



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Fareham College

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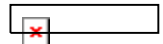
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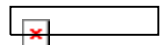
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Basic information about the college

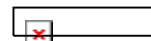


Name of college:	Fareham College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Carl Groves
Address of college:	Bishopsfield Road Fareham Hampshire PO14 1NH
Telephone number:	01329 815200
Fax number:	01329 822483
Chair of governors:	David Arrell
Unique reference number:	130693
Name of reporting inspector:	Keith Abbott HMI
Dates of inspection:	9-13 May 2005

Part A: Summary



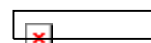
Information about the college



Fareham College is a small general further education (FE) college located on one site on the western outskirts of Fareham. It serves a population of about 200,000 in the boroughs of Fareham and Gosport in south-east Hampshire. Levels of educational, social and financial deprivation in much of the Gosport area are high. In contrast, Fareham is relatively affluent, although pockets of deprivation exist. In Fareham and Gosport, around 76% of young people stay in education after age 16. Most attend one of south-east Hampshire's three general FE colleges or three sixth form colleges. There is one local school with a sixth form.

The college offers a broad range of vocational and academic programmes. Its main focus is on vocational provision. There is no work-based learning. Its largest areas of learning are visual and performing arts, health and social care, information and communications technology (ICT) and engineering. It is the lead partner in the Fareham and Gosport Increased Flexibility Consortium and around 150 pupils aged 14 to 16, from 12 partner schools, attend the college. The college employs 316 staff, comprising 163 teachers, 43 curriculum support staff, 87 business support staff and 23 managers. The principal took up post in October 2002. In 2004/05, the college enrolled just under 4,300 students, of whom about 68% are part time. About 2% of college students are from minority ethnic groups. This reflects the ethnic profile of the local community. The college's mission statement is to 'develop the full potential of each member of the College Community through high quality learning services'.

How effective is the college?



The college has made good progress throughout a period of considerable financial difficulty. Managers have made major changes to the curriculum and achieved substantial cost savings. Overall pass rates and the proportion of lessons judged to be good or better by inspectors are above the national average for FE colleges. Seven curriculum areas were inspected. Provision is outstanding in one area, good in one area, satisfactory in four areas and unsatisfactory in one area. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- strong and effective leadership by governors and the executive team

- good strategic and operational planning

- the teaching of adult students

- teaching in practical lessons

- sound advice and guidance

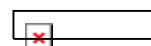
- effective additional learning support
- the support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

What should be improved

- overall achievements on a significant number of courses
- the implementation of quality assurance procedures in most curriculum areas
- the consistency of tutorial support and action planning for individual students
- links with employers
- the assessment of students in several curriculum areas.

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

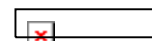


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Engineering	Satisfactory. There is good teaching in motor vehicle lessons and generally good attendance, but some lessons lack challenging activities. Retention and pass rates range from high to very low. Action planning for individual students is weak, but recent management

	changes are beginning to have a positive impact.
Business studies	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on national vocational qualification (NVQ) accounting courses, but pass rates are low on vocational courses and in advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) law. A good range of activities and resources are used to promote learning and good monitoring of progress encourages students to achieve. Key skills qualifications are not well implemented and course reviews lack rigour. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was poor.
Sports, leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on full-time level 3 sports courses, but retention rates on some sport and tourism courses are well below national averages. Most lessons are well planned, but there is often insufficient challenge for the more able students. Assessment is rigorous and support for students is good.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Outstanding. There are very high retention and pass rates on most courses. Assessment and monitoring of students' work are thorough. Teaching is very good. Students attend well and are punctual. Key skills are integrated effectively with courses. The area has strong curriculum leadership and effective management.
Health, social care and public services	Unsatisfactory. There are high pass rates on counselling courses, but low pass rates some key full-time courses. Much teaching and learning is ineffective. The internal verification system is not effectively improving the marking and grading of assessments. Aspects of the public services provision are unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good. Pass rates are high on many advanced level courses. However, pass rates have declined in general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) art and AS-level performance studies and are low on level 2 photography courses. Teaching is very good and standards of students' practical work are high. Students develop excellent independent learning skills and receive good individual support from teachers and tutors. Course review action plans are insufficiently robust.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons start punctually and students learn well. Additional learning support is used effectively to support full-time students. There are poor retention rates on adult literacy and numeracy courses and unsatisfactory overall pass rates in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) mathematics. There is insufficient use of initial assessment on courses for adults.

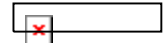
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Overall pass rates and the proportion of lessons judged to be good or better by inspectors are above the national average for FE colleges. However, the college is in a weak financial position. A recovery plan, which includes very significant changes to the curriculum and major cost savings, has been well managed. The local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has confidence in governors and senior managers. The principal has provided strong and effective leadership throughout a difficult period. Curriculum management is good or satisfactory in most curriculum areas and there are comprehensive quality assurance arrangements. However,

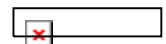
and of the tutorial system is unsatisfactory. The arrangements to promote equality and diversity are satisfactory. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



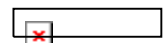
The college's response to education and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college offers a wide range of full-time vocational courses. There is a good range of key skills courses at levels 1 to 3. The college has recently started pre-GCSE English and mathematics courses and revised its pre-entry courses for people with learning difficulties. It teaches nearly 150 school pupils under the Increased Flexibility (IF) programme and supports a further 20 pupils who are in danger of being excluded from school. The satisfactory range of part-time provision includes a modular access to higher education (HE) course, adult literacy and numeracy courses at five community venues, and level 1 provision in English for speakers of other languages. Skills for life provision in the community includes provision for people on probation, people with mental health disabilities and people who attend drug rehabilitation centres. The proportion of staff and students from minority ethnic backgrounds reflects the local community. A college chaplain, who is a qualified counsellor, is available to students of all faiths.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are good. Students benefit from a well-managed advice and guidance service and good links with specialist counselling and careers services. School pupils aged 14 to 16 are well supported when they attend college. Tutors and support staff communicate effectively with parents about college events, attendance and behaviour. Thorough initial assessment, interviews and careers advice, ensure that most students are placed on appropriate programmes. Additional learning needs are identified early and support is provided soon after enrolment. Most students take advantage of this support and those that do so are more likely to remain at the college than those who decline the offer of support. Tutorial support varies from very good to unsatisfactory. College policy is not followed consistently. It is unsatisfactory that some students receive minimal formal tutorial support. In some areas, tutorial records reveal inadequate action planning. Support for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties is good. Effective strategies are in place to diagnose and support students with dyslexia. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory.

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

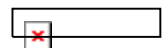
- supportive teachers and tutors

- welcoming and friendly atmosphere
- the opportunity to take qualifications not available elsewhere
- the help available with personal problems and career choices
- good resources for art, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy
- the awards evenings.

What they feel could be improved

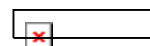
- the extent of timetable changes
- cover arrangements for absent teachers
- the variety of activities in some lessons
- tutorials for GCE A-level students
- the provision of textbooks
- resources for sports.

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



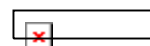
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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
19+ and WBL*	72	28	0
Learning 16-18	61	31	8
19+ and WBL*	72	28	0

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

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards



16 to 18 year olds

1. In 2003/04, 1,154 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 92% of students on full-time, full-year courses. In the same year, 157 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 3% of the part-time students. In 2003, overall success rates (the number of qualifications achieved compared with the number of qualifications started) of students on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were satisfactory. They were marginally above the national average for FE colleges at levels 1, 2 and 3, at 61%, 57% and 65%, respectively. In 2004, success rates at all three levels declined slightly. At levels 1 and 2, they fell marginally below the national average. At level 3, they remained just above the national average. Overall success rates in 2004 remained satisfactory.

