



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## Brooke House Sixth Form College

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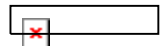
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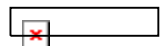
**Basic information about the college**



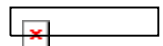
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Name of college:	Brooke House Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Angela O'Donoghue
Address of college:	Kenninghall Road Hackney London E5 8BP
Telephone number:	0208 525 7150
Fax number:	0208 525 7151
Chair of governors:	Richard Garrick
Unique reference number:	120341
Name of reporting inspector:	Meena Wood HMI
Dates of inspection:	18-22 April 2005

**Part A: Summary**



**Information about the college**



Brooke House Sixth Form College was opened to students in September 2002. It was established in response to the 16 to 19 area-wide inspection in Hackney and Islington in October 1999 which identified a lack of appropriate provision for young people within the borough. The college was set up on a site previously used by the Community College of Hackney, a general further education (FE) college.

Hackney is the fifth most deprived borough economically and socially in England. Almost half of its school pupils are eligible for free school meals and half do not have English as their first language. Hackney has a larger proportion of people of minority ethnic origin than the London average. Around 90% of students enrolled at the college are from minority ethnic groups. Of these, 62% are from Black and African Caribbean groups. This is significantly higher than the local population of 56%.

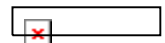
There are three Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded sixth form schools in the area. Some 77% of students attending the college live within the borough of Hackney.

The college has developed its curriculum to meet the needs of its local communities and so does not reflect that of a typical sixth form college. The college offers both academic and vocational programmes at all levels from entry level through to level 3, with 31 subjects at advanced subsidiary level (AS level) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level). General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) level is offered in English, mathematics and science. Courses leading to advanced vocational certificates of education (AVCEs) or national diplomas are provided in 10 areas. Vocational qualifications at level 2 are also provided in business administration, childcare, health and social care, information and communications technology (ICT), media, performing arts, science, sport, and travel and tourism. There are entry level and level 1 courses in business, health and social care, arts and media, performing arts and ICT. The college also offers programmes at entry level in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), literacy and numeracy and for students with learning difficulties.

In 2003/04, the college enrolled 1,022 students, of whom 924 were aged 16 to 18 and 98 aged 19 and over. In 2004/05, the college's enrolments have increased to 1,374 16 to 18 year olds, some 89% of the total college population, and 148 students are aged 19 and over. Some 25% of students aged 16 to 18 enrolled at level 1, about a quarter enrolled at level 2 and half at level 3. Just over one fifth of the college's current enrolments are in foundation studies and 15% of enrolments are in science and mathematics. Enrolments have increased significantly in visual and performing arts and media and health, social care and public services during 2004/05.

Hackney Local Education Authority's (LEA's) average figure for pupils gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, at 45%, is well below the national average. The college prides itself on its inclusive and non-selective mission and has ensured that its entry criteria for level 3 programmes provide opportunities for those young people with minimum GCSE scores to study level 3 programmes and progress to higher education (HE). The college's mission statement is to inspire through respect and to transform through learning.

### **How effective is the college?**



Inspectors judged the provision to be good in science and mathematics and humanities. In visual and performing arts and media and English it is satisfactory. Overall provision in literacy, numeracy and ESOL is satisfactory, with ESOL being attributed a contributory grade of good. Business administration is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning at the college is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory and support for students is good. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

### ***Key strengths***

- good pastoral support for students
- good range of enrichment activities
- high value added in most AS-level and GCE A-level subjects
- good or better teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses
- high level of staff and students' commitment to the college's inclusive mission
- high standard of students' behaviour in lessons
- secure and welcoming environment
- productive partnerships with local schools and communities.

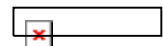
### ***What should be improved***

- attendance and punctuality
- the quality of teaching on many vocational courses at all levels
- the implementation of cross-college procedures in teaching, learning and assessment
- achievement on courses at levels 1 and 2 in vocational areas

- retention rates on level 1 courses
  
- additional support to meet the language and literacy needs of all students
  
- success rates for GCSE English and mathematics courses
  
- success rates in key skills
  
- staff and students' information and learning technology (ILT) skills.

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	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on most GCE A-level courses and in GCSE and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) science. However, the retention rate is low in AS-level mathematics. Students make very good progress on all AS-level and GCE A-level courses in relation to their GCSE grades. Teaching in science is highly effective and leads to improvements in students' language skills. Students' progress is monitored insufficiently.
Business administration	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Pass rates are low on all courses, but retention rates are high on GCE A-level business studies and AS-level economics. Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities and both academic and pastoral support are good. Teaching on vocational courses is ineffective with teachers and students making insufficient use of ILT. Students' punctuality is unsatisfactory and disrupts learning in lessons.
Visual and performing arts	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is good on AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Students use very good specialist equipment and benefit from

	excellent enrichment opportunities. Pass rates on vocational level 2 courses were low in 2004 and students' punctuality on all courses is poor. Students' literacy and language needs are not being met effectively on vocational courses.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on AS-level and GCE A-level courses and the achievement of high grades is particularly good in government and politics, sociology and psychology. Achievement in government and politics, history and psychology is very good in relation to GCSE grades. Students' punctuality is poor. Pastoral support is very good, but feedback on students' work is insufficiently informative to help students to improve.
English	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on GCE A-level courses with a large proportion of grades A and B. Teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses is good. Students' language skills are insufficiently developed and retention rates are unsatisfactory on GCSE courses. Students' attendance and punctuality are poor and hamper their learning.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The contributory grade for ESOL is <b>good</b> . On ESOL courses, students' attendance and retention rates are very high and teaching and achievements are good. In adult literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers motivate their students skilfully through vocationally or socially relevant topics to help them make satisfactory progress. However, there is insufficient attention to individual learning needs and inadequate use of individual learning plans in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Success rates on key skills communication and application of number are unsatisfactory.

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

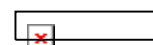
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, and her management team, have made rapid progress in establishing the new college and in communicating successfully the strategic priorities, values and inclusive ethos to staff and students. Governors are committed to developing the college in challenging circumstances. Recruitment has nearly tripled since the first year. Retention, pass and success rates are below national averages, but have improved over the last two years. Key college policies and procedures for attendance, punctuality and assessment are not implemented consistently across the college. The support of new teaching staff does not focus adequately on the practical strategies needed for the management of students' learning and raising of pass and retention rates. The college is in financial category C. Its weak financial position stems from over-running of time and costs on building developments. The necessity to reschedule the college's full opening and consequent loss of enrolments led to the overall lowering of the college's projected income.. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

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

Social and educational inclusion are good. Parents and young people have a poor perception of education in the borough and 40% of young people leave the borough for their secondary education.

