineering. There is good progression to FE and employment from E2E courses, but many jobs are without training. Most work-based learners acquire practical skills which are at least satisfactory.

Adult learners

8. Currently there are nearly 14,800 adults undertaking a range of courses across the curriculum. In health and social care, nearly 1,600 adults study NVQ courses in the workplace. The college also has a large contract to provide NVQ courses in customer service and retail to 300 students at food retailers.

9. Retention rates for adults in 2003 on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were at or above national averages. Pass rates have been consistently below the national average at levels 2 and 3 for three years, but showed an improvement in 2003. Pass rates on short courses have been well above the national average for the last two years. The number of short programmes has increased from 40% of qualification outcomes in 2002 to 60% in 2003. These account for large numbers of adult enrolments.

10. The standard of adults' work is high on many courses. On professional courses in business, students develop skills and knowledge which they can apply effectively at work. In ICT, mature students quickly become competent in using a range of computer applications. The standard of work is high on NVQ customer care courses. Students make good progress and many complete their NVQ level 2 in less than six months.

11. In health and social care, pass rates are high on the access to nursing course. The range of qualifications available to adults in the workplace has effectively widened

participation and enabled care students who might not otherwise have an opportunity to learn, to do so.

Quality of education and training

12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 230 lessons. The proportion of teaching that is good or better is similar to that for colleges of the same type inspected on 2002/03. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching in different curriculum areas. Teaching is consistently good or better in a few areas; for example, engineering, hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, and foundation. In five of the thirteen areas inspected, there was a low proportion of good or better teaching. For example, in some humanities subjects and in hairdressing and beauty therapy, teaching is dull and does not inspire students to learn. Theory teaching is unsatisfactory in construction and in some ICT lessons.

13. Students learn effectively in a number of areas; for example, engineering, business, ICT and foundation studies. Learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy is particularly poor. Attainment is good in five of the thirteen areas inspected. In engineering, business administration, hospitality and health and social care, adults and work-based learners, in particular, demonstrate good vocational and technical skills. Attainment is unsatisfactory in science and mathematics and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Students' responses to questions show a poor level of understanding. Portfolios of students in art and media are uninspiring and poorly presented. The percentage of good or better teaching for adults is similar to that for students aged 16 to 18. Overall, the highest proportions of good or better teaching and effective learning and attainment are at entry level and level 3. Teaching, learning and attainment are good for work-based learners.

14. The more effective lessons are well planned, with clear aims and objectives which are shared with students. Lessons build on students' prior knowledge and experience. Full consideration is taken of students' individual needs and preferred learning styles. Learning is consistently checked. Students are challenged, actively involved in their learning and make good progress. In telecommunications lessons, teachers encourage lively discussions and motivate students through their enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject. Teachers use a range of strategies to maintain students' engagement. In business, administration, management and professional, good use is made of adults' work experience to apply teaching and learning to job roles. In health and social care and retail, where large numbers of adults are learning in the workplace, individual training and support are good.

15. In the less effective lessons, teaching is dull, with little variety, and does not encourage students to learn. Interaction between teachers and students is minimal. Students' learning is not checked, particularly before moving on to more complex topics. The use of IT is limited in some lessons, for example, in engineering. The pace of lessons is slow, and a great deal of time is spent copying notes from the whiteboard.

16. The quality of key skills teaching varies, but is particularly low at level 2. In the better key skills lessons, teaching is set in a context which students find interesting and

relevant to future employment, and assignments are integrated into the vocational area. For example, in one application of number assignment on modern music, students carried out an investigation into the acoustic properties of the college dance studio. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers lack experience, they have had insufficient training, the teaching is not clearly linked to key skills criteria and students do not see the relevance or understand the objectives of the lesson.

17. There are a sufficient number of qualified teachers with appropriate vocational qualifications in most curriculum areas. Overall, 84% of full-time staff and 66% of part-time staff have both teaching and relevant vocational qualifications. There has been difficulty in recruiting sufficient numbers of qualified staff to meet demands for training in construction and high technology engineering courses. The college is aware of this and there are plans in place to retain existing staff and to attract and support new staff. Staff development opportunities are designed to help teachers to improve their teaching and to develop their skills in the use of IT in the curriculum and in the planning and delivery of key and basic skills. Training in leadership and management and equality and diversity has also taken place. However, development is not always targeted to the staff in most need.

18. The quality of teaching accommodation in the college is good. Most teaching rooms are well decorated; furniture is high quality and rooms are of an appropriate size for most groups. However, there are few displays of students' work in classrooms and corridors and a lack of subject identity in many areas of the college. Specialist facilities are good in science, performing arts, beauty therapy and IT. In engineering, the computer-aided design suite has been recently upgraded and students attending sound engineering courses use high-quality, industry-standard equipment. Travel and tourism students undertake work experience in a well-equipped travel shop on the main high street in Plymouth. The college also has a training restaurant, bistro, delicatessen, bakery and florists for selling students' work.

19. Libraries and study areas are of a high standard with good access to computers. The college has made significant investment in up-to-date ICT software and equipment, which is effectively maintained. A large number of staff have their own personal computer or laptop. There is very good access to the Internet and e-mail on all sites, using innovative technology including wireless networks.

20. Catering facilities are appropriate on all sites. The facilities on the main sites are modern and well furnished. There are very good student social areas on the Goschen campus, which are well used. The college has planned a comprehensive maintenance programme. Comprehensive access audits have been carried out with well-planned programmes of alterations which have improved access for students with restricted mobility. Nearly all college areas are accessible to all students and there are plans to improve access in other areas.

21. Assessment and monitoring of student progress are satisfactory. Assessment is generally well planned and students have a clear understanding of the process. For example, NVQ assessors develop good individual learning plans in health and social care, which are effectively shared with students. In hospitality, assessments are planned on a group basis and

related to job rotas. This does not enable sufficient focus on individual assessment needs. Tracking and monitoring of progress are at least satisfactory in most curriculum areas. The monitoring of progress for part-time students in ICT is very effective. Target minimum grades are set on AS-level and GCE A-level courses but in science and mathematics some students are unclear about what their grades are and their progress. Formal monitoring is inadequate in humanities, English and modern foreign languages.

22. Homework and assignments are set regularly and marked promptly. In some curriculum areas, written feedback is insufficient, but in science and mathematics and business, administration, management and professional studies, students receive clear written feedback on most marked work. Clear verbal feedback is given in dance and drama, but in hospitality it does not provide help to students to improve further.

23. Work-based assessments take place regularly in engineering, business, hospitality and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Good assessment records are kept in learners' portfolios. In construction, some workplaces do not cover all the evidence required for the NVQ and no alternative placements are provided. Clear targets are set and reviewed at each visit in most areas. Workplace reviews in hairdressing and beauty therapy have good input from the employer but workplace supervisors do not usually take an active part in reviews in engineering or construction. Reviews for work-based learners in construction are infrequent and incomplete. Reviews of learners' progress are ineffective on foundation programmes. Targets are not sufficiently specific to measure students' progress. E2Es' targets are often repetitive and it is not clear how far students have progressed.

24. Employers and parents receive adequate information on students' progress, where appropriate. Internal verification is satisfactory in most curriculum areas, but failed to identify slow progress in work-based learning, late assessment in hair and beauty or problems in construction.

25. Curriculum planning is good and ensures that courses offered on the various college sites and through franchises, other partners and providers is complementary. A wide range of courses is available, with good opportunities for progression. The college is responsive to the needs of the community it serves. Particularly good developments to promote social inclusion have included the provision of ICT courses in the community, a project to encourage people to return to learning, the expansion of E2E provision and work with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are some gaps in provision at level 1, but an expansion of E2E provision has helped to rectify this, and alternative provision at level 1 is available from a local consortium. Arrangements for the provision of education and training to students aged 14 to 16 are sound.

26. Liaison with employers is good, and is effective in enhancing provision. The college works well with employers on projects to promote vocational training and employment, and is responsive to their ideas for course development. Its links with employers are used well to provide work placements for students. Courses are offered using a variety of modes of delivery. These include full-time and part-time courses, flexible

learning at different times and on different days of the week, qualifications over different timescales and learning in the workplace.

27. The programme of enhancement and enrichment opportunities is not sufficiently well developed for all full-time students. Engineering and work-based learning programmes offer additional qualifications, units, or access to funding for such things as driving lessons. In hospitality, there is a wide range of beneficial activities which greatly extends students' experience. However, these opportunities are not always replicated in other areas of the curriculum. Tutorials are used to develop students' self-awareness and study skills, and there is a programme of activities on Wednesday afternoons, for which students purchase a membership card, but the programme is not sufficiently well used.

28. Full-time students and work-based learners receive good personal support in tutorials, their lessons and in the workplace. Teachers and workplace supervisors are aware of individual students' needs and are responsive to them. Students value the support they receive and are confident that when they need additional help, it will be given. The tutorial arrangements for full-time students are clear and well structured; and include a weekly tutorial and individual discussions. Comprehensive information and guidance on conducting tutorials is provided for tutors. It includes information on child protection and how to respond to students who report abuse. There is a good scheme of work for full-time students' tutorials with a wide range of activities which raises students' self-awareness and helps them to prepare for examinations and progression to employment and HE.

29. The quality of tutorial provision for part-time students is inconsistent. The twice-termly tutorials do not always happen in accordance with college procedures and are not always used to develop and extend students' knowledge and skills. Timetables do not always allow for tutorials and some staff are over-reliant on their teaching contact with students to identify concerns and provide feedback. Review sheets are not always properly completed with clear actions for improvement and target dates.

30. Arrangements for initial guidance and support are satisfactory. Students enrol through a central admissions service or directly with departments, depending on which course they apply for. Their suitability is satisfactorily assessed through analysis of the application form and interview. Central admissions use particularly clear procedures which alert staff to the need for more detailed guidance and discussion with applicants. Students receive good careers information and guidance and there are appropriate and effective arrangements for liaising with the Connexions service.

31. All students receive an induction which is effective in preparing them for their course of study and for their roles and responsibilities as students. The procedures for monitoring and improving their attendance are satisfactory. Tutors phone full-time students when they are absent and follow up poor attendance and punctuality during tutorial sessions. A range of interventions is used, culminating in final warning letters. Students have a good understanding of the procedures. However, they are not consistently followed and some teachers use different methods for following up lateness. The procedures for following up

poor attendance and punctuality for part-time students make appropriate allowances for the external constraints and demands they face.

32. Where additional support needs are properly identified, and where students take it up, the learning support provided is effective. An initial assessment of students' needs is done using the basic skills and other tests, and by self-referral. The methods used are most effective for full-time applicants at level 2 and below. At level 3 and for substantial part-time students, learning needs are not always clearly identified at the start of their programmes. Many students opt out of receiving support although they are aware it is available.