2. Success rates are derived from retention rates and pass rates. Between 2002 and 2004 retention rates at all three levels were satisfactory. Apart from level 1 retention rates in 2002, they were within

5% above, or 5% below, the national average for FE colleges. Between 2002 and 2004 there was a marginal improvement in overall retention rates. In 2002 and 2003, pass rates were good at levels 1 and 2 and satisfactory at level 3. In 2004, at all three levels, pass rates fell and were satisfactory at all three levels. At each level, overall pass rates for 2004 were within 2% above or below the national average.

3. On average, about 400 students aged 16 to 18 took short course qualifications in 2002, 2003 and 2004. The success rates were 66%, 51% and 66%, respectively. These rates are below the national average of 70%. The unsatisfactory success rate in 2003 was primarily caused by an unsatisfactory pass rate of 57%. In 2004, the pass rate improved to 82%, which is slightly above the national average.

4. Level 1 key skills communication and application of number success rates declined between 2002 and 2004. However, they have remained above the national average and are satisfactory. At level 2, in 2004, the retention rate was very good on key skills communications, application of number and information technology (IT) courses, but the pass rates of 21%, 18% and 25%, respectively, were poor.

5. In several curriculum areas, there are high pass rates on individual courses. In each of the past two years, all students who completed the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in travel and tourism and the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in popular music were successful. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, pass rates and retention rates have been consistently high on full-time and part-time courses for the past three years. In 2004, pass rates were well above the national average on the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate courses in leisure and tourism and in art and design. NVQ level 1 vehicle maintenance students have consistently achieved pass rates well above the national average, although retention rates were low in 2003 and 2004. In 2004, there were high pass rates on several AS-level courses, including business studies; sports, games and recreation; and film studies. The GCSE English pass rate of 55% in 2004 was 6% above the 2003 national average for FE colleges. Students on the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course also achieved a high pass rate in 2004.

6. There are unsatisfactory overall achievements on a significant number of courses. These include the BTEC first diploma in caring and NVQ level 3 provision in early years care and education. Less than a quarter of students enrolled on this NVQ programme between 2002 and 2004 achieved the full qualification. There are unsatisfactory achievements on several engineering courses, including the NVQ level 2 programmes in vehicle maintenance and performing engineering operations. The GCSE mathematics pass rates for the past three years have ranged from 32% to 36% and are unsatisfactory.

7. The college has value added data comparing students' GCE A-level results with the results that might be expected based on their GCSE results. This shows that, over a three-year period, students achieve slightly better than might be expected in film studies and physical education. However, on many programmes, particularly law, ICT and mathematics, students achieve less well than might be expected. The college also participates in a Hampshire county project to judge value added on GNVQ intermediate, AVCE, BTEC first diploma and BTEC national diploma qualifications. This showed that, in 2004, the college performed less well than most other Hampshire colleges at both level 2 and level 3. However, the data may be misleading since the entry qualifications of Fareham College students were recorded as significantly higher than those of students at almost all of the other colleges.

8. Standards of students' work observed in lessons during the inspection ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory. The proportion of lessons in which students aged 16 to 18 were judged to have made good progress, compared with the progress that would be expected at that point in their course, was low at 53%. Attainment was judged to be satisfactory in 38% of lessons and less than satisfactory in 9%. In business studies, health, social care and public services and literacy and numeracy lessons observed by inspectors it was judged that students were making good progress in well under half of these lessons. In contrast, students were making good progress in over 70% of the visual and performing arts, media, hairdressing and beauty therapy lessons observed by inspectors.

9. Students in many curriculum areas produce good practical work and develop relevant skills. Art and design and performing arts students produce imaginative project work and there is strong performance work in music and drama. Travel students use travel manuals competently. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students develop very good practical and customer care skills. Motor vehicle students' coursework is well presented. In a few lessons, for example, in health, social care and public services, students had not reached the standards expected for the stage of their courses.

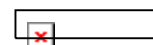
Adult learners

10. Between 2002 and 2004 the overall success rates of adult students taking levels 1 and 3 long qualifications were around the national average. At these levels, both retention rates and pass rates were very close to the national average. At level 2, in 2002 and 2003, the success rates were unsatisfactory at 38% and 29%, respectively. In 2004, the number of adults taking level 2 qualifications fell from over 1,500 to less than 500 due to withdrawal from franchised courses. Results in franchised first-aid provision were good, but franchised sport and leisure provision had very poor overall achievements. In 2004, the success rate for level 2 provision improved dramatically to 71%. This very good rate is over 20% above the national average. Although both retention and pass rates improved, the most significant factor was an improvement in the retention rate from 42% to 80%. In 2004, 2,237 adults took short qualifications. This is around 4,000 fewer students than in 2002 and 2003 due to withdrawal from franchised courses. The success rate in 2004 of 80% was just above the national average, but represented a slight fall compared with 2003.

11. Adult students' work, observed in lessons during the inspection, was of a higher standard than the work produced by students aged 16 to 18. Attainment was judged to be good or better in 64% of lessons and satisfactory in 36% of lessons. Adult students are well motivated and generally produce good work. For example, adults on part-time professional business studies courses engage in lively discussions, enhanced by their personal experience of work. The portfolios produced by accounting and legal studies students are comprehensive and well presented. The overall achievements of adult students are generally good. For example, NVQ accounting students at levels 2, 3 and 4 have consistently had good overall achievements. There is a good standard of oral work in ESOL lessons, but the overall achievements of students on adult literacy and numeracy courses are unsatisfactory, mainly due to low retention rates.

12. Overall attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was 81%. In lessons for students aged 16 to 18, the rate was 83% and in lessons involving adults it was 77%. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors varied widely. In business studies and literacy and numeracy lessons attendance was unsatisfactory at 72% and 63%, respectively. There was good attendance in engineering, hairdressing, beauty therapy, visual arts, performing arts, sport and travel lessons.

Quality of education and training



13. Inspectors observed and graded 114 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 67% of lessons, satisfactory in 28% and less than satisfactory in 5%. The proportion of good or better lessons is 5% above the average for general FE colleges inspected in 2003/04. Teaching was most effective in hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual and performing arts and literacy and numeracy lessons where 79%, 77% and 75%, respectively, of lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better. Teaching was least effective in health, social care and public services and engineering lessons where 50% and 53%, respectively, of lessons were good or better. Lessons taught by part-time staff were generally of a higher standard than lessons taught by full-time teachers. Some 72% of lessons taught by part-time staff were good or better, compared with 64% of lessons taught by full-time staff. Teaching is significantly better in lessons primarily involving adult students. Some 72% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 64% of lessons for

unsatisfactory lessons involved students aged 16 to 18. Analysis of the standard of teaching by level shows that the best teaching is on level 1 courses and the weakest is on level 2 courses.

14. In many curriculum areas, the best lessons are either practical lessons or lessons that include both the teaching of theory and practical activities. Over 80% of practical lessons were good or better, compared with 57% of theory lessons. In the better lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching methods including group work and role-play to maintain students' interest and develop learning. In several curriculum areas, for example, business studies, sports, travel and tourism, health and social care, and GCSE English, ICT is used effectively. In a business studies lesson, students completed their research using a law students' website. In engineering lessons, digital projectors are well used to illustrate computer-aided design. In business studies lessons, interesting quizzes, crosswords and case studies are used to maintain students' interest. In general, teachers plan effectively and cope well with students of differing abilities who are taught in the same lesson. Trained support tutors provide good support for students with dyslexia. The use of learning support assistants is also well planned and has helped to improve retention rates, for example, on business studies and health and social care courses.

15. There are a variety of reasons why teaching in a third of lessons is no better than satisfactory. Examples include inadequate answers to students' questions, lack of clarity when explaining new topics, dull teaching which relies on students copying notes from whiteboards, failure to check students' understanding of topics and poor management of class discussions, because teachers allow a few students to dominate the discussions. In public services lessons, a lack of discipline adversely affects learning. In some literacy and numeracy lessons, short-term targets are too vague to enable students' progress to be measured.

16. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory. The teaching of communications and application of number is integrated with students' main subject programmes. The effectiveness of these arrangements varies between curriculum areas and there are a few examples when opportunities to gain evidence of the acquisition of key skills are not highlighted in lessons. Key skills IT is taught by a central staff team. Quality assurance is provided through cross-college co-ordinators in each subject who also plan professional development and the sharing of resources.

17. Almost all learning is satisfactory or better. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 65%, 30% and 5%, respectively. Learning is better in practical lessons and in lessons involving adults. The proportion of lessons primarily involving adults where learning was good or better was 72%, compared with 62% of the lessons for students aged 16 to 18. Learning was unsatisfactory in 8% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18 and none of the lessons for adults. The most effective learning is in art and design and hairdressing and beauty therapy lessons. In both these areas, teachers work hard to ensure that students achieve professional standards in their work. A similar emphasis is lacking in several health and social care lessons. In art and design, teachers effectively encourage students to develop their independent learning skills.

18. Assessment is satisfactory. Comprehensive assessment procedures give clear guidance to staff about assessment, plagiarism, appeals and complaints, and internal verification procedures. In subjects that are assessed by final examination, teachers are encouraged to attend awarding body standardisation meetings and to double mark some work with another teacher to ensure consistency. Internal verification, standardisation and moderation of assessments generally comply with awarding body requirements. A clear process ensures that senior managers are aware of the recommendations made by external verifiers. In business studies, sports, travel and tourism, literacy and numeracy, hairdressing and beauty therapy and some engineering, courses internal verification processes are thorough. However, in 2003/04, inadequate assessment practices resulted in students failing courses in health and social care, engineering and business administration. Action has been taken to rectify these problems.

19. Most students' progress is regularly reviewed at half-termly intervals in one-to-one tutorials. Students' progress is well monitored in business, management and professional, sport and leisure, literacy and numeracy, art and design and performing arts courses. Action planning is thorough in art and design and hairdressing and beauty therapy, with specific and achievable targets being set.

However, in some other areas, such as public services and engineering, the reviews and plans are cursory, and too general to give meaningful indications of progress or targets.

20. The quality of marking and feedback on students' work is satisfactory. In some areas, such as visual and performing arts and media, literacy and numeracy, engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy, it is thorough and detailed, and gives students clear information about how they can improve their performance. In health and social care, assessment sheets guide teachers to give students helpful assessment of a range of skills, including accuracy, structure of work and content. However, in other areas, accuracy is not marked, and comments are general. Sufficient homework is set, and usually marked within the college time limit of two weeks. Deadlines are set for submitting work, and in a few areas assessment timetables are given to students, but these are not consistently adhered to.

21. In lessons, teachers regularly check understanding through a range of methods. In a revision lesson, one student was asked to explain the Pythagoras theorem to another, which resulted in increased understanding by both students. All staff received valuable training on the effective use of questioning in 2005. In health and social care and sports and leisure, assignments are designed carefully to interest students through linking theory and practice.

22. All full-time and substantial part-time students are given an initial screening for literacy and numeracy followed by a detailed online diagnostic assessment of their communication skills. Further diagnostic assessment of students' numeracy skills is only carried out when number skills are part of their course. Results are analysed promptly. The results are communicated to tutors and made available to all teachers on the intranet. However, initial assessment of adults on basic literacy programmes is too informal and does not lead to effective target setting.

23. Students benefit from an accessible, well-managed advice and guidance service. Advice and guidance are equally available to both full-time and part-time students, with good provision of services in the evening. The range of services includes welfare, finance, careers advice and counselling. Productive links are maintained with three Connexions advisers, and the adult careers advice and guidance service, known as 'Next Steps'. As well as providing one-to-one careers advice, the college has arranged several successful careers events to help E2E, training and HE. Specialist counsellors visit frequently to offer help with issues related to, for example, sexual health and drugs awareness. Good links are maintained with local schools and 147 pupils on IF projects are well supported. Advice and guidance about college courses are generally good, but some advice about courses in health, social care and public services failed to give students an accurate picture of course requirements. Some students left these courses because their expectations were not met.

24. The college keeps in touch with applicants and their parents or carers from the time they apply to the college. After interview, a well-planned series of events and other communication takes place. In 2003/04, this included sending a chocolate bar wrapped in revision tips. Parents are promptly informed when their child is offered a place, and when problems arise with work, behaviour or attendance. Good performance is recognised appropriately. Following successful progress reviews, congratulatory letters, signed by the principal, are sent to students' home addresses. A range of awards evenings celebrating students' success are appreciated by students.

25. Support for most students starts with a thorough initial assessment. An exception is students on adult literacy programmes who are not effectively assessed when they join the college. The initial assessment, combined with careful interviewing, ensures that almost all students are placed on appropriate programmes. Additional learning needs are also identified soon after enrolment. In the current year, 207 new students were identified as needing additional literacy or numeracy support. In most cases, support was in place within one month after the start of their course. The majority of those assessed as needing support receive it through individual sessions in the study centre or in-class support for the whole group. In-class support by study assistants is offered in all lessons with students aged 14 to 16 and on all entry level and BTEC first courses. A recent initiative, the reading repair scheme, is beginning to help students with severe reading difficulties to develop their skills. Many students, previously reluctant to seek one-to-one help, do so after developing a good relationship with the study assistant in lessons. The retention rate of students who accept help with literacy and numeracy is above the retention rate of the minority who decline help. In most

curriculum areas, for example engineering, visual and performing arts and media, teachers and tutors are given regular and prompt feedback on the progress of students who receive additional learning support.

26. Tutorial support varies from very good to unsatisfactory. A comprehensive and well written tutorial scheme should ensure a balance between group and individual tutorials. Where this is used effectively, for example in visual and performing arts, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, students value the opportunity to focus on their particular needs and problems. Some group tutorials are unsatisfactory. In many GCE A-level group tutorials, students are given a few items of information and then dismissed after a few minutes. Some GCE A-level students felt that it is unsatisfactory that their personal tutors did not teach them. Records of individual tutorials in a few areas, for example public services, reveal inadequate discussion and lack of useful action planning. Some individual learning plans in business studies are weak. They lack clear targets and tutorial records show that monitoring has been inadequate. Tutorial support for part-time students also varies. For example, some part-time business students have scheduled tutorials, but others rely on informal arrangements to see their teachers at the beginning or end of lessons. Teachers are very willing to give their time outside lessons and generally part-time students are supported effectively.

27. Support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties is good. Two members of staff, qualified to diagnose students with dyslexia, negotiate with awarding bodies for appropriate examination conditions for these students. Many staff use different coloured handouts, appropriate fonts and computer backgrounds to assist students with dyslexia.

28. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. One person is responsible for all child protection issues, and staff are aware of the referral system. The college has a child protection policy, which it is currently updating. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the protection of young people aged 14 to 16 on college premises. All staff have criminal records bureau checks when they are appointed. Governors are aware of the college's responsibilities for child protection, but they have not yet received training.

29. Most teachers have relevant vocational qualifications and appropriate industrial or commercial experience. Some 78% of full-time teachers and 69% of part-time teachers have a teaching qualification. These figures are close to the average for the sector. The college has robust mechanisms for supporting new or inexperienced teachers. For example, good use is made of professional tutor mentors, a teachers' survival kit and increased lesson observations for new staff. There are sufficient technicians, study tutors and study assistants to support teachers in lessons.

30. The campus has a spacious feel and welcoming atmosphere. The main entrance opens on to the college 'Mall' which is well laid out with, for example the reception area, refectory, travel shop and staff and student common rooms. The campus comprises a mix of buildings which provide satisfactory teaching accommodation, specialist facilities and workshops. Most specialist areas are sufficient, for example, the hairdressing and beauty therapy salons, the travel agency, the engineering laboratories, the theatre and the Chequers restaurant. Some specialist areas, for example, the sports hall and gymnasium are in need of updating. The college provides two nurseries for students and staff and a successful holiday play scheme. A reduction in enrolments until 2003/04 has led to low overall space utilisation. The college is well decorated and signposting is clear.