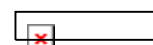
challenging context, teachers and managers have been very successful in widening participation through an increase in student numbers and in promoting social cohesion amongst college students. Discrimination and incidents of bullying, harassment, and homophobia are dealt with effectively so that students feel safe, secure and welcomed within the college. A prayer room is well used by all students. The curriculum is educationally inclusive to reflect the local economic context and young peoples' prior attainment, abilities and skills. Value added on AS-level and GCE A-level courses is higher than that in sixth form colleges, owing to the progress students make from their low qualifications on entry. Students progress successfully through course levels and to HE. A clear equality and diversity policy and action plan have been updated to take account of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) training events for staff are mandatory. There are good examples of inclusive teaching within the curriculum. The college's 14 to 16 cohort includes those with additional English language needs at entry level who would not otherwise receive the appropriate support at school. In science, teachers are responsive to the large number of students who are speakers of other languages and successfully ensure their accurate use of scientific language. The Skills for Life strategy is underdeveloped. Integrating literacy, numeracy and language support within vocational and academic subjects is not well established.

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



Guidance and support for students are good. Careers guidance is good. Students appreciate the high level of support they receive from subject tutors and personal tutors. Good working relationships with staff encourage students to seek help and advice across a wide range of learning and personal issues. The college has effective arrangements for the initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and language, and detailed diagnostic reports are written for students with learning difficulties. Induction is well planned and effective, but latecomers do not always receive an appropriate induction. The range of support measures provided by the college's Student Services is extensive and students receive effective support on social and personal issues, especially for finance and housing. There is not enough additional learning support to meet the literacy, numeracy and language needs of all students, in particular, on vocational courses. Language and literacy support is insufficiently linked to the main programme of study. Some 82% of those identified with learning support needs are currently receiving it: nearly one fifth of the total college population. Students with disabilities are supported well. The requirements of child protection legislation have been implemented effectively.

### **Students' views of the college**



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

#### ***What students like about the college***

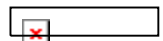
- good teaching
  
  
- personal help from student services

- support from tutors and subject teachers
- excellent relationships between staff and students
- use of the college's laptop computers at home
- friendly, welcoming and safe environment
- good specialist facilities, laboratories and gym
- enrichment programme.

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

- lack of study space in the learning resource centre at busy times
- insufficient computers
- number of textbooks in library
- poor perception of college by outsiders
- limited choice of food in refectory.

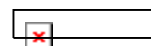
**Other information**





The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC 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



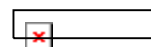
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and 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	64	28	8
Learning 16-18	62	30	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. The college offers a wide range of AS levels and GCE A levels, together with GCSEs and vocational qualifications at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. The majority of students are full time, aged 16 to 18 and recruited mainly from areas of high social deprivation. Two thirds of the students study advanced level courses and start their courses with an average GCSE points score significantly below the national average for all subjects, except for computing and Spanish. Since the college has been open for two years, its pass and retention rates data are available for the period 2002 to 2004. The college's self-assessment report compares the college's pass and retention rates to national averages for general FE colleges and to sixth form colleges. In 2003/04, compared to the national averages for general FE colleges, students performed better in retention and achievement at level 2 and at level 3 in retention only. Although improving between the two years, compared to the sixth form colleges' national average in 2004, the college's pass rates at all levels are significantly below the national average. Retention rates at levels 2 and 3 are below the national average and significantly below at level 1. The in-year retention rate across the college was 88% at the time of inspection, above the national average of 85% for sixth form colleges, including those colleges from disadvantaged areas.

2. In arriving at judgements about students' achievements, inspectors took the context of the college into account and placed significant emphasis on value added data for AS-level and GCE A-level courses to determine the progress made by the students against their prior attainment. In judging overall pass and retention rates in curriculum areas, inspectors took into account national averages for general FE colleges as well as sixth form colleges, including those colleges from disadvantaged areas. However, samples of retention and pass rates given in the curriculum tables and judgements arising from these are compared with the national average for sixth form colleges including those colleges from disadvantaged areas.

3. Between 2002/03 and 2003/04, the proportion of students who started courses and successfully completed them improved year on year. This occurred at all levels for all students. Success rates for students on foundation programmes increased significantly as numbers of students have increased from 2002 to 2004. In 2004, of the 614 students who started courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, 74% completed them successfully.

4. The largest groups of minority ethnic students in the college are Black African and African Caribbean. Success rates for these groups indicate that they perform significantly below the national averages for such students. However, as compared to college averages, students of Black African origin perform better at level 2, at 59%, compared to the college average of 53% and at level 3 at 56%, compared to the college average of 48%. They perform below the college average at level 1. Conversely, students of African Caribbean origin perform slightly better than the college average at level 1, but below the college average at levels 2 and 3.

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

5. For students taking GCE A-level courses, analysis of value added shows that, over the last three years, overall performance is above what would be predicted on the basis of prior attainments. In 2004, students' performance in nine subjects at GCE A level was significantly better than predicted by their GCSE scores. These subjects accounted for 52% of the total examination entries. In economics, students performed significantly less well and in business, performance was slightly below that predicted by their GCSE scores. A three-year rolling average analysis for each individual GCE A-level subject shows that out of 23 subjects, students in 9 subjects, biology, chemistry, physics, French, English literature, mathematics, further mathematics, and government and politics consistently achieved higher grades than predicted on the basis of their GCSE performance. In AS-level film studies, law, drama and theatre, music technology and AVCE science, students achieved below their expected grades, but not significantly so.

6. Significant numbers of students retake GCSE mathematics, science and English during their time at the college. In English and mathematics, the proportions of A\* to C grades have improved to national averages in 2003/04. In science, all 17 students entered, passed with A\* to C grades. However, retention rates are significantly below national averages for mathematics and below for English. In science, retention rates are at national averages. The success rates on GCSE courses were below national averages for 2002/03 and, although improved for 2003/04, were still below national averages for mathematics and English. In GCSE mathematics in 2004, of the original 140 students who started the courses only 59% of the students completed and achieved successfully as against the national average of 75%. In science, however, the success rates in 2003/04 were significantly above the national average, at 82%, but numbers who started courses were much lower.

7. Retention rates on level 1 courses for students aged 16 to 18 have not improved between 2002/03 and 2003/04, and remain at 74%. Retention rates on level 2 and level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18 have improved marginally between 2002 and 2004, but are below the national average. Pass rates are below the national average at all levels, but particularly low at level 1.

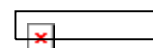
### **Adult learners**

8. The college has a very small number of adults aged 19 or over. Numbers on vocational and academic courses have increased over the last two years as students who enrolled at the college at the age of 17 have progressed to advanced level courses. In 2004, retention rates on courses at all levels improved significantly for adults as numbers of students increased. Pass rates for adults on level 3 courses have nearly doubled over the last two years from 48% to 82% and are well above the national average; at level 2 they are at the national average. On level 1 courses, pass rates are significantly below the national average and have declined from the previous year. The largest proportion of adult students study on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses followed by science and mathematics.