33. The provision of whole-college learning support lacks cohesion and clarity. The co-ordination and monitoring of provision is unsatisfactory. Although provision is evaluated, the evaluation is not used well to improve the service. Arrangements for evening-class students are unsatisfactory. The main entry point for support at student services is closed after 17:00, although the telephone number for student support services is provided.

Leadership and management

34. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and governing body provide firm leadership, and have a clear commitment to meeting the needs of students and the community, including employers, in Plymouth and the surrounding area. The proportion of students who successfully complete their courses has risen over the last three years. Pass rates on short courses, which are a major part of the college's provision, are very high. However, pass rates are unsatisfactory on a significant number of long courses, particularly at levels 2 and 3. Provision in three curriculum areas is unsatisfactory. Progress to address some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection by the Further Education Funding Council, for example, poor achievements in science and mathematics, and weak curriculum management, has been unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although progress to improve further the quality of teaching has been slow.

35. Communications within the college are satisfactory. Regular bulletins and electronic communications are effective in ensuring that staff across the organisation have access to information and can present their views. An appropriate range of departmental meetings enables staff to be consulted on significant issues. Informal communications between the senior management team and the staff are infrequent. As a consequence, some teachers regard the senior management team as remote.

36. Strategic planning is effective. Governors, senior managers, curriculum managers and other key post holders attend an annual weekend conference to review the college's mission, ethos and values and to discuss and agree the principles of the strategic plan. The planning process is informed by an appropriate range of internal and external information. Clear strategic priorities are identified and communicated to all staff. The strategic plan provides a clear vision of the college's planned range of activities and how it will evaluate its success. However, some of the targets for improvements in students' achievements are insufficiently challenging.

37. The senior management team was restructured in 2001. The principal is supported by two vice-principals and three directors. Senior managers have clear functional responsibilities and understand their roles well. However, actions to address areas of underperformance are frequently insufficiently swift or decisive. Curriculum team leaders are directly managed by the vice-principals, whilst one of the directors is responsible for partnership and community provision.

38. There are differences in the quality of curriculum management across curriculum areas. In health and social care, there is a clear focus on improvement. In retail and customer service and E2E, the quality of provision is effectively monitored. However, curriculum management in five of the thirteen curriculum areas inspected is poor. For example, in science and mathematics there is a lack of effective leadership. In construction, the importance of serious weaknesses in quality assurance has been underestimated. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, teaching and learning are particularly poor. The co-ordination of additional learning support and the teaching of key skills are unsatisfactory. Management of work-based learning provision is satisfactory or better, except in construction, where there are poor assessment practices.

39. Quality assurance systems are comprehensive. The timetable of quality assurance activities is clearly linked to strategic and operational planning processes, course evaluation and review, and self-assessment. Feedback from students and employers is collected and used effectively to inform self-assessment. However, the effective implementation of quality assurance procedures is inconsistent. Many course reviews lack rigour, and are insufficiently evaluative. Data on students' achievements are not used effectively to analyse performance in some curriculum areas.

40. As self-assessment is carried out by department, and areas of learning are often spread across more than one department, it is difficult to get an overview of quality in some curriculum areas. Although a large number of lesson observations have been carried out internally, the grades awarded were higher than those awarded by inspectors. Strategies to improve further the quality of teaching and learning have not had sufficient impact in several curriculum areas. Although curriculum area self-assessment reports are moderated by senior managers, no college-based provision was assessed as unsatisfactory. One work-based learning grade, construction, was self-assessed as unsatisfactory.

41. Mechanisms for sharing good practice have begun to have a positive effect in some areas. Quality assurance of the college's franchised provision has improved significantly over the last two years, leading to an improvement in achievements. However, most curriculum areas are insufficiently involved in liaising with franchise partners. Following the recent acquisition of two training companies, the college has created a new work-based learning department, which has not yet been fully integrated into the college's quality assurance systems.

42. There have been significant improvements in the reliability and accessibility of management information over the last year. Comprehensive and current reports on enrolments, attendance, retention rates and pass rates are available on the college intranet.

Some managers use the data effectively to plan and to make informed decisions. However, in a minority of curriculum areas, a reluctance to accept the validity of the data leads to inaccurate evaluation of students' performance.

43. The college has a clear commitment at all levels to equality and diversity, and was recently awarded a Beacon Award in recognition of its work to promote equal opportunities. It works closely with employers and with the wider community of Plymouth to provide a wide range of educational and training opportunities. Statutory obligations in relation to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 have been met. Data on the performance of different groups of students and on the composition of staff are collected and used to inform planning. Staff understanding of current equality and diversity issues has been raised through appropriate training. Governors receive regular reports on equal opportunities issues, and have undergone comprehensive training on awareness of equality and diversity. None of the senior management team, and only two of the ten curriculum team leaders, is female, although there has been an increase in the number of female middle managers. The promotion of diversity and equality through the curriculum is uneven, but it is good in health and social care, hairdressing and beauty therapy, ICT and humanities, English and modern foreign languages.

44. Arrangements for appraising staff have recently been changed. The new performance review system is more thorough, and is designed both to improve performance and to ensure that staff training is consistent with strategic priorities. It is too early to assess the impact of the system on staff performance. However, staff development activity is now focussing on improving the quality of teaching and learning through disseminating good practice.

45. Governors are committed to the success of the college, and work hard to ensure that the college meets its strategic objective of making a significant contribution to the educational and economic performance of the city. They have a good understanding and knowledge of the social and economic environment in which the college works. They receive regular reports on the financial and academic performance of the college, and recognise their role in holding management to account for weaknesses. Recent analyses of risks facing the college provide an accurate account of the college's current position. The strategic planning and quality committee receives regular reports on key issues facing the college, on students' performance, and on areas causing concern. However, the reports on students' performance are not sufficiently focused to enable governors to locate the precise source of the weaknesses. As a consequence, mechanisms through which governors ensure that weaknesses in curriculum provision are successfully addressed are underdeveloped.

46. The college has faced significant financial pressures in recent years, and firm action has been taken to reduce expenditure. Financial management is satisfactory. Curriculum managers have been made increasingly accountable for their income and expenditure plans. Nevertheless, changes in the funding methodology, and risks associated with the diverse nature of the college's provision, mean that the college may face further financial challenges

in the future. On the basis of the college's improving success rates and its prudent financial management, it currently provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Science and mathematics

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on GCE A-level biology and advanced certificate of education (AVCE) science courses
- good teaching on biological sciences courses
- good laboratory facilities and learning resources
- good links with external organisations.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on AS-level human biology, physics and mathematics
- low pass rates on AS-level chemistry and physics
- low pass rates on GCE A-level mathematics, chemistry and physics
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective and inconsistently applied quality assurance procedures.

Scope of provision

47. There is a wide range of provision in science and mathematics for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. The college offers general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) mathematics, AS-level and GCE A-level biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, AVCE science, GNVQ intermediate science, access to HE and NVQ forensic science. There are GCSE courses run by two franchise partners at community colleges. There are 297 students aged 16 to 18 and 377 adults studying science and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

48. Retention and pass rates are unsatisfactory. Retention rates on AS-level mathematics and physics courses are below the national averages. Retention rates on AS-level human biology have declined over the last three years and are 8% below the national average. Pass rates on AS-level chemistry and physics courses are low. Pass rates on AS-level human biology and biology have declined over the last three years. Pass rates on GCE A-level mathematics, chemistry and physics are low. In 2003, they were 22%, 16% and 11%,

respectively, below the national averages. Retention and pass rates are high on GCE A-level biology and on AVCE science. High grade pass rates on GCSE mathematics in 2003 were just below the national average; however, pass rates for adult students were high.

49. The standard of students' work varies between courses. For example, in a microbiology lesson, students competently used optical microscopes to help them to produce careful, annotated drawings of onion cells and amoeba. In a GNVQ intermediate lesson, students confidently used electronics kits to build circuits that would switch a light off under different conditions of light level and temperature. They applied their knowledge by identifying practical applications for their circuits. In the less effective lessons, students' responses to questions show a low level of understanding and the only work produced is notes copied from the whiteboard.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	57	209	139
		% retention	86	85	72
		% pass rate	33	17	36
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	44	52	45
		% retention	70	67	69
		% pass rate	71	54	61
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	31	34	35
		% retention	84	82	69
		% pass rate	92	82	63
GCE A-level	3	No. of starts	16	28	34
		% retention	44	75	94
		% pass rate	100	81	91
AVCE science	3	No. of starts	16	19	15
		% retention	63	68	80
		% pass rate	80	69	83

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Access to HE certificate in science	3	No. of starts	*	28	39
		% retention	*	68	54
		% pass rate	*	74	95

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

50. Too much teaching is unsatisfactory. In the weaker lessons, there is little interaction between teachers and students, little opportunity for students to consolidate their knowledge, and learning is not checked effectively. Some lessons are too teacher-centred and students spend the whole lesson listening to the teacher and directly copying notes.

51. In the best lessons, objectives are shared with students at the beginning of the lesson. Activities are interesting and varied. Teachers use directed questions to check understanding, challenge the more able and support the weaker students. Teaching in biological science is good. In one outstanding biology lesson, the teacher used a short animation to introduce students to the process of mitosis. Students then modelled the stages of mitosis, using trays and pipe cleaners to represent cells and chromosomes. This exercise effectively reinforced their learning. In an introduction to forensic science evening class for adults, the teacher reinforced students' understanding by giving them the opportunity to perform a number of simple practical tests to detect the presence of blood.

52. Most staff have good knowledge of their subjects. Science laboratories for physics, chemistry and biology are well equipped and spacious. A darkroom adjoins the physics laboratory and one biology laboratory has a microbiology area. All laboratories contain a wide range of appropriate equipment and most benefit from networked computer access and television and video facilities. Projectors and interactive whiteboards are installed in the biology laboratories and are used effectively to enhance learning. Mathematics resources, such as the booklets used in the evening mathematics lessons, are located in a dedicated mathematics workshop. General classrooms lack displays of relevant materials and specialist equipment, resources and texts are not readily available. Library provision is good.

53. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Clear written feedback is given on most marked work which helps students to identify what they need to do to improve. Individual tracking sheets are used effectively on most courses to monitor students' progress. Performance at GCSE is used to inform initial subject target grades for each student. Tutors review progress against these targets. However, some students are unclear about their target grades and the quality of progress monitoring varies between courses.

54. There is a broad range of provision to meet students' needs. A range of study times and venues is available for GCSE mathematics students. Some access to science students consider some parts of the course to be at too advanced a level. There are good external links. As a result, students benefit from placements with large local environmental projects and visits to production plants and research organisations.