31. The college has substantially improved access for people with disabilities. Further work is scheduled and the college plans to be compliant with Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) legislation by September 2005, by which time access will be good. Most entrances have automated doors and there are ramps, modern chair lifts and lifts to aid access to most areas of the campus. However, some internal doors remain difficult for wheelchair users. Currently, there are no lifts in two teaching blocks, effectively preventing wheelchair users from enrolling for science or media studies. Lifts are planned to be installed by September 2005.

32. There is a good range of specialist teaching resources for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including specialist software, one-handed keyboards and large screens. Static and mobile computer pods are used effectively to facilitate the use of information and learning technology (ILT) by teachers and there are interactive whiteboards and data projectors in all curriculum areas. The

college has placed strong emphasis on the development of ILT and it is being used well in most curriculum areas.

33. The learning resource centre has sufficient study space, a satisfactory range of books and periodicals and good ILT facilities. In a few areas, for example, business studies and media studies, the range of books and journals is unsatisfactory. There are sufficient modern computers for students, with the exception of computing facilities for music students. Due to insufficient computers, music students sometimes have to share machines in lessons. The college has developed an intranet, and a new virtual learning environment is beginning to be used by some students, for example on engineering courses.

34. In the last three years, as part of its financial recovery plan, the college has made sound strategic decisions to revise its curriculum offer. Following local consultation, including discussions with the local LSC, governors agreed significant changes to the curriculum. The college increased its focus on vocational courses. It discontinued franchise provision and community adult education provision, because it was not economically viable, and it confirmed its decision not to offer work-based learning, since the local area is well served by other work-based learning providers.

35. The focus on vocational provision has increased the range and number of enrolments on level 1 and level 2 vocational courses. In 2004/05, enrolments on these courses increased by 189 students. The college now offers a wide range of full-time vocational courses, mainly aimed at students aged 16 to 18. There is a good range of key skills courses at levels 1 to 3 and appropriate English and mathematics provision for full-time students. The college has recently recognised that many students need introductory courses before progressing to GCSE English and mathematics. It has also revised pre-entry courses for people with learning difficulties to ensure that they promote the development of vocational as well as social skills. Progression rates from level 1 to level 3 are satisfactory or good in most curriculum areas. The college offers around 25 subjects, on a full-time basis, at AS level and GCE A level. The relatively low number of enrolments results in small class sizes in some AS-level and GCE A-level subjects.

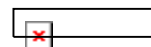
36. Part-time courses are available in most curriculum areas. They include an access to HE programme with pathways in, for example, business, IT, media and law. The college offers a satisfactory range of adult literacy and numeracy courses at the main site and in five community venues. ESOL is offered at level 1, but since there is no higher-level ESOL provision, some students who have achieved level 1 continue learning in the same class as entry level and level 1 students. A limited range of skills for life provision is offered in the community, mainly through specialist agencies. For example, there is provision for people on probation, people with mental health disabilities and people who attend drug rehabilitation centres.

37. The college has good relationships with local schools. The college is a lead provider under the IF programme. This enables nearly 150 school pupils, aged 14 to 16 to undertake part of their education at the college. Pupils are able to work towards a level 1 qualification across a range of 10 curriculum areas. In addition, around 20 pupils from local schools, who are in danger of exclusion, attend the college on a part-time basis to develop vocational skills. These pupils have individual programmes designed to meet their particular needs. These programmes include support for literacy and numeracy.

38. There is a wide range of enrichment activities including sport, first-aid, a theatre group and music. In some curriculum areas, particularly visual and performing arts, sports and tourism, there are good opportunities for students to take additional qualifications. In a few cases, timetable restrictions preclude students from full participation in enrichment activities.

39. Employer links vary from good to unsatisfactory. There are good links in hairdressing and beauty therapy. For example, students offer free treatment days at a local hospice. Engineering students benefit from work experience at a local defence facility. The business studies and leisure and tourism curriculum areas have too few links with employers and students do not have opportunities for work experience. The college is seeking to improve the consistency of its links with employers. A recent initiative has been to link senior managers to specific local employers.

Leadership and management



40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection in January 2001. Overall pass rates are slightly above the national average for FE colleges. The proportion of good or better teaching has improved since the last inspection and is 5% above the national average for FE colleges. However, for several years until 2003/04, the college suffered from falling enrolments, although in 2004/05 the number of full-time enrolments increased significantly. Consequently, the college has been, and still is, in a weak financial position. A recovery plan was agreed with the local LSC in October 2003. Key aspects of the plan include very significant changes to the curriculum and major cost savings. These changes have been well managed and substantial cost savings have been made, mainly due to a reduction in staff costs. The local LSC has confidence in governors and senior managers. Senior management has provided strong and effective leadership throughout a difficult period.

41. Governors have been centrally involved in reviewing the college's mission and formulating the strategic plan. They effectively monitor students' achievements, corporate college performance and key policies. They are actively engaged with the local LSC in discussions about a strategic options review for the local area. The college's comprehensive strategic plan sets clear priorities. It is coherently linked to operational plans for each curriculum area and business support area. The plans are understood and supported by staff. There are varied and effective processes for communication across the college. The college intranet is well developed and regularly used by staff. The principal regularly meets with all staff groups, which they value.

42. Curriculum management is good or satisfactory in most curriculum areas. It is very good in hairdressing and beauty therapy, but is unsatisfactory in health, social care and public services. There is insufficient co-ordination of the key skills and literacy and numeracy cross-college teams. The management of additional learning support is good. A new schedule of meetings has been carefully constructed to link to college management processes. Good progress has been achieved in providing managers and staff with access to timely, accurate and relevant data. The use of data is spreading through the college, but it needs further embedding, particularly to support the planning and quality improvement processes. Similarly, the sharing of good teaching practice is not well established.

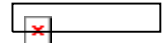
43. There are comprehensive arrangements to assure and improve the quality of provision, but the consistency of their implementation is unsatisfactory. This is reflected in differences between the standard of teaching across curriculum areas and variations in the overall standard of provision assessed by inspectors, which ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory. Managers have also failed to recognise and rectify wide variations in the standard of tutorials. Course reviews are rigorous and are used for curriculum planning in sport, leisure and tourism, and in some visual and performing arts courses. In all other areas, course reviews are not sufficiently robust, for example, failing to include judgements, having vague action plans, failing to use data well, or being only partially completed. Consequently many course level self-assessment reports are ineffective. In contrast, the overall college self-assessment report is self-critical and inspectors agreed with most of its judgements.

44. The college's lesson observation scheme is central to improving teaching and learning. Major revisions in January 2005 produced significant benefits. Grades for lessons observed by college staff since January 2005 have been very similar overall to the grades awarded by inspectors. Previously, the effectiveness of the scheme had been compromised by considerable overgenerous grading. There is good support for teachers whose lessons were not graded as good or better. A team of four professional tutors provide a specific focus for improving teaching and learning. A good range of well-planned staff development opportunities support the college's plans to improve quality and train the many staff who have assumed new responsibilities during a period of substantial change.

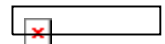
45. The arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity and diversity are satisfactory. Some 2% of students and 3% of staff are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 2% in the local population. The college is broadly in compliance with the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. It has a separate racial equality policy, but the action plan has yet to be fully implemented and monitoring is underdeveloped. The college has plans to be compliant with disability discrimination legislation by September 2005. Training has been provided for all staff on equality and diversity issues. Data showing the performance of different groups of students are collected, but analysis is not sufficiently developed. In some curriculum areas, there is insufficient activity with students to promote their understanding of issues of equality and diversity. There are effective policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to respond to complaints and to address any cases of harassment.