9. The quality of all students' work is satisfactory in most subjects. Inspectors judged that the standard of students' work was good or better in 51% of lessons, satisfactory in a further 39% and unsatisfactory in 11%. Students are very attentive and well behaved during lessons and most make good progress from the time they join the college. Teachers have high expectations of students and support them individually during lessons and outside of lessons to achieve their best. Students place a very high value on the amount of help they receive outside of lessons and have high levels of motivation and commitment to their studies. The highest standard of students' work is in science and humanities. Students' written and practical work in science lessons are accurate and well presented. In humanities, students develop the knowledge and debating skills to participate productively in classroom discussions dealing with complex topics. In history, government and politics and psychology, students have good critical thinking skills and interpret source evidence accurately to develop reasoned arguments. On English advanced literature courses, students develop good reading and close analytical skills. On media courses, students evaluate the use of technology in relation to aspects of production perceptively. ESOL entry level students' conversational skills are accurate and they express opinions effectively. However, students in visual and performing arts have poor use of written language. Art students' notebooks are annotated poorly and students make insufficient use of primary source evidence. In business, most students' work is not produced to professional standards as they do not develop effective ILT skills. On GCSE English courses, students' writing suffers from inaccurate grammar and poor use of expression. AS-level law students of lower ability or those who have missed lessons have unsatisfactory reading scanning skills in retrieving source information.

10. Overall attendance rates were well below the 85% average attendance for sixth form college inspections. In the lessons observed, attendance was 76%. The attendance rate was low in English at 64% and in visual and performing arts and media at 69%, while it was high in science and mathematics and business at around 80% and 84% respectively. Students' punctuality is a significant weakness. In a significant number of lessons, students' persistent lateness and poor attendance hamper their learning and progress, and that of other students.

## Quality of education and training



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 83 lessons. The majority of lessons were for students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses at advanced level. Overall, inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in 64% of lessons, satisfactory in 28%, and less than satisfactory in 8%. This teaching profile is below the average for sixth form college inspections, but within national averages for all colleges. The proportion of lessons graded very good and outstanding was 40%. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching on vocational and academic courses. On vocational courses at all levels and on GCSE courses, teaching, learning and attainment were not as good as on AS-level and GCE A-level courses. A higher level of unsatisfactory teaching, learning and attainment

as unsatisfactory and 50% as satisfactory. At level 2, 22% of lessons observed were judged as unsatisfactory, 39% satisfactory and 39% good or better. The best teaching observed was at entry level where there was no unsatisfactory teaching and at level 3 where only 4% of the teaching was judged as unsatisfactory and 76% good or better. The quality of teaching observed in science was very high. The learning profile was good or better in 61% of lessons, satisfactory in 30% of lessons and less than satisfactory in 8% of lessons.

12. In good lessons, teaching and learning are structured very effectively and take the abilities and prior attainment of the students into account. Teachers use a variety of whole-class teaching, group work and individual activities successfully to maintain students' interest and understanding. Learning objectives for each activity are clearly shared with students. In science, for example, targeted questioning of students encouraged high levels of concentration. Teaching of different topics provided good opportunities to extend more able students and to support less able students or those who had been absent in a previous lesson. In the best lessons, teachers use good methods to enable students to understand often quite complex concepts. Students' learning is well monitored through questions, assignments and practical activities. Teachers give students constructive feedback to help them improve their skills and knowledge. In a psychology lesson, students undertook a practical role play, following a debate, so that they could demonstrate and evaluate their understanding. In English lessons, students enjoy articulating their views either through work in pairs or through enthusiastic class debate.

13. Specialist equipment and facilities, such as those used in performing arts and media, are used effectively to develop students' practical skills. Most materials used by teachers are at least satisfactory, and, in science, they are of a high standard. Students are encouraged to access materials on the college's intranet. In humanities, many lessons are posted on the intranet so that absent students can catch up on work missed. ILT is used very imaginatively to incorporate video clips and other multi-media aids.

14. In the less effective lessons, teachers often fail to develop the appropriate skills through tasks and activities that are suitable for all the students. In lessons at level 2 and on vocational courses, teachers do not take sufficient account of students' language and literacy needs in the planning of lessons. At level 3, students' independent learning and critical thinking skills are not adequately developed in some lessons. Inspectors observed too little effective use of ILT in lessons. Interactive whiteboards are not used widely.

15. Resources to support learning are good. The college has responded to significant difficulties in recruiting staff in specialist subject areas by, for example, training and supporting college administrative and support staff to apply for teaching positions within the college.

16. Specialist accommodation is of a high standard in hair and beauty, visual arts, performing arts and media and sport. Classrooms and laboratories are well equipped with computers and data projection facilities. However, there is insufficient use of displays and students' work to give a subject identity and to celebrate students' achievements in classrooms.

17. The college has yet to analyse room utilisation to improve efficiency. Access to accommodation and resources for students with physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties is very good. The college is fully compliant with the SENDA. Arrangements for completing risk assessments and the monitoring of health and safety are thorough.

18. The ratio of students to computers is good, at 3:1. However, access to computers at peak times is not managed well and there are insufficient spaces for students to work quietly or to work on a computer in the learning resource centre. All students are provided with textbooks, but there are insufficient texts for them to undertake wider research or explore their subject interests more widely.

19. The college has made slow progress in developing its intranet site. However, recently introduced ILT subject champions, particularly in science and mathematics, have proved positive.

20. The application of the quality standards for assessment and monitoring of students' progress are applied inconsistently across subjects. Teachers use a wide range of assessment practices that do not always provide clear guidance for students on how to improve effectively.

21. In the best examples, marking is informed, supportive and makes reference to assessment objectives frequently. In many lessons, teachers give good verbal feedback and spend time helping students to develop their self-evaluation skills and to monitor their own performance. In poorer examples, assessments fail to inform students what they are doing well and what needs to be improved.

22. The arrangements for informing students of their overall progress are effective. Information from marked assignments is used in students' progress reviews. Twice-yearly progress reports recording performance, effort and attendance provide a thorough assessment for each subject. The college has been successful in increasing attendance at parents' evenings.

23. The college's curriculum strategy is based on the systematic analysis of local needs. Level 3 provision is structured in a way that encourages students to combine vocational and academic studies. A significant number of students progress on to higher level courses within the college. In 2004, 88% of completers progressed from one level to the next and 73% of students completing level 3 courses progressed to university, three quarters of whom were the first in their family to do so.

24. Senior managers have established very effective links with local schools to increase the curriculum offer for 14 to 16 year olds. Students from local schools attend the college to study GCSE and AS-level Turkish, GCSE drama and those on the popular Increased Flexibility (IF) programme follow national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 1 in hairdressing and vocational GCSEs in health and social care and music technology. Pupils aged 14 to 16 from the Pupil Referral Unit are integrated successfully into the college's mainstream provision and 14 to 16 year old refugees and/or asylum seekers attend a successful full-time ESOL course.

25. Students benefit from appropriate enrichment activities. The college's citizenship project has been highly successful in motivating young people. Students who participate in an accredited mentoring programme work with local school pupils as well as college students. Former students who now attend local universities mentor college students preparing for HE. Those studying business courses have good opportunities in mentoring and gain paid work experience in a city financial institution, as well as an additional vocational qualification in personal finance.