55. Support for students is good. Tutorial provision is good for access to HE students but viewed negatively by full-time students. Full-time students have good individual support in lessons or from teachers outside lessons when they need it. Additional learning support is available for students needing it. Induction is good for full-time students. It includes taster lessons to ensure that students choose the right subjects. Induction is less well developed for part-time students.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Quality assurance procedures are ineffective and are not applied consistently across all subjects. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection relating to low retention rates and poor achievement remain. Staff development activities designed to improve the quality of AS-level and GCE A-level teaching have not been effective in some areas of science. Self-assessment is not sufficiently evaluative. Course reviews and development plans are completed poorly. Teamworking in mathematics has helped to some extent to improve teaching, learning and attainment, but overall there is insufficient sharing of good practice across teams. Promotion of equality of opportunity by both staff and students is good.

Construction

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

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

Strengths

- good practical skills development
- good resources
- broad and flexible range of provision.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates
- slow progress towards achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- unsatisfactory theory teaching
- ineffective quality assurance arrangements.

Scope of provision

57. The college offers a wide range of construction courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels covering both craft and technical trades. It also carries out training for the Construction Industry Training Board. Students are able to study for institute membership examinations or HE qualifications. A range of attendance modes is available including full time, block and day release, evenings and weekends.

58. Of the 2,055 students on construction programmes, there are 273 full-time students, 1,474 part-time day release and evening students, 267 advanced modern apprentices, 38 foundation modern apprentices and 3 studying an NVQ only. Only 366 students are aged 16 to 18. There are strong links with 13 local schools. There are 70 pupils aged 14 to 16 on foundation and level 1 courses, and 22 pupils aged 16 to 18 on a schools link project.

Achievement and standards

59. Pass rates are low, particularly in 2003 when sanctions were imposed by the awarding body following concerns about the quality of provision. On NVQ level 2 bricklaying, only 7 of the 25 students completed the programme, and only 1 achieved the qualification. On NVQ level 2 plumbing, only six of the 77 students achieved their NVQ qualification. Retention and pass rates improved on electrical installation level 1 in 2003 and are above the national average.

60. The rate of achievement for modern apprenticeship frameworks is slow. Many learners have too little on-site assessment by qualified assessors. Key skills have been introduced late. Learners have not been guided on how to collect appropriate and sufficient key skills evidence from the workplace. A number of learners' key skill portfolios, submitted for assessment, have been mislaid, and learners have had to repeat work.

61. The standard of students' work in practical lessons and in the workplace is good. Work produced in lessons is accurate and neat. Work-based learners develop good skills. One first-year learner studying heating and ventilation installed pipework in a prestigious office development to a high standard. The pipework was accurately cut and clipped and the learner was clearly aware of the function of the installation. There is good progression of full-time students on to modern apprenticeships.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Electrical installation part 1	1	No. of starts	18	34	15
		% retention	72	76	87
		% pass rate	54	31	77
Intermediate construction award	2	No. of starts	*	62	17
		% retention	*	82	18
		% pass rate	*	12	33
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	34	60	77
		% retention	47	38	55
		% pass rate	81	86	14**
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	32	22	25
		% retention	9	36	28
		% pass rate	67	13	14
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	51	21	15
		% retention	25	48	60
		% pass rate	100	100	56

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ construction operations	2	No. of starts	96	68	31
		% retention	100	100	97
		% pass rate	10	44	10**

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters

**awarding body sanctions in place

Quality of education and training

62. Teaching in all the practical lessons is at least satisfactory. In an electrical installation lesson, students carried out wiring exercises which involved cutting and bending trunking and galvanised conduit. The atmosphere in the workshop was purposeful and industrious. Work was carried out to high standards, with good support and feedback from the teacher. Teachers effectively relate their experiences in industry to practical tasks. Many staff are new, with good, recent industry experience.

63. A significant amount of theory teaching is unsatisfactory. There is a preponderance of teacher-led presentations which do not adequately involve students. In one lesson, too much information was given at the outset. The teacher made no checks to see if students understood the basic concepts before moving on to more complex areas. Many students did not understand the subject fully at the conclusion of the lesson.

64. Most modern apprentices work for good companies which enhance their practical skills. However, their on-the-job training is inadequately planned. Learners identify the requirements of the NVQ, match these to the work available in the workplace and gather the evidence required. Where the range of work required to cover the NVQ is not available, no alternative placements are provided.

65. Resources for learning are good. Workshops are generally spacious, well lit and well resourced. The carpentry and joinery training and assessment areas effectively simulate conditions found on building sites. The area has full-size structures with a half-completed floor and roofing areas. The classrooms for theory teaching are good.

66. Reviews for work-based learners are infrequent, incomplete and are not carried out in accordance with contractual obligations. The frequency of reviews varies from two to eleven months. Many have had a number of reviewers in a short space of time. This lack of continuity has hindered their progress.

67. The range and variety of delivery patterns of courses at the college are good. Air conditioning, heating and ventilating, plastering and successful short courses in gas

installation and electrical installation are available in addition to traditional craft courses. Courses are offered on a Saturday. Links with local industry are good. Full-time students gain experience with local companies while a company's own apprentices are attending college on block release. Manufacturers display their products at the college, benefiting both students and local construction companies, who attend the demonstrations.

68. Support for students with additional learning needs is satisfactory. Thorough screening and diagnostic tests identify literacy and numeracy requirements. Support is delivered either in class or in discrete sessions. Low numbers of students access additional support, but there is a high awareness by students of the support systems that are available.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Protracted problems with awarding body approval for a number of construction courses have hindered students' achievement. Some improvements have been made in response to the issues identified, but progress is slow. Internal verification is weak. The internal lesson observation process has failed to improve the quality of teaching.

70. The management of work-based learning is weak. Links between on-the-job and off-the-job training are poor. Many progress reviews have been missed and insufficient assessment is undertaken in the workplace. Quality assurance procedures fail to identify these issues. Work-based learners still do not have a good understanding of equality of opportunity, even though it is covered thoroughly at induction and reinforced at progress reviews. The self-assessment report understated the impact of serious weaknesses within the construction department.

Engineering

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

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on courses at level 1
- good practical skills acquired by work-based learners
- good teaching and learning
- effective employer links.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for a significant number of students at levels 2 and 3
- slow progress towards achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- poor resources for automotive technology
- ineffective co-ordination of a few aspects of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

71. The college offers full-time and part-time courses at levels 1 to 3 in motor vehicle, electrical, electronic and mechanical engineering, manufacturing and computer-aided design. It has CoVE status for high technology engineering and offers programmes at levels 2, 3 and 4 through the CoVE.

72. There are 1,037 students studying engineering either at the college's main site, one of the five franchise partners or through work-based learning. There are 91 foundation modern apprentices and 284 advanced modern apprentices. Only 154 students are aged 16 to 18 and only 4% of students are full time.

Achievement and standards

73. Retention and pass rates are high on level 1 programmes. On the repair and servicing of road vehicles course, both were 100% in 2003. At levels 2 and 3, retention and pass rates are more variable. Retention and pass rates were below the national average on NVQ level 2 performing engineering operations in 2003. Pass rates for the first diploma and national certificate courses were high.

74. On a significant number of level 2 and level 3 courses, with small class sizes, students do not achieve their qualifications. For example, on NVQ level 3 installing and commissioning electro-technical systems and equipment, the retention rate was 29% and the pass rate was 50% in 2003. On NVQ level 2 vehicle maintenance service replacement, pass rates were only 17% in 2003.

75. The rate of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is slow, due to delays in starting off-the-job training and key skills in college. There is also an insufficient range of activities in a few workplaces to cover the NVQ competencies.

76. Most students develop good practical skills during their training. Work-based learners produce high-quality products using a range of complex machinery and tools. Many modern apprentices work in good general engineering companies or companies producing high-quality products such as luxury yachts, pharmaceutical products and steel fabrication. The standard of their written work for assignments and coursework is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Repair and servicing of road vehicles	1	No. of starts	18	18	15
		% retention	72	78	100
		% pass rate	85	93	100
Introductory welding skills	1	No. of starts	46	47	22
		% retention	91	94	100
		% pass rate	71	93	91
Fabrication and welding competences part 2 (three year)	2	No. of starts	*	37	40
		% retention	*	70	50
		% pass rate	*	96	100
NVQ performing engineering operation (one year)	2	No. of starts	*	87	18
		% retention	*	86	72
		% pass rate	*	77	54

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
National certificate in engineering (two years)	3	No. of starts	63	77	123
		% retention	79	52	59
		% pass rate	94	88	96
NVQ engineering production	3	No. of starts	*	25	21
		% retention	*	100	90
		% pass rate	*	36	47

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

77. Teaching is good, and most lessons are good or better. Lessons are well prepared and planned. The pace is appropriate and there is a high level of individual support. Teachers provide clear explanations of topics and regularly check students' understanding. In a good lesson about computer programming for control systems, the teacher used a computer projector to introduce and explain the tasks. This was followed by a practical application of the programme on a test rig. Key skills are well integrated into work-based learning and full-time programmes. In some weaker lessons, insufficient use is made of ICT. Teachers spend time drawing diagrams which could be displayed and reused if they were available electronically.

78. Staff are suitably qualified and have a wide range of relevant experience. Specialist resources for sound engineering are good, with high-quality, industry-standard equipment and recording studios. The computer-aided design suite contains up-to-date technology. The engineering workshops are satisfactory and are equipped with suitable tools and machinery, except for automotive technology. The cars in the automotive workshop are old and worn. They do not provide students with sufficient opportunities to work with modern technology. Classrooms are appropriate and there is a broad range of learning resources.

79. Work-based assessments are well planned and frequent. Assessment requirements are clear, and there is good checking of understanding. Verbal feedback at the end of assessments is good but, in a few cases, written feedback is insufficient to maximise progress. Good assessment records are kept in portfolios. Assessors visit work-based learners approximately every five weeks to carry out assessments and to check progress; they formally review training and pastoral matters every twelve weeks. Clear targets are set and reviewed at each visit. Workplace supervisors do not usually take an active part in the reviews, but get good verbal feedback from the reviewer.

80. Links with employers are good. The CoVE in high technology engineering has resulted in some innovative high technology work with companies. The college successfully helped one company to develop an idea which resulted in an expansion of its workforce from four to twenty-eight employees. Employers are actively involved in helping the college to develop its courses.

81. The range of courses is good, although there are few opportunities at level 1. Advice on progression is satisfactory, except for a few foundation modern apprentices who were inappropriately guided on to a first diploma course which is at the same level. Progression on courses in the CoVE is good, and at least 50% of students progress to level 4.

82. All students have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Good learning support is offered to those needing it. A learning support assistant contributes effectively to the entry level motor vehicle lessons. Work-based learners are well supported and, where necessary, have weekly visits to ensure their needs are met. Employers also offer a high level of support on both training and personal issues.

Leadership and management

83. Management of engineering, including the CoVE, is satisfactory. Roles and responsibilities are clear. The team, through regular team meetings, effectively plans the curriculum and monitors students' progress. The shortage of industry specialists to teach some elements of the high technology engineering programmes has still to be resolved.