46. Although the college has under-utilised accommodation and a weak financial position a comparison of current expenditure with overall student performance indicates that the college provides satisfactory value for money. The use of resources is increasingly effective. Staff are deployed effectively. Course costing has been introduced as an integral part of curriculum planning. However, there is no systematic application of national average data to financial resources.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Engineering



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

Strengths

- very high retention rate on first diploma courses

- good teaching in motor vehicle lessons

- good attendance.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ level 2 courses

- lack of challenge in lessons

- weak action planning for individual students.

Scope of provision

47. There is a good range of provision with courses from entry level to Higher National Certificates (HNC). There are full-time and part-time courses in aerospace, electrical, electronic, mechanical, manufacturing and automotive engineering and part-time courses in welding and computer-aided design. There are good progression opportunities, but few evening courses are offered. Enrolments declined by almost 30% overall between 2002 and 2004, and by 70% for adults. At the time of the inspection, there were 376 enrolments, mainly of students aged 16 to 18. In addition, 49 school pupils aged 14 to 16 take college programmes as part of the IF programme.

Achievement and standards

48. Retention rates of 94% and 97% in 2003 and 2004, respectively, on the first diploma course are very high. Overall retention rates are close to national averages. Pass rates are very high on the level 1 motor vehicle course. In contrast, pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on NVQ level 2 engineering courses were well below national averages in 2004. Unsatisfactory assessment practice contributed to the poor results of engineering operations students. These issues have now been addressed. Unsatisfactory overall achievements contributed to the decision to discontinue the AVCE in engineering and the City and Guilds in basic engineering competences at the end of 2004.

49. Students work confidently in workshops. They are generally well motivated and produce good written and practical work. Assignments are well researched. Many students' work is well presented, with good use of word processing and complex graphics. Attendance throughout the year has been very good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ vehicle maintenance	1	No. of starts	27	30	38
		% retention	78	67	68
		% pass rate	86	95	85
First diploma in engineering	2	No. of starts	*	18	30
		% retention	*	94	97
		% pass rate	*	82	86
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	39	52	51
		% retention	59	81	71
		% pass rate	30	60	25
NVQ vehicle maintenance	2	No. of starts	22	19	27
		% retention	73	53	63
		% pass rate	33	100	41
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	65	74	66
		% retention	80	69	70
		% pass rate	96	96	82

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

**course not running*

Quality of education and training

50. Teaching is good in motor vehicle lessons, but in other lessons the work often lacks pace or challenge. Most lessons are well planned and objectives are made clear to students. However, some teaching takes insufficient account of individuals' differing needs and teachers often fail to provide challenging activities for the more able students. Good use is often made of ILT. For example, in a lesson on braking systems, excellent use was made of a digital projector and in a lesson on sound waves, an interactive whiteboard was used to demonstrate audio and visual effects of changes in frequency and pitch. Regular testing of students' understanding takes place in level 1 lessons. One example demonstrated that students had a good understanding of kinetic energy. Motor vehicle students work on vocationally relevant assignments. Teachers have generally improved their teaching of key skills. For example, the production engineering curriculum is mapped against key skill requirements with information drawn from coursework. There are good progression opportunities within and beyond the college. At the end of 2004, five students progressed to study engineering at university. Strong links with a local defence facility, enables students to gain work experience on aircraft.

51. Workshops are well resourced. Most teaching areas have a good range of engineering components, test equipment and models. The engineering workshop has bench fitting, heat treatment and metal forming areas and a compact welding facility. Health and safety signage is prominent. The motor vehicle workshop contains a good range of vehicles. Classrooms and corridors have very good displays of vocationally relevant posters and information. However, low stools in an electrical workshop make it difficult for students to write when seated. There is good technician support in workshops and laboratories. Staff are well qualified vocationally, but some new teachers have not yet achieved teaching qualifications or assessor awards. Two female lecturers provide good role models for female students. Students have good access to sufficient computers and textbooks.

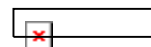
52. Assessment is good. Students receive assignment timetables at the start of their courses and co-ordination between lecturers ensures that students' workloads are reasonable. Most assignment cover sheets show key skills opportunities, evidence of internal verification and clear grading criteria. Assignments are returned with detailed feedback. Assessors indicate where grading criteria have been applied. Sheets are used to monitor the progress of students on practical workshop tasks. In the automotive workshop, job cards are used to simulate industrial practice. Internal verification processes are now rigorous, following unsatisfactory practice on a few programmes in 2004.

53. Students are well supported by engineering staff. Full-time and part-time students have regular tutorials. Action plans are discussed and agreed, although they are not always followed-up at subsequent tutorials. Students' files contain individual action plans, but often the plans lack clear targets. Progress in each subject is reviewed and performance in assignments is compared with individuals' targets. Full-time students receive written progress reports. Employers of part-time students can request a report. Full-time students' literacy and numeracy is assessed on entry and appropriate support is provided, either in lessons or in one-to-one support sessions.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been significant staff turnover. The team has a new programme manager and staff are committed to improving provision. The team are starting to address key issues, including weak action planning, both for the department and for individual students, and incomplete course reviews. Meetings are held regularly and actions are minuted. Staff development has taken place on equality and diversity, and teaching and learning methods. Attendance, punctuality and disciplinary concerns are monitored effectively.

Business studies



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on NVQ accounting courses
- good range of activities and resources used to promote learning
- good monitoring of students' progress
- good progression opportunities in accounting.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level law, AVCE business and the certificate in administration
- unsatisfactory implementation of key skills for full-time vocational students
- poor attendance at lessons
- lack of rigour in course reviews.

Scope of provision

55. The college has a good range of full-time and part-time provision from level 1 to level 5. Full-time courses include AS levels and GCE A levels in accounting, business studies and law. The BTEC first diploma and BTEC national diploma in business have recently been introduced to replace the GNVQ and AVCE in business. The Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) certificate in administration at level 2 is also offered. Part-time professional courses include the association of accounting technicians, which has more than 150 students studying at all three levels, Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) legal studies, and the certificate and diploma in management. Level 1 book-

keeping and sage accounting short courses provide an introduction to the subject and progression to higher levels. A small programme of office skills is offered in the evening. Of the 365 students on business programmes, 100 are on full-time courses and 265 study part time.

Achievement and standards

56. Retention and pass rates on NVQ accounting courses are high and many students progress from level 2 to level 4. In the last three years, achievements at all levels were above the national average. Pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level business studies were also above the national average in 2004. On AVCE business and AS-level law, pass rates in 2004 were low. None of the students who completed the new certificate in administration course in 2004 achieved the full qualification, although all students gained certification for the office skills elements of the course. Most courses had good retention rates in 2005, but attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low at 72%.

57. The standard of students' work is good. Accounting students produce work of a high standard in lessons and for assessment. Portfolios completed by legal studies students are comprehensive and well presented. Full-time students develop good team-working skills and hold constructive discussions. They apply knowledge to relevant business case studies. They make good use of their well-developed IT skills by using applications appropriately to produce effective presentations and reports for assessment. Most students work enthusiastically and make productive use of time. Professional students make good contributions in lessons and share their experiences to enhance learning. In a few cases, students are not well prepared for their lesson or are not focused on the tasks set.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business studies, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	37	51	49
		% retention	84	84	88
		% pass rate	90	84	91
AS-level accounts	3	No. of starts	38	35	27
		% retention	71	71	59
		% pass rate	59	80	63
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	78	76	43
		% retention	77	75	95
		% pass rate	82	70	83
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	63	53	27
		% retention	76	70	70
		% pass rate	60	73	53
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	31	33	36
		% retention	97	100	81
		% pass rate	97	100	93
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	69	64	52
		% retention	94	80	100
		% pass rate	54	63	58

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

58. Most teaching is good or better. Lessons include a wide range of activities that engage and motivate students. Teaching is supported by professional presentations and good learning materials. ICT is used effectively in lessons. In a law lesson students used laptops in the classroom to research information, using a website designed for law students. Teachers provide good individual support for students in lessons and take account of their differing needs. Effective use is made of directed questioning to check individual students' understanding. More able students who complete tasks quickly are set additional tasks to extend their learning. Administration students develop their proof-reading skills by checking each other's work. Good use is made of recent business news items to illustrate examples in business and management lessons. In weaker lessons, teaching is uninspiring, a few students dominate discussions and some students become distracted and are noisy. Key skills are not effectively integrated with the work on courses for full-time vocational students. In a few lessons, learning is insufficiently monitored, students' questions are not adequately answered by teachers and text from presentations is read out with too little explanation. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and have appropriate experience. Classrooms are spacious and have good wall displays.