26. All students are entitled to achieve level 2 in key skills through proxy qualifications in literacy and numeracy, and pass rates are high. Arrangements for students on level 3 courses with a level 2 entitlement are inadequate. Key skills are not integrated effectively with advanced level courses and separate lessons are only available in information technology (IT). IT key skills achievements are a significant weakness. Pass rates are very low. In 2004, out of 291 students who started IT key skills level 2, only 5 achieved the qualification. In the same year, no students achieved a key skill qualification at level 3.

27. Guidance and support for students are good. The college provides a good careers advice and guidance service and collaborates effectively with the Connexions service. On courses, students experience a thorough induction and diagnostic assessment programme. However, students who start late do not take part in all of the screening, assessing and induction procedures. A significant proportion of students who enrol prior to the start of term

fail to attend. In September 2004, nearly one third of such students did not start their studies. Effective arrangements to gather feedback from absent students are yet to be implemented.

28. Arrangements for the initial assessment and diagnosis of students' needs for literacy, numeracy and language below level 2 as well as for learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. During 2004/05, the college provided learning support to 265 students, currently 19% of the student population. Some 82% of those initially identified with learning support needs are currently receiving it.

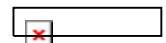
29. Learning support in class, in one-to-one sessions and in workshop sessions is not well established. The role of learning support assistants and their work with subject tutors in the classroom have not been defined clearly. Separate individual learning plans for students' support in literacy, dyslexia, numeracy or language are not integrated within the main programme and those needing support during lessons do not always receive it. In vocational and AS-level lessons where students' language and literacy support needs had not been identified, students struggled with the demands of their subject. In the best examples, support assistants and teachers plan language, literacy and numeracy support as part of the classroom teaching to meet the specific demands of the course. Many students fail to attend the voluntary workshop sessions regularly. Absence and lateness are insufficiently monitored by all staff. Attendance at timetabled sessions is, however, good. Subject support and support by personal teachers, in particular, revision lessons, extra lessons at weekends and counselling services are valued greatly by students.

30. The college's support for students with disabilities is good. One student with a severe disability on a music technology course is supported effectively by a learning support tutor using specialist audio and computer equipment.

31. The college's tutorial system is very effective and popular with students, in particular, when it is used to provide advice and guidance for applications to HE. Termly tutorial sessions are used to review individual learning plans, negotiate new targets and agree action planning.

32. Support for students on social and personal issues is good. The college meets its statutory obligations under child protection legislation and staff are well trained on child protection issues.

## Leadership and management



33. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college benefits from strong leadership. The principal was appointed in late March 2002, five months before the new college opened. At that stage, there were no premises, no staff and no strategy apart from the imperative to provide educational opportunities for 16 to 18 year olds within the borough and thus improve and widen participation. Since September 2002, under extremely difficult circumstances, the senior management team, together with the governors, has successfully developed a growing college, where staff and student numbers have more than doubled and results are improving. The college's seven strategic aims and objectives enable students to study in a welcoming, safe and secure environment and to progress successfully from their low prior attainment. All staff have succeeded in communicating the core values of respect for others and for learning, amongst its diverse student population.

34. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory in foundation, visual and performing arts and business and good in humanities, science and mathematics and English.

35. The procedures to set operational standards are not implemented effectively across all faculties. For example, those for performance management and appraisal are informed by lesson observations and staff targets, but these have not yet been implemented fully in all faculties. Monitoring procedures for attendance and punctuality are not applied rigorously by all teachers and managers. Not all course managers have had training on using the college's systems. The college does not have formal systems for the sharing of good practice in teaching, learning and in assessment, even between teachers on the same courses. College-wide systems to improve the quality of assessment and achieve consistency in standards are not well established. Quality assurance of courses relies too heavily on external verification feedback for improvements to be implemented.

36. The college has a clear self-assessment process that is effectively implemented in all faculties. Self-assessment grades for the curriculum were very similar to those awarded by inspectors except in English and visual and performing arts. Self-assessment reports and action plans identify key weaknesses and good progress has been made in tackling many of these. College mechanisms for gathering objective feedback from students on the quality of their course and college experience are not well established and are not used effectively in the writing of the self-assessment reports. For example, in English there is a detailed analysis available but, in business, the questionnaires are not discussed formally by the team.

37. Communication is good and staff are well informed. Whole-college meetings, faculty and cross-college meetings are scheduled regularly and well attended. Minutes of meetings are on the college's intranet and a college newsletter and a bulletin are published.

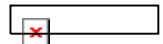
38. The rapid growth of student numbers and the introduction of new courses have been accompanied by the recruitment of a large number of staff. The average length of service of teaching staff is 13 months. The college has a strategy for supporting the high numbers of newly recruited teachers. New teachers serve a 10 month probationary period that incorporates mentoring and monitoring activities. Similarly, newly qualified teachers have a mentor system, with monthly support meetings, dealing with aspects such as lesson planning. However, a minority of teachers have not received direct support for in-class management when necessary. Teachers have good staff development opportunities to address issues identified in internal lesson observations. Some have little impact. For example, training to promote differentiation has not resulted in greater use of these strategies in teaching and learning.

39. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed to supporting the college through challenging circumstances. The average level of attendance at corporation meetings is, however, relatively low and an overall attendance target has not been set. Governors more recently have prioritised reviewing the quality of courses, the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and the data on retention and pass rates. They are well informed about managerial actions. Governors have not benefited from external training opportunities. Students' complaints are carefully logged and governors receive a summary of these. Staff complaints are not always dealt with in a timely way by managers.

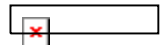
40. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively in some curriculum areas. In English, a wide range of literary texts is used imaginatively to reflect students' cultures. Enrichment activities in visual and performing arts develop productive links with Asian and African-Caribbean theatre and film productions. Half of the staff are from minority ethnic groups. However, college signs are not multi-lingual and there is little use of icons for speakers of other languages even though a significant proportion of the students have literacy, numeracy and language needs. Other languages are not used in the college prospectus. The college analyses underachievement by ethnic groups and curriculum strategies to address the issues are incorporated into the strategic plan. However, these are not implemented fully by staff. The college recognises the need to raise its profile within the business community with employers, but does not have a coherent college-wide strategy for employer engagement.

41. Financial management is good. The system for managing the internal finances of the college is monitored stringently. The college has been placed in financial category C (weak) by the LSC and is dependent on continuing support from the funding body in the short term. The delayed opening of the college and the operational consequences that followed, primarily, loss of enrolments combined with over-running of costs incurred from the new building developments have led to a loss in the college's projected income. The establishment of four new city academies in the local area presents a further challenge to the college achieving its mission and financial security. The college provides satisfactory value for money as recruitment has doubled, the low success rates in many areas are now improving and students with low prior attainment on AS-level and GCE A-level courses make very good progress.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Science and mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass and retention rates on most GCE A-level courses
  
- high pass rates on level 2 science courses
  
- high value added in all AS-level and GCE A-level subjects
  
- highly effective teaching
  
- good use of ILT in science lessons.

#### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates in AS-level mathematics



- o insufficient attention to the monitoring of students' progress.