84. The co-ordination of a few aspects of work-based learning is ineffective. Significant progress has been made in implementing consistent quality assurance procedures, but targets to complete this have not been met. Regular checks are made at learners' progress reviews to ensure employers comply with the conditions of their contract, including those relating to equality of opportunity. However, in a small number of cases, insufficient checks on employers are carried out prior to a work-based learner starting their programme. For example, one employer's reluctance to remove a display of inappropriate pictures from a garage wall was not picked up until the learner's progress review. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is good.

Business administration, management and professional

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on professional management courses
- good development of occupational skills
- good use of adults' work experience in teaching and learning
- wide range of courses to meet community needs.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ programmes
- low pass rates on AS-level business and AS level and GCE A-level accounting
- ineffective curriculum management.

Scope of provision

85. The college offers full-time courses at levels 2 and 3 including GNVQ intermediate and AVCE business and AS level and GCE A-level business and accounting. A wide range of part-time, flexible and distance learning programmes from levels 2 to 5 is also offered.

86. There are 153 full-time students, of whom 133 are aged 16 to 18. Of the 642 students studying part time, 632 are adults. There are 16 students on NVQ administration courses at one franchised provider. There are 10 foundation and 12 advanced modern apprentices in administration and 26 Jobcentre Plus clients.

Achievement and standards

87. Pass rates on professional management courses are high, particularly on the certificate in management, certificate in personnel practice and the diploma in management, which had a rate of 95% in 2003. The AVCE business single award and GCE A-level business also have high pass rates. Pass rates on most NVQ courses are low and are significantly below national averages. For example, the pass rates on NVQ level 2 administration and NVQ level 4 management were only 46% and 40%, respectively, in 2003. Pass rates on AS-level business and AS-level and GCE A-level accounting were also low, at 56%, 42% and 57%, respectively, in 2003. Retention rates are generally satisfactory, with high retention rates on most management programmes. Attendance and punctuality are mostly good.

88. Work-based learners and those on professional courses develop particularly good occupational skills. Modern apprentices demonstrate good administration, customer service and IT skills in the workplace. Students effective at work use the skills and knowledge they have acquired on professional courses. All students develop good personal and learning skills. Many students on higher level courses demonstrate good reflective thinking, analysis and critical evaluation skills. The standard of students' written work is at least satisfactory and is appropriate to the stage and level of their programme.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, management and professional, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	27	23	36
		% retention	55	78	75
		% pass rate	92	72	63
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	112	116	75
		% retention	85	87	73
		% pass rate	62	62	46
AVCE business (single award)	3	No. of starts	**	56	66
		% retention	**	71	70
		% pass rate	**	80	76
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	16	19	39
		% retention	75	58	69
		% pass rate	83	55	56
Certificate in first line management	3	No. of starts	50	34	39
		% retention	94	97	95
		% pass rate	96	94	78

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Certificate personnel practice	3	No. of starts	49	28	24
		% retention	98	96	100
		% pass rate	88	96	92
Certificate management	4	No. of starts	31	28	23
		% retention	84	96	91
		% pass rate	96	100	95

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

89. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best lessons are well planned, with an appropriate range of activities. Staff are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and encourage and motivate students. On the adult professional and management programmes, teachers make good use of students' prior knowledge and experience of the workplace to extend learning. For example, in one lesson, students undertook a critical analysis of the health and safety policies in each other's organisations. Through this, students developed their knowledge of health and safety issues and best practice. They used this information to suggest improvements for their own organisation. In work-based learning, there is appropriate co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training.

90. Some lessons are dull and uninspiring. They lack a variety of teaching methods to meet the different learning styles and abilities of individual students. Insufficient checks are made to ensure students are learning. There is too much use of open questions, which are usually answered by the most able. In a few lessons, teachers talk for too long and students are bored and are not motivated to learn effectively.

91. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified, with good vocational experience. Most have teaching qualifications. There are appropriate arrangements for professional updating. Library resources are satisfactory, with a range of journals, videos and books, and high quality handouts which provide useful reference sources for students.

92. Assessment and internal verification meet awarding body requirements. Assessment is generally well planned and understood by students. Homework and assignments are set regularly and work is marked promptly with good, supportive comments that help students improve. Monitoring of progress is recorded appropriately. In work-based learning, observed assessments are recorded in detail and are clearly referenced to the NVQ standards.

Initial assessment is satisfactory but is not always used to inform lesson plans or students' programmes. Progress reviews are satisfactory and targets are set.

93. The range of courses and modes of delivery are effective in widening access, increasing participation and facilitating progression. Students value the flexibility of programmes. Timetables and modes of study are sensitive to the demands placed on students by their work and domestic commitments. All full-time business students benefit from work experience and UK study visits. GNVQ intermediate and AVCE business students and work-based learners make satisfactory progress with key skills, which are integrated into their main programme.

94. Support for students is satisfactory. Teachers have a good awareness of, and are sensitive to, the needs of individual students. Some additional subject support sessions and workshops are provided. Appropriate support for literacy and numeracy is incorporated into key skills lessons. Satisfactory tutorials keep students informed of their progress and are a forum to discuss any concerns. Good pre-course advice and guidance ensure students are on the right programme. Induction is satisfactory and helps students to settle quickly into their course. Modern apprentices are supported well in the workplace.

Leadership and management

95. Curriculum management is ineffective. There is insufficient cohesion in the planning of the diverse provision offered. Sharing of good practice is insufficient across the many departments providing courses. Quality assurance procedures do not fully address inconsistencies in practice. Arrangements to improve the quality of teaching are not well established. Newly recruited staff are observed teaching, but this does not routinely happen for other staff. An effective programme review process feeds into self-assessment, with full staff involvement and use of students' feedback. The self-assessment report identifies some, but not all, of the strengths and weaknesses identified during inspection. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on full-time courses
- good development of students' technical skills
- good teaching and learning on telecommunications courses
- good monitoring of part-time students' progress.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) and Integrated Business Technology (IBT) level 2 courses
- low retention rates on Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) in 2003
- slow pace of learning in many lessons.

Scope of provision

96. The college offers full-time courses at levels 2 and 3 at the main college sites. Part-time courses in application software are offered at the main centres, in a range of community locations, through on-line learning and with franchise partners. They range from entry level to level 3, with good progression opportunities. There are currently over 160 students aged 16 to 18 and nearly 1,800 adults on ICT courses. The majority of students recruited to the full-time courses are male and aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

97. Pass rates have improved over the last three years on most courses and are high for the full-time courses. Pass rates were above national averages on AS-level computing in 2003. On GNVQ intermediate IT, pass rates were 82% and 93% in 2002 and 2003, respectively, although student numbers were low. Students on these courses achieve higher grades than predicted. Pass rates for the level 2 part-time courses in IBT and the ECDL have been below the national average for the last three years.

98. Retention rates have declined on many courses. Retention rates on the CLAIT course declined significantly in 2003, with over half of the students leaving before the end of their course. Pass rates for those who remained were high. Retention rates for ECDL declined in 2003 and for IBT at level 2, retention rates fell to below the national average.

99. Students develop good technical skills. Many mature students on short courses are new to using IT. However, they quickly become competent and confident in handling a range of software applications. Many students are well motivated and are able to work independently at their own pace. The standard of full-time students' work is good. Telecommunications students demonstrate considerable technical competence when working on demanding tasks such as building a computer network.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	587	417	307
		% retention	98	82	43
		% pass rate	22	33	91
IBT	2	No. of starts	271	127	173
		% retention	94	87	69
		% pass rate	21	41	37
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	21	*	*
		% retention	71	*	*
		% pass rate	93	*	*
ECDL	2	No. of starts	71	235	82
		% retention	97	87	78
		% pass rate	43	35	58
National diploma in computer studies/computing	3	No. of starts	22	21	26
		% retention	59	90	86
		% pass rate	**	89	86

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	35	42	44
		% retention	83	81	70
		% pass rate	74	59	90

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** data unavailable

Quality of education and training

100. Some teaching is good. The quality of theory teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good, while teaching in workshops and practical lessons is good. The better lessons are well managed and students' computing skills are developed effectively. Students receive good individual attention and the appropriate level of technical language is used. Students are effectively challenged to learn without being overpowered. Lessons in telecommunications are particularly good. In one lesson, students worked on a project to create an application to display information. The teacher heightened students' awareness of hazards by getting them to put cables through a cupboard which had mock asbestos warning. Students used the appropriate safety procedures under the expert and enthusiastic guidance of the teacher, who encouraged discussion and debate.

101. The less effective lessons are poorly planned and the pace is often too slow. In one lesson, the teacher gave feedback on the quality of marked work to students while the rest of the class waited. In another, the teacher spoke too quickly. Students new to computing struggled to understand and did not make adequate progress in the lesson.

102. Accommodation and resources for learning are good. All students have access to an extensive range of up-to-date computers, software, electronic equipment and training manuals. There is a wide range of teaching aids, such as digital projectors linked to computers. The college learning materials are of a high standard, but little use is made of intranet-based electronic learning materials on full-time courses. A stand-alone network is used by telecommunications students to build, install and test networks. Staff are mostly well qualified, although in a few lessons teachers lacked the technical expertise to answer students' queries.

103. The monitoring of part-time students' progress is good. All part-time students have a personal tutor who is responsible for checking their progress and providing advice, guidance and support. Each part-time student has agreed clear learning goals and a training plan and has a learning log with space for evaluation. Progress towards achievement of learning goals is effectively monitored by personal tutors on monthly basis. Students' literacy and language needs are identified and appropriate additional support is provided.

Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Assessment is regular, well structured and carried out in a fair manner. However, written feedback on marked work for some of the full-time students is too brief.

104. There is a wide range of appropriate IT courses, ranging from very basic courses to those courses at levels 2 and 3 in software applications, advanced telecommunications, programming and access to HE. There is a wide range of ways to learn. This includes learning from textbooks and CD-ROMs, on-line tutoring and traditional classroom teaching. Some students choose a mix of learning methods.

105. As a result of widening participation, the number of part-time students with barriers to learning has increased. These range from physical and mental disabilities, acting as carers for partners or children, shift working or a lack of confidence. Personal and classroom tutors build good relationships with students and allow them maximum flexibility in how and when to learn.

Leadership and management

106. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Individual teams are managed effectively, but there is insufficient co-ordination between the teachers of part-time and full-time students with regard to curriculum quality and development. Part-time courses are well managed but it is too early to see whether improved strategies for supporting part-time students will result in improved pass rates. The self-assessment process involves all staff and the report was broadly accurate. There is good awareness amongst staff and students of the wider issues relating to diversity and equality of opportunity.

Retailing and customer service

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

Strengths

- good achievement on the foundation customer care award
- effective use of learning resources in the workplace
- good support for students in the workplace
- good management of programmes.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on graduate diploma courses
- significant number of students on inappropriate qualifications
- poor initial assessment of individual learning needs.