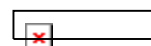
59. Assessment and monitoring of students' work are good. Monitoring of students' progress at subject level is effectively used to help plan assessment. Assignments meet awarding body requirements. Regular homework is set, marked promptly and returned with helpful guidance for improvement. Self-evaluation of assignment work by management students enables them to relate their studies to their personal and career development. There are few links with employers for business courses. Administration students have work experience that contributes to their assessment. Visits and speakers related to law are arranged for legal studies students.

60. Support for students is good. All students are assessed on entry to identify skills and additional support needs. Appropriate support is offered. Students receive good support on personal issues. Parents are kept informed of students' progress. Individual tutorials for full-time vocational students are effective in monitoring progress and assisting students with issues affecting their performance. GCE A-level tutorials are often poorly attended and are less effective. The college system for individual learning plans and action plans for full-time students is not implemented consistently.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A careful review of the curriculum has recently been carried out and changes made to improve the provision and increase recruitment. Communication is good. Regular meetings ensure that staff are well briefed on college policies and strategies and deal appropriately with student issues. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Course reviews lack depth of analysis and adequate action plans. Equality and diversity are promoted at recruitment and courses are accessible to all, but there is little promotion of equality and diversity within teaching programmes.

Sports, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on level 3 sports courses

- well-designed classroom activities relating theory to practical activities
- proactive, well-organised curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on level 2 courses
- insufficient attention to individual students' needs.

Scope of provision

62. The college offers BTEC first and national diplomas in sports science, AS-level sports, games and recreation and GCE A-level sport and physical recreation. Travel students can study BTEC first and national diplomas in travel and tourism. The travel agents certificate at primary level and community sports leader awards are offered as additional qualifications. Of the 84 full-time students studying sport, 69 study first and national diplomas, and 15 take AS-level and GCE A-level courses. There are 41 students on full-time travel and tourism programmes. Tennis and cricket form part of a comprehensive college enrichment programme.

Achievement and standards

63. Pass rates are high on AS-level sports, games and recreation and the national diploma in sports science. Pass rates are consistently high on GCE A-level sport and physical education with all students passing in 2004. Retention rates are low on full-time travel and tourism courses. Most students gain additional qualifications, such as the higher sports leader award and certificate in travel destinations. Retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 sport, offered through franchise partners in 2002 and 2003, were extremely low. This partnership has been discontinued. All full-time students take key skills qualifications, but pass rates are low. Retention rates on 2004/05 level 3 courses are high. Progression rates to HE and continuing FE are good. Some 72% of students on the first diploma in sports science in 2003 progressed on to the national diploma in 2004.

64. Students in both curriculum areas develop practical skills appropriate for employment. Travel and tourism students use travel manuals quickly and efficiently to find passport and visa information. Sports students are able to design fitness testing circuits and identify the impact of different sports drinks on athletes. The quality of students' written work is satisfactory. Students on the national diploma in travel and tourism produce good assignments and demonstrate well-developed analytical and evaluation skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sports, leisure and tourism, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism*	2	No. of starts	19	14	26
		% retention	84	71	50
		% pass rate	75	70	92

First diploma in sport and exercise studies	2	No. of starts	**	15	15
		% retention	**	80	67
		% pass rate	**	100	80
National diploma in sports science	3	No. of starts	22	28	48
		% retention	86	68	71
		% pass rate	58	95	94
AS-level sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	40	35	17
		% retention	70	60	82
		% pass rate	93	81	93
GCE A-level sport and physical education	3	No. of starts	19	21	10
		% retention	100	95	100
		% pass rate	95	90	100
AVCE travel and tourism (double award)	3	No. of starts	24	28	16
		% retention	46	57	31
		% pass rate	64	100	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* first diploma in travel and tourism in 2004

** course not running

Quality of education and training

65. Most teaching in sport and tourism is good. In the good lessons, teachers effectively relate theory to practical activities. Students' participation is lively and most students are fully engaged in learning. Group work is well used to teach team skills that are relevant to employment. Sports students worked in groups to produce a game. They assessed their own leadership styles. They then related them to specific sports to see which style would produce the most successful teams of sports people. Travel and tourism students used the Internet to research the impact of the 2004 tsunami on tourist destinations and then produced promotional materials convincing travellers it is now safe to visit affected areas. A significant minority of teaching is uninspiring. Repetitive teaching methods and a failure to adjust learning styles to meet individuals' needs means that some students lose interest. There is insufficient challenge to extend the learning of more able students. Students who complete work quickly are not always given more advanced work. Opportunities to gain evidence to support key skills are highlighted in most lesson plans, but are not always evident in teaching.

66. Most teachers are appropriately qualified, but a few staff lack appropriate industrial experience. Links with industry are few. Working relationships between teachers and students are relaxed and supportive, both within and outside the classroom. A variety of guest speakers, trips and residential visits enrich students' experience. Destinations include a theme park, Wimbledon and New York.

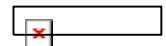
67. Resources are satisfactory. They include a gym, sports hall, weights room and playing field. Resources in subject base rooms are good. Interactive whiteboards are well used by staff and students. The library is stocked sufficiently with appropriate periodicals, but some textbooks are outdated. There are sufficient manuals to support travel students in using practical skills. ILT resources are good. The college has an operational travel agency where students successfully develop basic skills for use in the industry.

68. Vocational specialists give clear guidance at interview on course content, assessment methods and progression routes. Students' progress is well monitored and feedback on written tasks helps students to improve their performance. Teachers give guidance about how classroom activities relate to assignments. Students' progress is satisfactorily monitored through group and individual tutorials. However, target setting for individuals is not always sufficiently specific. Formal and informal support are available when students find assessed work difficult. Students do not always meet deadlines for completion of work. There is poor scheduling of assessments on sports courses.

Leadership and management

69. Curriculum management is good. Course teams constantly review the curriculum and take appropriate action. Students' views are valued and acted upon. Courses are well designed and efficient timetabling gives students opportunities to take part in enrichment activities. Thorough course reviews contribute to rigorous self-assessment. Specific targets are set and monitored at team and school meetings. Communication within the area is good. Strategies to improve retention rates have been successful and current year figures are above national averages on most full-time courses. Sports and tourism staff work closely together, sharing good practice and supporting new colleagues.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on full-time courses and high achievement on part-time courses

- much excellent, lively teaching

- very good attendance and punctuality

- clear focus on high vocational standards to prepare students for work

- excellent feedback on written and practical work

- excellent teaching of key skills

- o strong curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- o there are no key weaknesses.

Scope of provision

70. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy, and holistic therapies from entry level to NVQ level 3. In 2004/05, the college recruited 370 full-time and 406 part-time students. Most part-time students and around half of the full-time students are adults.

Achievement and standards

71. Retention and pass rates are outstandingly high on most courses. For example, on NVQ level 1 and level 2 beauty therapy and NVQ level 2 hairdressing courses, both retention rates and pass rates were significantly above the national average for 2002 to 2004. Pass rates are also good on most part-time courses. Pass rates for the course in Indian head massage averaged 96% over the three years ending in 2004. Certificate in body massage pass rates averaged 95% over the same period.