### **Scope of provision**

42. A course in adult numeracy at level 1 is available to students for whom GCSE mathematics would not be appropriate. Courses at level 2 include a dual award GCSE in science, GNVQ intermediate science and GCSE mathematics. There are AS-level and GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. The college offers a national diploma in vocational science. There are 235 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 36 aged 19 and over.

### **Achievement and standards**

43. Pass and retention rates in GCE A-level science and mathematics courses are high. In 2004, pass rates were 100% in GCE A-level physics and chemistry and 92% in GCE A-level mathematics. Retention rates are also high in these subjects. In 2004, the pass rate in GCE A-level biology was below the national average for sixth form colleges, but well above the national average when compared to general FE colleges. Students on AS-level and GCE A-level courses make excellent progress relative to their prior attainment at GCSE. Pass rates on level 2 science courses are high and retention rates are around the national average for sixth form colleges. Retention rates in AS-level mathematics are low.

44. Students show a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. For example, in physics students are able to explain clearly the energy changes in an electrical circuit. In practical laboratory work in chemistry, students work methodically and show a good understanding of chemical analysis. In GCE A-level mathematics, students with good problem-solving skills tackle difficult questions on mechanical equilibrium very successfully. In GNVQ intermediate science, students record the results of their experiments carefully and systematically. Students concentrate very well and show determination to succeed. Attendance at lessons during inspection was 79%. In many lessons, students arrive late and miss the introduction.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2003 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	75	140
		% retention	71	69
		% pass rate	15	45
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	28	37
		% retention	75	84
		% pass rate	81	81
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	28	40
		% retention	64	85
		% pass rate	78	62
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	33	36
		% retention	76	69
		% pass rate	80	84
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	*	17

		% retention	*	94
		% pass rate	*	100
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	17
		% retention	*	94
		% pass rate	*	100
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	*	19
		% retention	*	89
		% pass rate	*	82

Source: ISR (2003), college (2004)

\*course did not run

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

45. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned carefully to meet students' individual needs and interests. Teachers encourage students to use scientific language clearly and this is a strong feature of many lessons. In an imaginative introduction to biotechnology, students tasted and compared modified foods such as different breads and hybrid corns to bring out key aspects of the subject. In vocational science, a lively discussion on diabetes was handled skilfully and all students contributed with enthusiasm. Teachers make good use of ILT to help students learn. For example, in a physics lesson, the teacher successfully used the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate through visual animation how electrons move in a conducting wire. In chemistry, video clips were used to show close-ups of chemical reactions in test tubes. In mathematics, teaching is less imaginative and lacks sufficient variety to stimulate students' interest.

46. Teachers get excellent support from the ILT champion in the subject area. Technical support in science is good. Data projectors are used extensively in most lessons in science and mathematics. Learning materials are of a high standard and many are available to students on the intranet. There are well-equipped specialist laboratories for each science subject. All students are provided with their own modern textbook in each subject.

47. The assessment of students' work is inconsistent across subjects. The faculty policy on assessment is not always followed. The monitoring of students' homework and assessments is insufficiently systematic to give a clear overview of students' progress. Assessment and monitoring are better in vocational subjects and give students a clearer picture of their progress. Too many students miss deadlines for handing in their work, in some cases, by several weeks.

48. Progression rates are high from level 2 science courses to AS-level science subjects and to the national diploma in science course. There are good opportunities for vocational science students to progress into employment in science-based industries and hospital laboratories as well as HE.

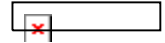
49. Support within subjects is good. Students value greatly the individual support and encouragement they receive from personal tutors such as additional revision sessions. For students referred to the learning resource centre for additional learning support take up is low.

### **Leadership and management**

50. Leadership and management are good. The self-assessment report focuses on raising achievement through rigorous lesson observations. These have raised the quality of

teaching and learning by emphasising good lesson planning that focuses on meeting students' needs. Strategies to improve retention rates are having a positive impact. Examples of good practice exist within the faculty, for example, in vocational science and biology, but are not shared across all subjects. Managers receive an analysis of results in science or mathematics by ethnic origin or gender, but there is no action planning to improve the under-achievement of particular groups of students.

## **Business administration**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates in GCE A-level business studies and AS-level economics
- good range of enrichment activities
- good subject support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on all courses
- ineffective teaching on vocational courses
- insufficient use of ILT by teachers and students
- lack of punctuality at lessons.

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

51. The college offers AS levels and GCE A levels in business studies, accounting and economics. Vocational courses are offered from level 1 to level 3 and include: GNVQ foundation; GNVQ intermediate; Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in business studies; certificate in administration and a BTEC national award in personal and business finance. These courses recruit mainly students aged 16 to 18. The

business curriculum offers students the opportunity to mix academic and vocational courses with progression routes from foundation to advanced levels. There are currently 203 full-time students on business and administration courses.

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

52. Pass rates on all business courses are low. The pass rates for GNVQ foundation business, AS-level accounting and AS-level business studies improved significantly in 2004, but remain well below the national averages. Retention rates on the GCE A-level business studies and AS-level economics courses are high. Retention rates on all other courses are within, or slightly above, the national average for colleges of FE.

53. Students who attend regularly produce work of a satisfactory or better standard. They make good contributions to group activities. A significant minority of students find it difficult to express their opinions and struggle to develop analytical and evaluation skills despite prompting by their teachers. Students' written work is generally satisfactory, but not word processed to a sufficiently professional standard. Patterns of attendance show an improving trend, but students are not punctual in many lessons and often they disrupt other students' learning. Teachers deal with students' lateness with differing degrees of rigour. There is good progression from level 2 to level 3 courses and from AS-level to GCE A-level courses. Progression to the second year of the BTEC national diploma and certificate business course in 2004/05 was poor.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, 2003 to 2004***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	28	10
		% retention	64	70
		% pass rate	33	57
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	26	31
		% retention	88	84
		% pass rate	57	62
AS-level accounting	3	No. of starts	28	40
		% retention	82	75
		% pass rate	30	53
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	38	47
		% retention	84	77
		% pass rate	28	56
AS-level economics	3	No. of starts	20	21
		% retention	65	95
		% pass rate	69	60
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	*	19
		% retention	*	100
		% pass rate	*	84

Source: ISR (2003), college (2004)

\*course did not run

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

54. Teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses is generally good, but there is too much ineffective teaching on vocational courses. In the best lessons, teachers involve students in discussion and evaluation, set demanding work and ensure that the lesson has achievable learning objectives. In one of the best lessons, students worked co-operatively to tight deadlines and applied theory to set tasks on cash flow forecasting. The completion of each task was analysed thoroughly by the teacher and students to ensure a good understanding. In a well-structured lesson on preparation for an accounting examination, the teacher used good learning materials to keep students focused on the task. In less successful lessons, the planning is weak, teachers talk too much and there is insufficient student interaction and activity. Teachers make insufficient checks on learning and fail to take account of students' differing needs. In a minority of lessons, slow-paced, unimaginative teaching fails to motivate students. ICT is used mainly in lessons for presentations. Students are not actively encouraged to attend key skills IT lessons and there are no systematic or planned opportunities for students on level 1 or level 2 courses to develop a professional standard of IT literacy.