Scope of provision

107. There are 493 students on part-time programmes ranging from level 1 in customer care and distributive operations to the level 4 chartered institute of purchasing and supply (CIPS) graduate diplomas. There are 16 work-based learners on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in retail operations and customer service, and 12 Jobcentre Plus clients are on the New Deal full-time education and training and voluntary sector options. There are 101 students enrolled through franchise partners on customer service, retail operations and warehouse distribution programmes.

108. Most students are adults working in retail outlets doing NVQ retail courses at levels 1 and 2. The courses are wholly covered in the workplace by a team of assessors who visit on a regular basis to conduct training and assessment. Modern apprentices work towards their NVQ in the same way, but some attend college on a weekly basis for key skills training.

Achievement and standards

109. Pass rates are high on the foundation award in customer care, which has been running for a year. On NVQ level 2 customer service, retention rates are above the national average but pass rates have declined. NVQ level 2 retail operations did not run in 2003, due to poor retention rates the previous year. Changes have been made and it is now offered again in 2004. Pass rates are poor on the CIPS graduate diplomas, although some students successfully achieve some units after the official end of the programme.

110. The standard of work is high at level 1 and on NVQ level 2 customer services. Many customer service students make very good progress, completing their qualification in less than six months. The standard of work in retail portfolios is satisfactory.

A sample of retention and pass rates in retailing and customer service, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Foundation award in customer care	1	No. of starts	**	**	36
		% retention	**	**	100
		% pass rate	**	**	100
NVQ in distributive operations	1	No. of starts	53	*	178
		% retention	2	*	51
		% pass rate	0	*	71
NVQ in retail operations	2	No. of starts	*	27	**
		% retention	*	37	**
		% pass rate	*	80	**
NVQ in customer service	2	No. of starts	377	56	93
		% retention	95	98	88
		% pass rate	20	62	54
Foundation stage of CIPS graduate diploma	4	No. of starts	*	18	17
		% retention	*	94	100
		% pass rate	*	0	41
Professional stage of CIPS graduate diploma	4	No. of starts	15	19	*
		% retention	53	26	*
		% pass rate	25	0	*

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

111. Students undertaking NVQ courses receive good one to one coaching in the workplace. They have ample time to discuss their development needs and progress with their assessor. Outside planned visits they can contact their assessors to discuss aspects of their progress. Most employers provide good opportunities for developing skills and knowledge through comprehensive in-house training. In some instances, this training is carefully cross-referenced to the NVQ standards to provide additional evidence.

112. Very little classroom teaching takes place, and that which does varies in quality. The better lessons are well planned; teachers motivate students using good visual aids and well planned activities provide opportunities for learning through problem solving and discussion. The poorer lessons are predominantly teacher-led and do not provide a sufficient variety of teaching methods or stimuli for students. Students do not benefit from opportunities to learn from each other.

113. Students on NVQ programmes taught and assessed in the workplace benefit from using high-quality workbooks produced by their employers. These workbooks provide an effective link to the NVQ standards and are successfully used by assessors as a high-quality learning and assessment tool. Assessors undertake regular commercial updating with the employers concerned to become familiar with the company's policies and procedures. This contributes significantly to the effective use of the workbook. Accommodation for off-the-job learning for retail and customer service students is good, with well-appointed classrooms that support student-centred learning.

114. The assessment of students' work is broadly satisfactory. However, records of a small number of observations carried out by some retail assessors lack sufficient detail to claim competence and support assessment decisions. Initial assessment procedures to identify individual training needs are poor. A skills scan is used to determine if the NVQ level proposed is suitable for the prospective students' current job role, but this does not identify any additional training needs. Additional training needs are identified informally by discussion, and this process does not permit a structured individual training plan to be generated. The lack of a formal training plan has hindered progress and continuity when assessors have been changed.

115. Although there is a wide range of part-time courses offered by the college, a significant number of students are placed on qualifications at an inappropriate level. Retail duty managers are often placed on an NVQ level 2 qualification, even though their job role enables them to work at level 3. In some instances, sales staff who are capable of achieving a level 2 qualification are placed on a level 1 course. There are no full-time courses that provide progression on to the foundation degree in retail management offered by the college.

116. Students receive good support in the workplace. Visits by college staff are regular and enable productive individual coaching to take place. Action plans are detailed and provide students with good guidance. Assessors work closely with supervisors and managers

to ensure that the students receive a high level of support with their learning programme in the workplace.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management of this complex curriculum area are good. The increase in student numbers due to the acquisition by the college of two training providers has been well managed by the team. There is effective monitoring of franchise partners and systems are in place to identify and share good practice. There is an efficient meeting structure to ensure that assessors and other staff working away from the college are kept informed.

118. Internal verification is satisfactory. Key skills are effectively integrated into modern apprenticeship programmes from the beginning. The diagnosis and provision of literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory. Awareness of equal opportunities and the promotion of diversity are satisfactory.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel

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

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism
- high retention and pass rates on kitchen supervision course
- good teaching and effective learning
- effective partnerships in hospitality.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on AS-level sports, games and recreation
- poor assessment practices on a few courses.

Scope of provision

119. The college offers courses in hospitality, leisure, recreation, travel and tourism from entry level to level 4. Additional industry-recognised qualifications including national pool lifeguard, resort representatives and food hygiene are available. Courses take place at the college, a local school or through four franchise partners.

120. There are 469 full-time and 1,199 part-time students. The majority of students are adults and 64% of these study hospitality. Of the full-time students, 168 study leisure and travel and 12 leisure and tourism students attend the college's centre of soccer excellence. There are nineteen foundation modern apprentices, eight advanced modern apprentices and five learners on NVQ only programmes in hospitality. There are 48 pupils aged 14 to 16 studying at levels 1 and 2 in hospitality and tourism. Some 8% of students are from minority ethnic groups.

Achievement and standards

121. There are high retention and pass rates on many programmes. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course and the kitchen supervision course have been consistently high over the last three years. Retention and pass rates for AVCE courses are high, and are satisfactory for NVQs. Retention and pass rates for work-based learners are satisfactory. Current learners on these programmes are making good progress.

122. Most students' work is well presented and of a high standard. Students have good research skills and work effectively. Students undertaking fitness and swimming qualifications demonstrate good practical skills and a well-developed ability to relate theory to practice. Hospitality students display good culinary skills and in one lesson they produced a high-quality buffet. Service standards are high and students are able to sustain a high level of food service with little guidance.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ food preparation and cooking (one year)	2	No. of starts	62	46	40
		% retention	81	85	78
		% pass rate	66	56	81
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	28	38	32
		% retention	89	84	88
		% pass rate	100	94	96
Kitchen supervision	3	No. of starts	*	20	17
		% retention	*	90	82
		% pass rate	*	100	100
AVCE leisure and recreation (double award)	3	No. of starts	**	24	26
		% retention	**	42	88
		% pass rate	**	100	87
AVCE travel and tourism (double award)	3	No. of starts	**	26	29
		% retention	**	77	66
		% pass rate	**	80	84
AS-level sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	18	29	21
		% retention	78	93	67
		% pass rate	86	78	57

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

**previously GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism

Quality of education and training

123. Most teaching is good or better and none is unsatisfactory. Teachers know their students well and use this knowledge sensitively to motivate students. Effective links are made between theory and practice. For example, in a travel lesson, the steps involved in problem solving were effectively demonstrated through a travel costing activity. In hospitality, one group of students prepared a buffet service straight after completing a lunch service, emulating the pressures of industry. Technical language is used appropriately. In a pool lifeguard lesson, the teacher repeated the correct names for manoeuvres in the water to ensure students were familiar with the terminology. Students' experiences are used effectively and built upon. In some lessons, punctuality is not monitored effectively. Teaching and learning for work-based learners are satisfactory. Links between on-the-job and off-the-job training are good, and teachers and assessors meet regularly to facilitate this.

124. Teaching staff have or are working towards recognised teaching qualifications and most have relevant industrial experience. Learning resources are satisfactory, although sports psychology books are kept on a different site from the one where students are taught. Students have access to a wide range of facilities off-site, including an all-weather pitch and swimming pool. The sports hall floor is not sprung, restricting the range of activities. Travel students use a travel shop in the town's main high street as a realistic working environment. Hospitality students have a broad range of kitchen facilities for food production and service. However, some of these are in need of updating.

125. There are extensive and effective local and international partnership arrangements in hospitality. Catering staff and students take part in a European exchange project which includes research and work experience. An American hotel chain recruits directly from the college, and offers work experience. The college has good links with local restaurateurs, hotels and contract catering companies, who take students to large events such as Ascot, Silverstone and the major golf tournaments. Employers of work-based learners attend business lunches to increase their knowledge of the programme and to meet the staff. The range of courses is broad in hospitality, but there are insufficient part-time and entry level programmes within leisure and travel.

126. Pre-course information and guidance are appropriate. Induction includes a good range of activities to introduce students to the college. Initial assessment and support for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory and meet the needs of most students. Key skills are at an early stage of integration into the main programmes. Students have regular tutorials to review and monitor progress. However, these are not always sufficiently documented. Progress of work-based learners is closely monitored.

127. There are poor assessment practices on a few courses. Verbal feedback is often ineffective and does not enable students to recognise their progress and identify what they need to do in order to improve. The level of written feedback provided by teachers varies and is sometimes too brief. Assessment planning on hospitality courses is carried out on a group basis and is linked to job rotas. This does not show students' individual assessment requirements and prevents satisfactory tracking to ensure that students are covering all the course requirements. Within hospitality, some assessment takes place in a training kitchen instead of in a realistic working environment. This does not adequately prepare students for the world of work.

Leadership and management

128. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular team and course meetings take place to monitor, review and plan the curriculum. The self-assessment process is self-critical and clearly identifies areas for improvement. Internal verification is not consistent. Some internal verifiers sign all completed units, whether they are sampled or not. Internal verification activity is recorded and appropriate feedback given to assessors. The level of understanding of equality of opportunity varies among staff members and for some it is underdeveloped.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

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

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

Strengths

- high retention rates for work-based learning
- good achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- good resources for beauty therapy
- well-organised tutorials and students' reviews.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ beauty therapy programmes
- low retention rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and level 3 beauty therapy courses
- unsatisfactory technical and professional standards
- much poor teaching
- unsatisfactory leadership and management.

Scope of provision

129. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time qualifications in hairdressing and beauty therapy. These include NVQ courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 in hairdressing and at levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy.

130. There are 105 full-time beauty therapy students and 108 students attend part time. There are 68 full-time and 223 part-time hairdressing students. A further 81 students are studying with 3 franchise partners. In work-based learning, there are 8 advanced and 54 foundation modern apprentices and 1 student on the NVQ only programme. There are 40 pupils aged 14 to 16. Only 4% of students are male.