72. Students make excellent progress relative to their prior attainment and potential.

73. Student's prior knowledge is used effectively to plan learning. For example, a student with many years experience in hairdressing, but with no formal qualifications, was able to proceed quickly through the course after completing a skills test. Students are self-critical and hard working. They develop excellent practical skills. For example, in an Indian head massage lesson, students demonstrated excellent massage and customer care skills. Level 1 beauty therapy students carry out detailed and high-quality nail artwork. The training salon attracts a variety of clients which allows students to develop and practise a wide range of skills.

74. There are good rates of progression to higher-level qualifications or into employment. Students understand the importance and relevance of key skills. They work hard to identify and produce relevant evidence to support the achievement of key skill qualifications. Students' attendance is very good and they are punctual. Lateness is dealt with effectively and there are good strategies to ensure they start work immediately after arriving at lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Indian head massage	2	No. of starts	24	25	42
		% retention	100	88	91
		% pass rate	96	95	97
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	61	73	49
		% retention	59	49	76
		% pass rate	94	92	86

NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	2	No. of starts	23	28	64
		% retention	83	82	97
		% pass rate	89	100	97
NVQ beauty therapy (2 year)	2	No. of starts	49	62	60
		% retention	63	58	63
		% pass rate	97	94	94
Body massage certificate	3	No. of starts	94	87	64
		% retention	80	78	78
		% pass rate	94	97	94
Diploma in reflexology	3	No. of starts	47	53	11
		% retention	89	85	91
		% pass rate	98	96	91
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	20	22	10
		% retention	80	95	80
		% pass rate	100	100	88

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

75. Teaching in over three quarters of the lessons observed by inspectors was good or better. Lessons are very well planned and interesting. Teachers are well organised, use a variety of teaching methods and a good range of learning resources to support individual students' needs. In practical lessons, there is particularly good individual support, guidance and feedback to help students acquire relevant vocational skills. In hairdressing, pupils aged 14 to 16 work with level 2 students. Teachers ensure that both groups learn from each other. Teachers set high standards and students produce excellent work. Teachers ensure that students meet client and employer expectations when carrying out tasks such as tinting, cutting, setting and blow drying. Commercial time deadlines are set for the completion of each task. New skills are broken down into small tasks, helping to build students' confidence and support their development. Teachers effectively check the knowledge and understanding of all students. In practical lessons, they demonstrate and explain techniques clearly and effectively.

76. There is excellent teaching and integration of key skills. Evidence from practical lessons is recorded and used effectively. Opportunities to achieve key skills are clearly identified on schemes of work, lesson plans, students' assessment documentation, and assignments. Students understand and value key skills. Pass rates for key skills are satisfactory.

77. Written learning materials are good and workbooks are particularly useful. Teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date knowledge of industrial practice. Most have recent experience of work in salons. Each year, most teachers have opportunities to update their skills. There is some use of ILT in teaching and it is well used by the students in their coursework. Some salon furniture and fittings are old, but functional. The range and variety of consumable resources for both hairdressing and beauty therapy are good.

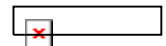
78. The assignment schedule is very well planned and understood by students. Internal verification and assessment procedures are thorough and meet awarding body requirements. On all full-time and most part-time courses, teachers monitor and review students' progress particularly well. Feedback on written work, assignments and practical work is very detailed. Students understand what they have to do to improve their performance, and they are praised for effort and achievement.

79. Monitoring of students' progress is thorough. Initial assessment and additional learning support are effective. Learning support is offered in lessons or individual sessions. Tutorial reviews of individuals' progress are effective. Students' targets are monitored regularly. Parents are well informed about students' attendance and progress. There are good links with employers and community organisations. For example, sports massage students provided remedial massage at a Royal Navy training weekend. Many employers provide good work experience for full-time students. Enrichment opportunities include visits to hairdressing and beauty trade events, internal competitions and fund raising events. Beauty therapy students raised funds for a local hospice by carrying out treatments at their open day.

Leadership and management

80. Curriculum leadership and management are excellent. The programme manager sets a clear direction. There is effective use of target setting for individual students, good management of resources and appropriate course development. However, some course self-assessment reports do not include useful targets. Communication is very good. Staff meetings are held weekly and there are frequent informal meetings to discuss students' attendance and progress. Full-time staff act as 'buddies' to part-time staff, ensuring they receive information and support.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on counselling courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on BTEC national diploma in early years and the BTEC first diploma in caring in 2004
- low retention and pass rates on NVQ 3 early years care and education
- unsatisfactory aspects of public service courses
- much ineffective teaching and learning
- ineffective internal verification

- o unsatisfactory leadership and management.

Scope of provision

81. The college offers courses in health and social care at levels 1 to 3 and in early years education and public service at levels 2 and 3. Counselling courses are offered at level 2. In 2004/05, the college enrolled 181 full-time students and 234 part-time students. Of the 181 full-time students, the vast majority are aged under 19.

Achievement and standards

82. Pass rates on counselling courses were above the national average and were high in 2003 and 2004. Both retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 3 course in early years care and education have been low for three years. Pass rates on the BTEC national diploma in early years and the BTEC first diploma in caring were low in 2004, although all students who completed the national diploma in 2003 were successful.

83. In lessons, students generally collaborate well on projects and group tasks. Most students undertake independent research with confidence. They analyse information and evaluate evidence effectively. On most courses, students achieve an appropriate range of skills which meet their occupational needs. In an NVQ level 3 early years care and education lesson, students developed skills of report writing based on observation. In some lessons, students are unable to discuss issues in a productive way. They are noisy and disruptive. Public services students do not meet the standards of behaviour expected on public services courses. In a few lessons, students do not work at an appropriate level; for example, rather than analysing information they copy it on to worksheets.

84. Students generally research and structure their assignments appropriately. On the higher-level courses, most students can critically analyse work and effectively link theory to practice and work placement experience. However, some students, for example, on public services courses, rely too much on material taken from the Internet and copied into assignments. Most care students' NVQ portfolios include evidence that the required competences have been achieved.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and public services, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in counselling (short course)	2	No. of starts	*	57	55
		% retention	*	79	82
		% pass rate	*	91	84
BTEC national diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	20	26	30
		% retention	75	77	80
		% pass rate	93	100	54
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	34	60	45
		% retention	50	55	38
		% pass rate	29	42	65

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

*course not running

Quality of education and training

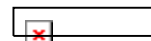
85. In most lessons, teachers use appropriate teaching and learning methods to motivate students, including effective questioning and good use of ICT. In a level 1 lesson, skilful questioning enabled students to arrive at their own solution to a problem on health hazards. There is ineffective teaching and learning in a significant minority of lessons. Some teachers do not keep effective control of their classes. In a few lessons, teachers are not clear about the standards students should be achieving. They set tasks that require copying rather than problem solving. In one lesson, incorrect information was given to students and there was one example of students adopting an unsafe method of completing a practical task.

86. Many of the teaching team are new, enthusiastic and well qualified. They are working hard to improve provision and they have the potential to be an effective team. Classrooms, library and ICT resources are satisfactory, but some specialist resources are not adequate. On most courses, staff set interesting assignments that link theory to practice. Most students are given sound feedback on what they must do to improve their assignments. On counselling courses, marking is sound and feedback is valued by students. However, feedback on public services assignments is inadequate. Spelling and grammar are not corrected and work copied from the Internet is accepted without criticism by the teacher. The recording of most students' progress is thorough and records are used effectively to inform students about their progress and set targets to improve. However, internal verification is not consistently helping staff to improve their grading of students' work. Tutorial records and individual action plans for students on public service courses are poor. Some students have left public services and early years care and education courses because the courses did not meet their expectations due to poor initial advice and guidance. The range of provision is sufficient. Teachers are working hard to improve links with local employers and work placement opportunities are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

87. Management is unsatisfactory. Quality assurance arrangements have not been systematically implemented. Targets for improving the programme area are vague and they have not been monitored effectively. There has been no permanent programme area manager for many months and the post has been covered by a temporary manager. Equality and diversity issues are dealt with effectively in the curriculum and efforts to improve the gender balance of staff have been successful.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many advanced level courses

- high standards of students' practical work

- very good teaching

- excellent development of independent learning skills

- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- declining pass rates and low value added in GCE A-level art and design and AS-level performance studies

- low pass rates on level 2 photography courses

- weak self-assessment action plans.