55. Resources in classrooms are good. Most rooms are equipped with well-located data projectors and interactive whiteboards, but these are not used to their full potential by teachers. Up-to-date textbooks and good handouts prepared by tutors are available for students.

56. Assessment of students' work is inconsistent as some assessed work contains detailed feedback and guidance on how to improve whilst on others the feedback is cursory. Teachers set and mark homework regularly and are readily prepared to give additional subject support outside lessons. Students are provided with good guidance on examination techniques and requirements. Teachers demonstrate good practice in the tracking of assignments and monitoring of students' progress.

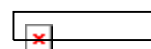
57. Students benefit from good opportunities to broaden their understanding of the business environment. The recently introduced Finance Academy course, in partnership with large financial institutions, combines excellent opportunities for academic study with mentorship and paid work experience. Many students benefit from a work placement programme and a planned programme of company visits and visiting speakers.

58. Students are well guided and inducted on to their chosen programmes. Weekly tutorials are effective and students review individual learning plans, targets and action plans during progress reviews. Students value the support they receive from subject tutors and the opportunity to attend revision and 'catch up' workshops.

### **Leadership and management**

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of the business area has been restructured recently and this has contributed to improved teamwork. A number of strategies have been implemented to improve retention and pass rates, attendance, teaching and learning. However, it is too early to establish the impact of these actions on overall standards. Staff are highly committed and communication within the department is good.

### **Visual and performing arts**



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

### **Strengths**

- good teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses
- very good specialist resources
- excellent enrichment opportunities
- good progression on all courses.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on level 2 vocational courses in 2004
- lack of punctuality
- insufficient attention to students' language and literacy needs
- inconsistent implementation of assessment practices.

### **Scope of provision**

60. The college offers an appropriate range of courses in visual and performing arts and media. Courses at level 1 include introductory diplomas in media and art and in performing arts. At level 2, there are BTEC first diplomas in performing arts, media, art and design. The college's advanced level vocational courses include BTEC national diplomas in design, media, general art and design, music technology and performing arts and textiles. Subjects offered at AS level and GCE A level include dance, drama and theatre studies, film studies, media, music and art and design. There are currently 358 students aged 16 to 18 and 38 adult students on courses in this area.

### **Achievement and standards**

61. In 2004, pass rates were low on level 2 vocational courses. In the same year, pass rates on AS-level courses in art and design, drama, and music were also low. In AS-level media, both pass and retention rates have been consistently high. In 2004, pass and retention rates in GCE A-level media were 100%. Overall, retention rates have improved and, in 2004, retention rates on most courses were around the national average for sixth form colleges.

62. The standard of students' work in media, dance and drama is high. In a dance lesson, students demonstrated dance notation symbols translated effectively into movement and devised new routines for a solo performance. In media, students evaluate perceptively the use of camera angles, set design, gesture and dialogue in relation to production. Students in art make insufficient use of primary sources and research is heavily reliant on secondary sources. GNVQ intermediate art and design students do not develop a thorough understanding of other artists' work. However, students demonstrate good use of materials and technologies. In a level 2 art lesson, students using optical mixing techniques experimented creatively with canvas and acrylic paints. Progression from level 2 to level 3 in all subjects is good. In 2004, approximately 66% of students progressed to HE.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts, 2003 to 2004***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	16	21
		% retention	63	81
		% pass rate	0	71
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	14	35
		% retention	71	74
		% pass rate	90	69
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	14	35
		% retention	43	89
		% pass rate	83	68
AS-level art and design	3	No. of starts	13	13
		% retention	92	92
		% pass rate	58	75
AS-level media	3	No. of starts	19	33
		% retention	84	91
		% pass rate	100	90
AS-level drama and theatre studies	3	No. of starts	*	15
		% retention	*	81
		% pass rate	*	62

Source: ISR (2003), college (2004)

\*course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

63. Teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses is good. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods to engage students in purposeful learning activities. Teachers refer to examination board marking criteria and offer students good advice on how to respond to examination questions. Teaching on level 1 and level 2 vocational courses is less successful and does not always meet the language and literacy needs of all students in the group. Detailed class profile sheets indicate individual students' needs clearly, but these are not used in lesson planning. In many of the lessons observed, students for whom English is not their first language frequently misunderstood both verbal and written instructions. During lessons, the lack of planning between support tutors and teachers results in much of the support being ineffective. Students' late arrival has an adverse effect on teaching and

learning in the majority of lessons. The start of lessons is often delayed and many teachers fail to challenge students who arrive late. Attendance recorded during the week of inspection was low, at 69%.

64. Accommodation and specialist resources are very good. The music technology suite is well equipped with a screening room for films and good access to computers with industrial-standard software. Many teachers are also practising artists and designers with current industrial knowledge that enriches the students' experience.

65. Assessment practices are not implemented consistently. Tracking sheets to monitor students' progress are not used on all courses. The quality of feedback to students varies from very good written comments that help students improve in media to little or no written comments on assessed work in art and design. In art and design, spelling and grammatical errors in students' written work are not always corrected. Students are encouraged to assess and evaluate each others' practical work in lessons.

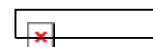
66. Enrichment opportunities are excellent. In performing arts, the director of a West End musical has supported project work and students have benefited from links with the Hackney Empire. AS-level media students produced a cable television film examining the stereotyping of males of black ethnic origin. National diploma music students contributed to the Stoke Newington festival and art students exhibit work twice a year at a local gallery.

67. Support for students from subject and personal tutors is satisfactory. Additional workshop sessions provided for students to catch up on work they have missed or to practise their skills are not generally well attended. Students receive good careers guidance and support for applications to HE.

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

68. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Staff retention rates have improved. Previously, staff shortages and changes had adversely affected students' learning and attainment. Inadequate cover arrangements had resulted in lessons being cancelled. The department has decided to withdraw music from the curriculum offer owing to low numbers. The timetable has been revised to improve room usage and clear course action plans are now in place.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on GCE A-level courses
  
- high value added in history, government and politics and psychology
  
- very good teaching and learning in history and religious studies



- extensive and innovative enrichment programme
- very good support for students.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention and pass rates on AS-level courses
- lack of punctuality in a significant minority of lessons
- insufficiently informative written feedback on most students' work.

### **Scope of provision**

69. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in geography, government and politics, history, law, philosophy, psychology, sociology and religious studies as well as AS-level citizenship and American history. There are currently 322 students enrolled on humanities courses, of whom 26 are aged 19 or over. Sociology and psychology are the most popular subjects in the area.

### **Achievement and standards**

70. Pass rates are high in GCE A-level government and politics and history, though numbers in the groups are small. A large proportion of students achieve grades A or B in government and politics, psychology and sociology. With the exception of sociology and history, pass rates on AS-level courses are low. In particular, pass rates in AS-level law and psychology are significantly below the national average for sixth form colleges. Retention rates on most AS-level courses are low. The college is addressing weaknesses in retention rates and, at the time of inspection, the in-year retention rate was high, at 93%.