Achievement and standards

131. Over the last three years, pass rates have been high on NVQ level 3 hairdressing, at 100%, although enrolments have been low. Pass rates are also high on the anatomy, physiology and body massage diploma in 2003. On NVQ beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3,

pass rates declined over the last three years and are significantly below the national average. There were only 14 students on level 3 in 2003 but, of these, only 6 successfully completed.

132. Retention rates are at or below the national average on most courses. In 2003, on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and NVQ level 3 beauty therapy, retention rates declined to 9% and 7%, below the national average respectively. Retention rates improved significantly in 2003 on the reflexology diploma.

133. Achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is good, at 63% overall, for the three years 1999 to 2002. Pass rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship have been high for last three years, at over 70%. Retention rates overall for the three years are higher, at 66%, and are particularly high for foundation modern apprentices currently in learning.

134. The standard of work produced by students in practical lessons is poor. Technical skills are slow to develop to industry standard, due to a lack of clients, particularly in the early stages of hairdressing programmes. There is also insufficient work experience for students on full-time programmes. In work-based learning, there is good development of technical hairdressing skills through regular salon training. Interaction with clients in the salons enables students to develop their social skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	2	No. of starts	18	23	27
		% retention	83	78	63
		% pass rate	89	72	71
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	2	No. of starts	52	54	84
		% retention	83	74	76
		% pass rate	70	83	61
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	3	No. of starts	17	23	*
		% retention	82	91	*
		% pass rate	93	76	*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Anatomy physiology and body massage diploma (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	36	34
		% retention	*	86	71
		% pass rate	*	29	75
Reflexology diploma (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	*	26
		% retention	*	*	85
		% pass rate	*	*	100

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

135. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching is dull and uninspiring and lacks variety of methods and activities. In a practical lesson on hair setting techniques, the teacher demonstrated an out-of-date hair style which students would not use in industry today. Note taking and the use of study packs is excessive. In one lesson, students did not have a clear view to see the demonstration and there was inadequate discussion about the techniques being shown. Insufficient use is made of IT, although computers are available. There is inappropriate combining of student groups to work together in the hairdressing salon and the progress of highly motivated students is hindered by disruptive students.

136. Professional standards are not practiced. Students' professional image and attitude is poor. In one NVQ level 2 beauty therapy lesson, there were too few clients and many students worked on each other or on their own nails. One student did not ask the client to remove their shoes before lying on the beauty bed. The client was covered with a paper towel rather than a towel or gown.

137. Practical teaching is good on level 3 beauty therapy programmes. Lessons are well planned and well structured. Students work purposefully, demonstrate good knowledge of the equipment being used and display high levels of customer care.

138. There are four beauty salons, three of which were opened in the last eighteen months. They contain a wide range and quality of commercial equipment. There is one large hairdressing salon, which is inappropriate to support the growing provision. It is overcrowded, lacks a professional appearance and does not have high quality retail products for students to use and sell to clients. The majority of staff are appropriately qualified or are working towards a teaching qualification, but some vocational skills are not up to date.

139. There is a wide range of courses at levels 2 and 3. Level 1 provision is restricted to hairdressing for students who have previously been disengaged from learning and for students aged 14 to 16. One of the franchise partners places all students on level 2 programmes, including those without any formal qualifications. There is no full-time holistic therapy programme for adults. The college has strong links with the local hairdressing industry; particularly through the modern apprenticeship programme

140. Full-time students have an initial assessment to identify their needs for support in literacy and numeracy. Some students identified as needing support have chosen not to take it up, but those who do are well supported. Assessment on NVQ courses is slow, owing to too few clients for the number of students.

141. Workplace reviews for modern apprentices are regular, effectively track and monitor learners' progress, and have good input from employers. Tutorials for full-time and part-time students are good. Tutors are diligent in setting targets for completion of NVQ units and monitoring progress. Attendance is thoroughly checked.

Leadership and management

142. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Staff have undergone useful training in equality and diversity but there is insufficient emphasis on raising the standard of teaching. Internal verification is unsatisfactory and has not identified students' slow progress and low standards. Staff shortages have been poorly managed, although new management in the beauty therapy area is beginning to bring about improvements. The self-assessment report does not accurately identify the weaknesses in college provision, but is more accurate for work-based learning.

143. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory. There are regular meetings between the work-based learning team and the curriculum team to discuss students' progress. A small number of modern apprentices have had too few assessments in the workplace.

Health, social care and public services

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- good teaching
- good assessment practice
- effective partnerships with a wide variety of agencies
- good curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on a few programmes
- poor achievement of key skills.

Scope of provision

144. The college offers a wide range courses in health, social care, child care and early years from foundation to advanced levels. Counselling courses are offered from introductory to advanced level. Courses in public services are mainly full time and are offered from entry to degree level. NVQ courses are offered from level 2 to level 5. Health and safety, first aid and manual handling courses are also available. The college offers many of these programmes through partnership and franchise arrangements.

145. There are 4,543 students, of whom 433 are aged 16 to 18 years. The majority are part-time students. A large number of these students, 1,627, are on courses provided by franchise partners, and nearly 1,600 are adults doing NVQs in the workplace. There are 220 students on public services courses and 22 pupils aged 14 to 16. There are eight advanced modern apprentices on a cadet nursing programme and one foundation modern apprentice.

Achievement and standards

146. Pass rates on full-time and significant part-time health and social care courses are high. Retention and pass rates are above national average on the access certificate in nursing, first aid and health and safety courses, and for advanced modern apprentices on the cadet nursing programme. On many NVQ courses, retention rates are high and pass rates are broadly satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on the first and national diplomas in public services courses are also high.

147. Retention rates were low on the certificate in community mental health care at 38% and the NVQ level 2 care (direct care), at 45%, in 2003. Retention rates are also low on the AVCE health and social care, but the number of students achieving high grades is above the national average. Achievement of key skills is poor. Attendance at lessons is unsatisfactory, especially in the late afternoon. Progress towards developing key skills evidence is slow; particularly for first and national diploma in public services students.

148. On all courses, students gain a wide range of skills. Health and social care and early years students have a good understanding of professional values relating to confidentiality, respect for the child and non-judgemental attitudes. Theory is effectively linked to workplace practice and students' written work is of high standard. Progression within college courses and to HE is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and public services, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
First aid at work (short)	1	No. of starts	711	773	584
		% retention	99	100	100
		% pass rate	85	86	99
NVQ early years care and education	2	No. of starts	34	24	50
		% retention	88	63	78
		% pass rate	73	53	85
AVCE health and social care (double award)	3	No. of starts	**	49	37
		% retention	**	51	51
		% pass rate	**	84	79
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	44	46	57
		% retention	75	74	75
		% pass rate	100	97	93

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	59	84	72
		% retention	90	89	74
		% pass rate	57	33	66
Access certificate in nursing	3	No. of starts	36	33	37
		% retention	86	85	73
		% pass rate	94	100	96

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

149. Teaching is good. Lessons are effectively planned with a wide range of activities to motivate and inspire students. In a level 3 diploma in child care and education lesson, the teacher used interesting and relevant task sheets, good question and answer techniques and a well managed discussion to develop students' understanding of the key concepts in the analysis and measurement of poverty. In an advanced counselling lesson, students learned how to manage difficult and sensitive counselling sessions through supervised role play. In a public services lesson, students drew up a comprehensive emergency plan to respond to a ferry disaster, based on a real example. In the less effective lessons, there is insufficient focus on the needs of individual students; work set makes too few demands on students and lacks relevance or interest.

150. Staff are well qualified in their occupational areas and most have or are working towards an initial teacher training qualification. All NVQ assessors have assessor and verifier qualifications. New staff are supported well. The library has a good stock of appropriate texts and journals, although there are not sufficient copies of the most popular texts recommended for assignment work. Students effectively use a range of very good websites. The provision of on-line learning materials is increasing. Many part-time students and students studying with franchised partners use the college library and IT resources.

151. Assessment is efficient and effective in helping students improve the standard of their work. NVQ assessors develop good individual learning plans for students and carefully direct them towards appropriate evidence in the workplace. Initial assessment of full-time and part-time students' literacy skills leads to appropriate support being provided by the college. Tracking and monitoring inform students of their overall progress. Internal and external verification meet awarding body requirements.

152. There are strong and effective external links and partnership arrangements with a wide range of agencies and employers in health and social care. These provide an authentic context for learning, which gives students the opportunity to develop their professional skills and progress to their chosen profession. The provision in care very successfully meets the needs of the local community. Employers are positive about the service the college provides for employed adults undertaking NVQs and about the opportunities offered to those who might not otherwise have a chance to learn. Provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 has been successfully introduced, and feedback from the participating schools has been positive.

153. Guidance and support for students are very good. They are an effective element of adult part-time and work-based programmes. All full-time students have a personal tutor who monitors their progress and deals effectively with personal and academic needs. Progress reviews take place regularly and inform individual action plans. Careful monitoring of action plans takes place.

Leadership and management

154. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear focus on improvement and development. Course performance is monitored effectively. Self-assessment is thorough and leads to effective action to address weaknesses. Resources and classroom practice are discussed at meetings each half term. The sharing of good practice to raise standards in teaching and learning is less effective in some of the partnership arrangements. There is a good awareness of equality of opportunity. In all aspects of work, staff have a very good understanding of diversity, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory behaviour.

Visual and performing arts and media

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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- high standard of students' performance skills in drama, dance and music
- good teaching and effective learning in performing arts
- good resources for performing arts and franchised provision.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on GNVQ intermediate media
- uninspiring teaching in many lessons
- poor assessment practices on art and media courses
- some unsatisfactory curriculum management.

Scope of provision

155. The college offers courses at level 2 in media and performing arts and at level 3 in media, dance and drama and popular music. There is a part-time access to HE course in art and design. AS-level and GCE A-level courses are available in art and design, theatre and dramatic arts, media and film studies. Franchise partners offer the national diploma in music technology, music and technology training and AS-level art and design. There are 475 students; of whom 253 are aged 16 to 18 and 222 are adults.

Achievement and standards

156. Pass rates are high on AVCE media, first and national diplomas in performing arts, AS-level theatre and dramatic arts and on AS-level and GCE A-level media in 2003. There are low pass rates for GCE A-level film studies. Students on GCE A-level drama and theatre studies and film studies do not achieve the grades predicted for them. Retention rates have been low on GNVQ intermediate media for the last three years although pass rates are high for those who remain on the programme. Progression from AS-level to GCE A-level art, media and drama and theatre studies is low. Internal progression is good from level 2 to level 3 courses.

157. The standard of students' work is high on performing arts, dance, drama and music courses. Performing arts students work with energy and enthusiasm to extend their performance skills. In drama lessons, teachers have high expectations and students respond

well. Music students have good analytical and aural skills and are able to compose and perform to high standards.