71. Students' work reflects good progress made in relation to their prior attainments. Achievement, when taking into account their qualifications on entry, is good. It is particularly strong in GCE A-level history, government and politics and psychology. The standard of students' oral work is very high. AS-level students demonstrate good skills and knowledge when tackling complex theorems such as the ideas of Nietzsche in philosophy and facets of Zen Buddhism in religious studies. During discussions, students produce responses that are clearly thought out. History students articulated very effectively Mussolini's rise to power. Students' writing is satisfactory and reflects a good understanding of the subject matter. Students are very attentive in class and participate successfully in learning activities. Attendance during the inspection was low, at 77%, and in a significant minority of lessons, students were not punctual.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 2003 to 2004***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2003	2004
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	11	22
		% retention	91	77
		% pass rate	90	88
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	26	35
		% retention	85	69
		% pass rate	41	42
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	28	70
		% retention	79	80
		% pass rate	86	43
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	*	15
		% retention	*	80
		% pass rate	*	83
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	*	17
		% retention	*	100
		% pass rate	*	88
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	*	17
		% retention	*	88
		% pass rate	*	87

Source: ISR (2003), college (2004)

\*course did not run

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

72. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to motivate and enthuse their students. Teaching and learning are especially good in history and religious studies. Students' skills of judgement and evaluation are developed in most lessons through imaginative work in pairs or groups. In the best lessons, teachers challenge and support students to analyse complex source materials and students are given structured explanations. Students develop critical thinking skills to a very high standard and can judge the relevance of key concepts. In a history lesson, students investigated how Nazi Germany used the youth movement and education to promote fascism. They were encouraged to make an assessment on how far minds can be moulded by education to fulfil the aims of a dictatorial government. One student made a perceptive comparison between classical Sparta and Hitler's policy on youth education. In a government and politics lesson, students evaluated very effectively successful aspects of Scottish devolution. A psychology lesson investigated the management of stress and students discussed different aspects of alleviation strategies and the side effects of anti-depressants. Students explored the doctor and patient relationship and stress management through a structured role play.

73. Staff are well qualified and experienced, though two teachers with little teaching experience are responsible for the co-ordination of whole subject areas. Most humanities rooms have ILT facilities but, as yet, interactive boards are not used as an integral part of teaching and learning. Wall displays in some teaching areas are poor and do not help learning.

74. The monitoring of students' progress is effective and incorporates target setting. Bi-

annual reports and reviews of progress against individual targets are good. However, feedback on students' work is insufficiently informative, particularly in those skills and areas that need to be improved.

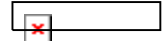
75. Students have a good choice of subjects, but progression from AS-level to GCE A-level courses is low. The enrichment programme provides good opportunities for students to improve their broader understanding. Students' work on the humanities magazine and the editorial control of citizenship news is outstanding.

76. Support for students is very good and includes revision lessons and personal support from tutors. In some cases, where additional support for literacy, numeracy and language has not been identified on AS-level courses, a minority of students struggle with their understanding of specialist language, reading and writing skills.

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

77. Leadership and management of humanities are good. Minutes of meetings are thorough with action points monitored adequately. Sharing of good practice through departmental meetings is satisfactory. All staff have contributed effectively to the self-assessment process. Some departmental practices, such as the consistent application of the assessment policy, are not formalised and quality assured.

## **English**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on all advanced level English courses
  
- large proportion of students who achieve grades A or B at AS level and GCE A level
  
- good teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on GCSE courses
  
- adverse effect of poor attendance and lack of punctuality on teaching and learning

- o insufficient development of language skills in several GCSE lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

78. AS-level and GCE A-level subjects are available in English literature, English language and literature and communication studies. The college provides a large GCSE English programme. There are currently 237 students aged 16 to 18 enrolled on courses in English, of whom 147 are studying GCSE English.

### **Achievement and standards**

79. In AS-level and GCE A-level English literature, retention and pass rates are high. Pass rates in AS-level and GCE A-level language and literature courses are high. Retention rates on AS-level English language and literature improved to around the national average for sixth form colleges in 2004. In 2004, the pass rate for AS-level communication studies was below the national average. Students on most advanced courses make good progress relative to their prior attainment at GCSE, especially in English literature. A large proportion of students achieve grades A or B on AS-level English courses and in GCE A-level English literature. For example, in 2004, some 56% of students achieved high grades in both AS-level English literature and GCE A-level English literature. Pass rates in GCSE English are around the national average, with 58% of students achieving high grades, but in 2004 the retention rate was below the average.

80. Students are well motivated and conscientious. Many students at advanced level demonstrate an understanding of the specialist vocabulary and terminologies used in critical analysis and have sophisticated analysis skills beyond the simple identification of literary features. The standard of most coursework is high. On GCSE courses, the most able students attain a high standard of autobiographical writing and include reflective detail on the influences of their backgrounds and culture. Less able students do not have a good development of language skills, in particular writing, or an understanding of a wide range of texts.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in English, 2003 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	94	138
		% retention	72	70
		% pass rate	50	58
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	32	33
		% retention	63	82
		% pass rate	100	93
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	7	11
		% retention	100	91
		% pass rate	100	100
AS-level communication studies	3	No. of starts	*	18
		% retention	*	89
		% pass rate	*	56
GCE A-level English	3	No. of starts	*	16

language and literature		% retention	*	94
		% pass rate	*	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	*	10
		% retention	*	100
		% pass rate	*	100

Source: ISR (2003), college (2004)

\*course did not run

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

81. Teaching on AS-level and GCE A-level courses is good. Teachers are particularly effective in managing group activities that stimulate students' interest and extend the more able students to attain their potential. Student debates and discussion are organised well. Often, the collective findings of the groups are summarised and posted on the intranet as a reference source.

82. The development of students' reading and analytical skills is a major strength in advanced level literature lessons. Most English language teaching at advanced level extends students' understanding of function, target audience, and purpose in written and oral language. In one AS-level English lesson, when considering the genre of letter writing, students effectively compared and analysed letters written by Raleigh, Dorothy Wordsworth and a modern politician.

83. In less successful lessons, teachers fail to challenge students' learning and do not sufficiently develop their critical thinking skills. On GCSE courses, teachers pay insufficient attention to developing students' language skills, in particular their spelling, grammar and vocabulary. The teaching of grammatical items is not sufficiently contextualised within the language experiences of the students. In one lesson, students were not given adequate opportunities to practise an item of speech and were confused as to the definition of an imperative. In another lesson, students demonstrated a poor awareness of punctuation when reading aloud. No guidance was given to help them to improve their reading skills. In another lesson, students did not practise basic spelling rules and dictionaries were not available to develop students' independent learning.

84. Resources for English teaching are satisfactory. Set texts are issued and there are adequate collections of videos for use. The stock of novels and general reading available in the library is small. Detailed study guides for students are available on all courses and additional handbooks are often provided for each course unit.