158. On art and media courses there is less development of specialist skills in the second year. Students' portfolios and project work are often uninspiring and poorly presented. Students often work in isolation and do not meet together to share and evaluate their work.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	**	17	17
		% retention	**	71	65
		% pass rate	**	83	100
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	26	22	*
		% retention	73	68	*
		% pass rate	100	100	*
AS-level art studies/fine arts	3	No. of starts	25	29	30
		% retention	84	76	80
		% pass rate	86	77	83
AS-level film/video production	3	No. of starts	25	18	34
		% retention	88	89	76
		% pass rate	77	94	92
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	30	38	44
		% retention	80	89	89
		% pass rate	75	76	90
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	37	35	37
		% retention	65	77	65
		% pass rate	96	93	96

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

159. Teaching and learning are good or better in performing arts and music lessons. In media lessons they are only satisfactory. Performing arts and music students are enthusiastic and well motivated. Teachers challenge and inspire students to improve their performance skills. In a first diploma in performing arts lesson on improvisation, students acted out the words of the seven deadly sins. Where it was not clear which word was being acted, the teacher suggested improvements. Students confidently discussed and shared their own ideas before changing and extending the improvisation. The pace of lessons is fast and holds students' attention. A variety of teaching methods are effectively used to teach practical skills.

160. In art and media lessons and in the franchised music provision, teaching is often uninspiring and does not recognise the needs of individual students. Lessons are often poorly planned. In one media lesson on the production of a short radio programme, students' separate conversations at times drowned the teacher's voice, students were unclear of the role of the editor and producer, and this was not clarified, and discussion was managed poorly. Teaching in media lessons develops the appropriate level of technical skills. Attendance and punctuality are poor on GCE A2 media and AVCE media year 2.

161. There is good joint planning and collaboration between staff working on the national diploma courses in performing arts and music. Second-year music students compose original scores, which are choreographed by second-year dance students for the end of year show. Music students perform in theatre productions and costumes are made with the help of the art department. ILT is used effectively for word processing and Internet and intranet research.

162. Staff are well qualified, with good links to local theatres and radio stations. Most have or are working towards a teaching qualification. Accommodation is good for performing arts. There is a large drama studio and a large dance studio with a sprung floor and mirrors. However, there is no fixed barre and the studios have poor soundproofing. In the music teaching room, acoustics are poor and there is a lot of external noise. There is a lack of visual stimulus in the media rooms and cluttered art rooms. Franchised partners' facilities are excellent. There are music practice rooms, a performance arena and well-resourced computer suites. The art room has good displays of students' work.

163. There is insufficient written feedback in art and media to help students to improve. For example, in media, attention is not drawn to the correction of low-resolution digital images, typography or spelling. In art, written work and research lacks analysis and some notations in sketchbooks lack relevance. Systems for tracking students' progress are good in music. On the franchised courses, units are assessed but students' progress is not consistently

monitored. On AS-level and GCE A-level, courses target grades are not always understood by students.

164. Initial assessment results in effective support for students who need it. On the music and technology training course, good arrangements are made for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students receive good advice about courses in performing arts and music from specialist staff during interviews and induction.

Leadership and management

165. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory, but management at subject level is more effective in performing arts and music than in media. The acting head of department for media, covering sabbatical leave, is new to curriculum management and has had too little support to carry out the role. Quality assurance procedures are not applied consistently. There are no course development plans in art and design and media, and other areas lack clear targets. The college systems are not followed by franchised partners. Although staff frequently meet informally, minutes of formal team meetings do not always show curriculum planning and teaching and learning issues being discussed. Staff and students' knowledge of equality and diversity is good.

Humanities, English and modern foreign languages

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

Strengths

- high pass rates for AS-level English literature, French and history
- good teaching on most courses
- effective strategies to promote inclusive learning.
- good academic and personal support for adult students

Weaknesses

- too few high-grade passes at AS level and GCE A level
- dull teaching in a minority of lessons
- insufficient subject identity or celebration of students' work
- ineffective monitoring of progress for students aged 16 to 18.

Scope of provision

166. The college offers over 36 AS-level and GCE A-level courses in humanities, English and modern foreign languages, and a large access to humanities programme. Most of the provision is located at the college's Goschen site in a campus style similar to that of a sixth form college. In addition, two franchise partners run courses at other sites in Plymouth. There is substantial adult daytime and evening provision at levels 1, 2 and 3. Of the 500 students, 220 are adults.

Achievement and standards

167. Pass rates are at least satisfactory across most AS-level and GCE A-level courses. In 2003, pass rates were particularly high for AS-level French and English literature and in 2002 and 2003, pass rates for history were above 90%. Pass rates for GCE A-level English and access to HE are broadly at the national average, but GCSE English language pass rates fell in 2003. Retention rates are high on some courses such as AS-level English literature, but declined on many courses in 2003 compared with previous years. Progression rates were low from AS level to GCE A level in 2002/03.

168. Many students fail to achieve the grades predicted for them, particularly in 2002 and 2003. At GCE A level, the grades achieved by students over the three years to 2003 are significantly lower than expected for psychology, law, German and French. At AS-level law, sociology and geography students also failed to achieve predicted grades.

169. Students' written work is satisfactory or better in many lessons. They are able to express themselves clearly and carry out critical analysis with confidence. For example, in an outstanding AS-level philosophy lesson, the students effectively compared the spiritual journey outlined by a famous philosopher to a journey in a contemporary cult film.

A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, English and modern foreign languages, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	36	29	41
		% retention	86	76	83
		% pass rate	52	50	71
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	53	72	76
		% retention	70	76	76
		% pass rate	76	84	81
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	70	57	86
		% retention	90	88	83
		% pass rate	86	82	94
AS-level French	3	No. of starts	20	*	23
		% retention	65	*	74
		% pass rate	85	*	82
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	83	64	119
		% retention	73	78	70
		% pass rate	82	76	80
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	33	33	25
		% retention	61	97	92
		% pass rate	100	97	96

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

**fewer than 15 starters enrolled*

Quality of education and training

170. Most teaching is good or better. In the better lessons, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. In a very good access to HE geography lesson, students used Ordnance Survey maps to make their own scale maps of the pollution points on a local river, which were given to them as grid references. They used real river pollution monitoring data to examine the possible causes of pollution. The exercise and the well-managed discussion which followed highlighted the real problems in tracing river pollution.

171. In a very good GCE A-level English lesson, students showed sustained insight into the characters of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. In one discussion, a student voiced delighted disgust at the duplicitous behaviour of Claudio, while another mooted irritation at the slapstick of the comic constable Dogberry and his assistants.

172. In a minority of lessons teaching is dull. In a few lessons, teachers talk for too long, there is little interaction with students and their individual learning needs are not met. In one lesson, out-of-date materials were used. The pace was slow and weak answers from students were not developed. Students spent too long copying notes from an overhead projector and were bored.

173. Accommodation is good. The Goschen site, where most of the courses are centred, is well maintained, with good teaching rooms and resources. A new software package enables students to access learning materials at any time. Teachers in six subject areas, including philosophy and religious studies, use the system effectively as a teaching tool. Students comment very positively on the benefits when staff use the system. There is insufficient subject identity in classrooms or celebration of students' work. In many subjects, students' work is not displayed and students have too few opportunities to see high-quality work. There are few exhibits of subject-relevant material in classrooms. Staff are appropriately qualified.

174. Assessment of coursework is satisfactory. However, monitoring of progress for students aged 16 to 18 is ineffective. Students appreciate the informal concern that teachers show for their learning and progress. More formal monitoring occurs, but it is inadequate. Subject and pastoral tutors use mechanisms for tracking and following students' progress. However, teachers know students well and communicate issues directly to them, rather than through the systems, which have become more necessary as the provision has grown.

175. There are effective strategies to promote inclusive learning. The minimum GCSE entry requirements have been reduced, making the provision much more inclusive for students aged 16 to 18, and even more so for adults. A number of pathways including creative writing and philosophy are offered on the access to HE programme, to help students who may struggle with core curriculum subjects, such as English or sociology, to develop their strengths. Provision has expanded rapidly over the past six years. Induction is appropriate for introducing students to the college and is beginning to focus more on ensuring

that students are making the right subject choices. There are few opportunities for enrichment.

176. Adult students are well supported, both in their learning and pastorally. Many students, including those who have challenging social, mental and physical health problems, are well integrated in lessons and encouraged to achieve. On access to HE courses, increasing numbers of adults progress to local universities. Pastoral tutorial provision for students aged 16 to 18 is inadequate. The time has been reduced to half an hour each week, and attendance is unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management

177. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory. Student numbers have grown, but curriculum innovations, such as the new software enabling students to revise or pick work up on the Internet at home, have led to measurable improvements in students' learning. Equality of opportunity is good. Self-assessment is accurate, but many quality improvements are slow to happen. The new software has yet to be introduced to all areas and issues regarding the low number of students progressing to GCE A2, poor retention rates on many AS-level courses in 2003 and low achievement of students against predicted grades have still to be resolved.

Foundation programmes

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

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

Strengths

- very good development of students' personal and social skills
- good achievement of additional qualifications by E2E students
- good teaching and effective learning
- effective behaviour management for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good management of E2E programme.

Weaknesses

- informal development of students' literacy and numeracy skills
- unstructured reviews of students' progress.

Scope of provision

178. The college offers E2E and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as a range of courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 223 students on programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Of these, 53% are aged 16 to 18. Courses are available for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties to moderate learning difficulties, and for those with mental health issues. There is a schools link programme and an alternative education programme for students aged 16 to 18. Most programmes are designed to develop literacy, numeracy and independent living skills.

179. There are 186 students on E2E. Most students attend the programme for at least 16 hours per week, but this is flexible, depending on their needs. Students on E2E and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may attend work experience. The college is the lead provider for E2E and subcontracts with two key partners. Jobcentre Plus programmes include employability training and New Deal full-time education and training in basic skills for young people aged 18 to 24. Both programmes are for a minimum of 26 weeks. Clients attend structured basic skills sessions for young people aged 18 to 24, employability modules and access the job search facilities.

Achievement and standards

180. The development of students' personal and social skills is very good. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good independent living skills, while students on E2E programmes are effectively re-engaged in learning and develop good citizenship skills. All students demonstrate good communication, confidence and self-esteem. Students on E2E and the work preparation programme gain an appropriate understanding of the skills needed for employment.

181. Achievement of additional qualifications is good on E2E. Many qualifications directly relate to the occupations students wish to enter, and include abrasive wheel certificates, food hygiene and qualifications in IT. Other qualifications include a powerboat certificate at level 1 which motivates students to continue with their learning. Since August 2003, 69% of students have gained externally accredited qualifications. For many students these are the first qualifications that they have achieved. Retention rates on both programmes are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

182. Teaching and learning are good. Learning activities in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are relevant to their needs. For example, in one lesson, students were developing cookery skills. One student with physical disabilities could not prepare the more complex meals, and was learning how to read basic cooking instructions and use a microwave.

183. Behaviour management in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective. Staff are experienced and communicate well with each other about students' behaviour, ensuring a co-ordinated approach to any issues. They use appropriate teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students. For example, students with autistic spectrum disorder were actively engaged in learning through the use of a pictorial communication system. This enabled them to sequence events, helping them to be more involved in learning independently.

184. E2E staff are adept at realising and developing students' potential and actively encourage them to participate in lesson activities. In a fun music-making lesson, students were fully involved developing their speaking and listening skills and working well with others. E2E students attending vocational training learn new practical skills. For example, in a practical carpentry lesson, students were making joints to fit skirting boards.

185. There is an appropriate range of accommodation, specialist equipment and educational games on all programmes. There are, however, insufficient resources to support literacy and numeracy. Staff are well qualified, but there are insufficient staff with suitable qualifications and expertise in literacy and numeracy on E2E.

186. The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is informal. In lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, literacy and numeracy is effectively

integrated into teaching sessions, but there is little formal planning of learning in relation to students' initial assessment. E2E literacy and numeracy teaching and assessment are not planned. When students attend sessions on personal and social development, literacy and numeracy are incidentally developed. Students on the vocational route of E2E are provided with support in relation to their qualification, but not for literacy and numeracy, as identified at their initial assessment.

187. Reviews of students' progress are not well managed. Targets for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not specific enough to measure the small steps students often make, such as recognising their own sponge bags and combs before a personal hygiene session. On E2E, targets set at reviews are often repetitive, and it is not clear how far students have progressed. Some issues, identified verbally at reviews, are not recorded in writing as areas for development.

188. Initial assessment is comprehensive and consists of a diagnostic assessment of literacy, numeracy and, where appropriate, an assessment against the pre-entry criteria. Students' personal and social skills are also assessed through discussion, observation and from information received from specialist agencies and parents. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for the assessment and moderation of qualifications.

189. The range of provision is satisfactory and includes learning in the community, a community house to provide teaching for students with autistic spectrum disorder, and subcontracted provision to meet the needs and aspirations of students on E2E. Support for students' personal needs is satisfactory, and provision is made for specialist advice and guidance when required. Students have a satisfactory understanding of key induction topics including health and safety and equality of opportunity. These are reinforced in some lessons.

Leadership and management

190. The management of E2E is good. Since the beginning of the programme in August 2003, much development work has been undertaken. There is a good wide of strategic and operational meetings that include key partners. Regular contract management meetings identify progress of partner organisations in achievement, retention rates and students' progression. Quality assurance checks have accurately identified issues with target setting, and training has been provided for staff to improve this.

191. Over the past two years, there has been a range of developments in the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through partnership arrangements, including a programme for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and discrete provision to develop independent living skills for students with autistic spectrum disorder. Most staff are involved in the self-assessment process, which accurately identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity issues and many have attended training.

Literacy and numeracy

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

Contributory grade for adult provision is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high retention rates on adult programmes
- good development of personal and learning skills on adult programmes
- good teaching and effective learning on adult programmes
- good use of ICT on adult programmes
- highly effective induction programme for asylum seekers.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for key skills
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning in a minority of key skills and ESOL lessons
- inadequate arrangements for additional literacy and numeracy support.

Scope of provision

192. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time literacy and numeracy courses from entry level to level 2. Courses are offered at the main college sites, including the two neighbourhood colleges, at Martin's Gate and Camel's Head, and at a range of community venues including two community colleges. Pre-beginner, beginner and elementary ESOL courses are offered for part-time students.

193. There are 894 adults and 59 students aged 16 to 18 on part-time literacy or numeracy programmes. There are also 162 adults on courses run by franchise partners at two community colleges. Literacy and numeracy are taught on full-time programmes for 40 students aged 16 to 18 who have previously been disengaged from learning and for 33 pupils aged 14 to 16. Additional learning support for literacy and numeracy is provided for 132 students in other areas of learning either individually, in small groups or in class. Discrete lessons for key skills at levels 1 and 2 are offered to 700 students on vocational courses.

Achievement and standards

194. There are good retention rates on adult programmes. In 2003, retention rates were 95% on entry level literacy programmes, 86% at level 1 and 100% at level 2. On numeracy

programmes, retention rates at entry level were 92 per cent, 100% at level 1 and 75% at level 2. Most students achieved an Open College Network (OCN) accredited qualification.

195. Achievement of personal and learning skills is good on adult programmes. Students achieve challenging learning targets, which are relative to their prior attainment and potential, set out in their individual learning plans. They develop good teamwork skills and work co-operatively together. Their confidence and self-esteem improves and they become more involved in the community and are more able to help their children or grandchildren with schoolwork. One student aged 70 was delighted that she was now able to write letters for the residents' committee and could use email.

196. There are low pass rates for key skills at levels 1 and 2. For the key skill of communications at level 1, pass rates are unsatisfactory at 9% in 2002 and 17% in 2003. At level 2, pass rates are low, at 2% in 2002 and 4% 2003. For application of number, pass rates are low at level 1, at 5% in 2002 and 0% in 2003. Level 2 pass rates are also poor, at 1%, in 2002 and 2003.

Quality of education and training

197. Teaching and learning are good on discrete adult literacy and numeracy programmes. In literacy lessons, learning is carefully planned for the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Teachers use appropriate teaching methods. Teachers and support tutors work effectively as a team to support students. In one lesson, students used laptop computers to complete the gaps on a handout about local activities. This was appropriate to their level of ability. The standard of grammar, use of vocabulary and layout of the students' work was very good. Teachers' written and verbal feedback to students is good and helps them to improve their work.

198. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in a minority of key skills and ESOL lessons. Teaching is poorly planned to meet the needs of individual students, and learning and attainment are poor. In the unsatisfactory ESOL lessons, teachers do not plan learning at an appropriate level and the vocabulary used is too difficult for the students to understand. The accommodation for these students is of high quality and is located centrally, but it is not on a college site with English speaking students. ESOL students do not have sufficient opportunity to practice and develop their speaking skills. In the unsatisfactory key skills lessons, there is too much emphasis on the completion of tasks and insufficient teaching of appropriate communication or numeracy skills.

199. There is good use of ICT to support learning on adult programmes. Computers are available in all teaching rooms and laptops are taken to community and employer venues. ICT is skilfully used to attract students back to learning and encourages them to develop their literacy skills. The use of ICT on other courses is satisfactory, although there is insufficient access to ICT for additional learning support. Other learning resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Teachers are appropriately qualified in literacy and numeracy, but two of the three ESOL tutors do not have ESOL qualifications and have not yet undertaken core curriculum training.

200. There is a highly effective induction programme for asylum seekers. The 30-hour, one-week programme includes visits to local support agencies, doctors, libraries and chemists, and introduces some key vocabulary. Visits to the main college site gives students the opportunity to see the learning and sports facilities, have a careers interview and find out about progression to mainstream programmes. Visiting speakers include health care and legal professionals. Students gain information on local culture and travel and complete assessments and other documentation. The week culminates with a social event such as a meal or a bowling trip.

201. Of the 704 students at levels 1 and 2 screened for additional learning support pre-entry, 610 enrolled. Of these, 213 have additional learning support integrated into their curriculum programme. Of the remaining 397 students, 212 receive additional learning support from the additional learning support team. Although the additional learning support provided at levels 1 and 2 is broadly satisfactory, some arrangements are inadequate. Additional support is delivered by the additional learning support team, key skills tutors and also in some curriculum areas, for example, construction. There is a lack of clarity and co-ordination in the management of this provision and no overview of whole-college learning support. There is little qualitative evaluation of the impact of support, although the retention and pass rates of those in receipt of support are measured.

202. There is a dedicated space for students to receive additional learning support at the Kings Road site, but not at Goschen. There have been issues regarding timetabling of in-class support, which have now been addressed but were disruptive to students. A few teachers do not adequately plan the use of support tutors in class and support is used mostly to help keep students on task rather than to develop their literacy or numeracy skills. Records of support given are insufficiently evaluative.

203. There is a satisfactory range of provision that is effective in widening participation. There is some good partnership work with employers to provide training to support employees' literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace.

204. Advice, guidance and initial assessment are satisfactory. Diagnostic assessment is used to set targets in individual learning plans. Tutorials and reviews for part-time students on discrete programmes are not fully established. There is satisfactory monitoring of punctuality and students' attendance.

Leadership and management

205. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course reviews are comprehensive and lead to positive change. Managers have set targets for each class to improve retention and pass rates, although staff are not fully aware of these targets. The systems of internal lesson observations, staff development and training and appraisal are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, but does not identify the unsatisfactory teaching in ESOL and key skills or the inadequate arrangements for additional support. Awareness of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Part D: College data
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16–18 %	19+ %
1	27	33
2	30	22
3	36	16
4/5	0	2
Other	7	27
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in November 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)*
Science and mathematics	610	1,005	6
Land-based provision	30	76	0
Construction	155	5,862	21
Engineering, technology and manufacture	439	1,008	5
Business administration, management and professional	230	1,286	5
Information and communication technology	307	2,011	8
Retailing, customer service and transportation	106	389	2
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	957	2,381	12
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	116	165	1
Health, social care and public services	1,035	5,147	22
Visual and performing arts and media	276	266	2
Humanities	648	485	4
English, languages and communication	375	449	3

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)*
Foundation programmes	206	2,059	8
Total	5,490	22,589	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	504	936	870	3,037	3,795	1,876
	Retention rate %	74	91	81	88	90	70
	National average %	75	76	**	69	70	**
	Pass rate %	67	71	69	26	40	77
	National average %	69	71	**	68	71	**
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,177	1,410	1,376	4,310	4,647	2,977
	Retention rate %	73	79	75	84	88	77
	National average %	70	72	**	68	68	**
	Pass rate %	64	64	67	38	53	57
	National average %	69	71	**	68	72	**
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,554	1,757	1,969	2,433	2,403	2,656
	Retention rate %	73	80	77	79	82	73
	National average %	71	77	**	68	70	**
	Pass rate %	81	78	77	53	55	61
	National average %	77	79	**	69	72	**
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	21	*	*	457	396	291
	Retention rate %	24	*	*	61	82	81
	National average %	73	71	**	67	67	**
	Pass rate %	0	*	*	52	55	53
	National average %	54	53	**	55	56	**

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 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.*
2. *College rates for 1999/2000 to 2001/02: College ISR.*

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled*

*** no national averages available for 2002/03 at time of publication*

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	24	8	25
Level 2 (intermediate)	48	40	12	50
Level 1 (foundation)	44	48	8	118
Other sessions	73	19	8	37
Totals	62	29	9	230

Notes