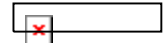
85. Staff give students much good individual support. The marking of students' work refers frequently to assessment objectives. Subject teachers and personal tutors monitor students' progress, and set targets for improvement. However, the targets set for students are not uniformly rigorous. Support for students in coursework and examination preparation is extensive. Poor attendance and students' lack of punctuality impact negatively on all courses, particularly in the planning of differentiated group work. Teachers employ several strategies to monitor and minimise absence and poor punctuality, and to enable students to catch up on work missed, but the problem remains.

### **Leadership and management**

86. Leadership and management are good. Managers and teachers work together very effectively and are committed to the college's mission for educational inclusion. Professional development is encouraged strongly. Action planning successfully addresses identified

weaknesses and is effective in bringing about improvements. There are insufficient formal opportunities for the sharing of good practice between advanced level and GCSE courses.

### **Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages**



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

Contributory grade for ESOL is **good (grade 2)**

#### ***Strengths***

- very high attendance and retention rates in ESOL
  
- good teaching and achievements in ESOL
  
- good attendance and high retention rates in literacy and numeracy lessons
  
- highly motivated students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory achievement in key skills communication and application of number
  
- insufficient attention to individual learning needs in literacy and numeracy
  
- inadequate use of individual learning plans in literacy and numeracy.

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

87. Courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are developing rapidly. The number of ESOL students has grown in response to local needs, particularly at entry level. Some 230 students are currently enrolled on literacy courses and over 120 on ESOL courses. About 100 of these are taking the English Plus course which comprises 12 hours of English each week and 2.5 hours of IT, 2.5 hours of numeracy or mathematics and a 1 hour tutorial. Over 200 students take part in numeracy courses. Most students are aged between 16 and 18,

with small numbers of 19 year olds. The college enrolls 14 to 16 year olds who have been excluded from school or who have arrived in the country with too little English to attend school.

### **Achievement and standards**

88. On literacy and numeracy courses, pass rates are satisfactory. Attendance is nearly 7% above the national average and the overall retention rate is 10% above. During the course of the current year, only 10% of students have stopped attending literacy or numeracy lessons. Over 95% of ESOL students achieve the qualifications for which they study. Their attendance and punctuality are exemplary. Pass rates in key skills level 1 communication and application of number are low.

89. The standard of students' work in literacy, numeracy and ESOL is satisfactory and, in half the lessons observed, they were learning skills to enable them to progress more independently. In a literacy lesson, students worked independently in small groups and checked their own answers accurately against the examination board's marking scheme. ESOL students have progressed significantly with their language skills in their second year in college. Entry level 3 and level 1 students speak using grammatically accurate and idiomatic English. On all literacy and numeracy courses, the extent to which some students achieve is affected by lateness and inconsistent attendance.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, 2003 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Certificate in adult numeracy	1	No. of starts	84	132
		% retention	92	91
		% pass rate	71	74
Achievement tests in literacy	1	No. of starts	43	*
		% retention	58	*
		% pass rate	84	*
Adult literacy test	1	No. of starts	*	83
		% retention	*	83
		% pass rate	*	49
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	*	121
		% retention	*	76
		% pass rate	*	33

Source: ISR (2003), college (2004)

\*course did not run

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

90. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in ESOL. In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to individual learning needs. All students have individual learning plans, based on an initial assessment. These do not have sufficiently specific targets for them to be useful in the planning of learning. In most lessons, individual learning plans are not used to evaluate students' learning. Students on vocational and academic subjects receiving additional support have separate individual learning plans for literacy, numeracy, tutorials and for learning support. These are not shared with the staff who teach in the different areas. This results in teachers being unaware of a student's

difficulties or progress across their programme of study. For example, numeracy teachers are not aware of students' literacy levels and cannot plan their worksheets accordingly. Most vocational and academic teachers remain unaware of students' needs and the progress they make in additional learning support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Students' learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is driven by schemes of work, based on accreditation rather than by students' individual needs, or their subject requirements.

91. Teaching topics used in literacy and numeracy relate well to students' vocational and social interests and motivate them. In a numeracy lesson, health and social care students made calculations based on portions of fruit and vegetables which were relevant to their main course. In literacy and language lessons, more able students discussed domestic violence and coping with bereavement. In lessons for beginners in English, students practised ordering pizzas. This extended their vocabulary for everyday use very effectively. In a very good ESOL lesson, students were split into two groups according to their skills needs. Some students concentrated on listening skills whilst others improved their reading and writing.

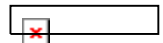
92. Students' work is displayed poorly in classrooms and there is little display of other materials to encourage learning. Most teachers rely too heavily on worksheets and whole-class teaching focusing on the whiteboard. Little use is made of ILT, video, audio material or real objects to promote the understanding of students with limited language skills. All students are assessed regularly throughout their courses, in many cases, using online testing.

93. The full-time English Plus course is particularly successful in meeting the needs of young people who are new arrivals in the country. Students receive very good personal support from their foundation tutors, particularly in ESOL. Good support is available for students with disabilities.

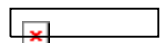
### ***Leadership and management***

94. Leadership and management of foundation level provision is satisfactory. Managers responded effectively to an unexpected need for entry level and level 1 literacy and numeracy. The self-assessment report has realistic action plans for improvement. However, the numeracy and literacy teams do not work together to better meet their students' learning needs overall in literacy, language and numeracy. ESOL courses are co-ordinated well. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in planning, teaching and recording across the subjects. Ambitious plans to make literacy and numeracy a central part of students' vocational subjects are at a very early stage of development.

### **Part D: College data**



**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2004/05**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	25	15
2	25	26
3	50	59



<b>4/5</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2004/05**

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>16-18 No.</b>	<b>19+ No.</b>	<b>Total Enrolments (%)</b>
Science and mathematics	366	6	15
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	10	1	0
Business administration, management and professional	219	28	8
Information and communication technology	140	11	5
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	98	14	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	63	7	2
Health, social care and public services	202	26	8
Visual and performing arts and media	356	38	13
Humanities	298	37	11
English, languages and communication	286	29	11
Foundation programmes	606	62	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,644</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100*</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2005

\*figures are rounded and do not total 100

**Table 3: Retention rates and achievement**

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Level (Long Courses)	Retention rates and pass rate	Completion year			
		16-18		19+	
		2003	2004	2003	2004
1	Starters excluding transfers	249	408	3	21
	Retention rate %	74	74	33	62
	National average %	83	83	73	73
	Pass rate %	60	73	100	54
	National average %	72	72	75	75
2	Starters excluding transfers	336	611	11	40
	Retention rate %	74	77	55	68
	National average %	81	81	69	69
	Pass rate %	72	78	67	70
	National average %	86	86	74	74
3	Starters excluding transfers	448	932	50	106
	Retention rate %	778	82	62	64
	National average %	90	90	73	73
	Pass rate %	62	70	48	82
	National average %	88	88	77	77

*Note: summary of retention rates 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 all sixth form colleges.*

*Sources of information:*

*1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2002 to 2003: Retention rates and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.*

*2. College rates for 2002/03 to 2003/04: College ISR.*

**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)	76	20	4	50
Level 2 (intermediate)	39	39	22	18

Level 1 (foundation)	0	50	50	2
Other sessions	56	44	0	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>83</b>

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