Scope of provision

88. The college offers a wide range of AS-level and GCE A-level and BTEC national diplomas in visual, performing arts and media. First diplomas are available in art and design and performing arts. A good range of part-time day and evening courses in art, design, craft and photography are offered for adult students. Of the 659 enrolments at the time of inspection, 382 were studying art and design, 114 on music and performing arts and 163 media, film and photography. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

89. Pass rates are high on many advanced level courses. In 2004, all students who completed AS-level and GCE A-level film studies, AS-level music and media studies, GCE A-level performance studies and the BTEC national diploma in music achieved their qualification. Pass rates have declined in GCE A-level art and AS-level performance studies over the last three years. They are below national averages and students have achieved results lower than those predicted from their GCSE grades. Pass rates are low on level 2 photography courses. In 2004, the pass rate in GCSE photography, at 38%, was well below the national average. In AS-level and GCE A-level film studies, the proportion of students achieving high grades is significantly above the national average. Pass rates are also high on part-time textiles and design courses for adults.

90. Students in all areas produce imaginative project work. Media students produce good designs for video sleeves for their documentary films. Students' performance work in music and drama is good. In a BTEC first diploma in performing arts lesson, students produced witty and imaginative pieces in the style of Berkoff. Art and design students devise creative responses to briefs and experiment with a wide range of materials and techniques. A creative arts awards ceremony showcased high-quality students' work, for example, an experimental short film, which challenged common perceptions of sexuality in older people. Most students are confident and enthusiastic about their work and able to communicate well. Attendance is good and students are punctual.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	15	13	18
		% retention	87	62	72
		% pass rate	100	88	92
AS-level art and design	3	No. of starts	137	80	119
		% retention	78	79	70
		% pass rate	68	76	77
GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	24	24	32
		% retention	96	100	94
		% pass rate	100	96	97
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	31	31	33
		% retention	97	90	94
		% pass rate	100	89	81
AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	44	25	36
		% retention	50	68	67
		% pass rate	95	100	92
Foundation diploma in art and design	3	No. of starts	31	27	24
		% retention	84	89	96
		% pass rate	100	100	91
BTEC national diploma popular music	3	No. of starts	12	8	13
		% retention	67	88	92
		% pass rate	100	100	100
BTEC national diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	*	16	12
		% retention	*	63	75
		% pass rate	*	100	89

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

*course not running

Quality of education and training

91. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are dedicated and plan carefully for their lessons. Support for small group and individual project work is effective. In a national diploma music rehearsal session, the teacher led each band in the development of rigorous rehearsal skills. Teachers set professional standards in their lessons. In a national diploma performing arts lesson, the teacher, as director, led students through an intensely focused play rehearsal, resulting in high standards of performance work. Students are developing excellent skills in independent learning. They monitor their own progress and develop good action plans, particularly in art and design. Teachers encourage verbal discussion and debate through challenging questioning, particularly in media and film studies lessons.

92. Most teachers are well qualified, many with recent or current industrial experience. They use this well to plan their teaching and inspire students. Technical support is good. Accommodation is good. There is a large, flexible theatre with good lighting and banked seating. Studios are spacious and well equipped in music, media and art and design. Computers have industrial-standard software, but

there are too few computers in music and students frequently have to share machines. There is some inappropriate teaching of large groups in a recording studio with a small screen computer and not all students can adequately see teachers' demonstrations. Teachers emphasize the importance of health and safety issues; for example, music students are provided with ear defenders for rehearsals.

93. Teachers mark work promptly and written feedback is detailed with useful points for improvement. Additionally, teachers give useful verbal feedback to students. Students monitor their own progress through well-constructed logs and diaries, and effective action planning, particularly in art and design. Internal verification procedures are implemented well and provide good feedback to assessors. Plagiarism is not always rigorously followed-up in media.

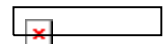
94. Courses meet students' needs and expectations and planning reflects the needs of local industry. For example, local taste is considered as a factor in building the repertoire for music students. Teachers are developing effective links with industry. Students perform in professional venues, visit a local radio station and artwork has been commissioned by a local residential study centre used by school children. Enrichment is good. Regular visits to museums, art galleries and theatres and foreign study visits greatly enhance the vocational curriculum. The teaching of key skills communication is successfully integrated with vocational courses.

95. Support and guidance for students are good. Induction helps students to settle in quickly. Results of diagnostic tests are used promptly to support students with learning difficulties. Students' progress is carefully monitored through their learning programme reviews, where targets for improvement are set and monitored by their personal tutors. While individual support is good, group tutorials are less effective in engaging and supporting students.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management are good at course and programme area level. Communication is good across the department. Lesson observations are used well to improve teaching and learning, but there is no formal scheme for sharing good teaching practice. Quality assurance processes are improving through the direct involvement of course teams, but self-assessment action plans often lack timescales and responsibilities. Development plans focus too much on resources and not enough on teaching and learning. Curriculum materials address equal opportunities issues. For example, a media studies assignment focused on current issues in the Middle East.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning

- effective additional learning support.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on literacy and numeracy courses for adults

- unsatisfactory overall achievements in GCSE mathematics

- insufficient use of initial assessment on courses for adults.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers provision for literacy, numeracy and language support in the college and in five centres in the community. There are 292 students enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses and 47 students on ESOL courses. Over 320 students receive additional literacy and numeracy support, either in-class, or in the college's learning support centre. Over 800 full-time students study key skills communications and application of number at either level 1 or 2. In addition, 185 students are enrolled on GCSE mathematics or GCSE English courses. Around half of the GCSE students are aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

98. There were low retention rates on literacy and numeracy courses for adults between 2002 and 2004. The retention rate in 2004 was almost 20% below the national average. The retention rate during 2005 improved and is above the national average. The pass rate on the literacy course is low. It has declined each year since 2002. Between 2002 and 2004, retention and pass rates on level 1 key skills courses were mainly above the national average. For example, in 2004, the level 1 application of number pass rate was 44%. In contrast, level 2 key skills overall achievements have been unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates in GCSE mathematics are also low, but in GCSE English pass rates are average.

99. Overall, the standard of work is satisfactory. There is a good standard of oral work in ESOL lessons. In one lesson, students learned how to give and receive directions. They quickly mastered the basic vocabulary required and took pleasure in confidently directing the teacher around the classroom. A few students do not take sufficient care with the presentation of their work.

A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy and numeracy, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in adult numeracy	Entry	No. of starts	91	172	110
		% retention	55	76	68
		% pass rate	68	75	64
Certificate in adult literacy	Entry	No. of starts	304	561	123
		% retention	80	69	64
		% pass rate	23	81	44
ESOL (1 year)	1	No. of starts	12	46	63
		% retention	33	63	52
		% pass rate	0	76	87
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	277	243	175

		% retention	78	65	62
		% pass rate	35	32	36
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	157	102	94
		% retention	55	72	56
		% pass rate	54	50	55

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

100. Most teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives which students understand. A wide range of teaching methods, often making good use of ILT, ensure that students' interest is maintained. In one English lesson, students used an interactive whiteboard and specialist software to write poems based on their feelings. Students enjoyed this exercise and learned to appreciate their own potential as well as the rhythm and form of poetry. In all lessons, teachers regularly check students' learning and give good support and encouragement. On courses for adults, at the end of each lesson, every student completes a record describing the activities undertaken, with comments by both the student and the teacher on progress made. Teachers use these records to plan learning in the next lesson. However, many students have individual learning targets which are too vague. One student had a target of 'fractions'. Such ill-defined targets are insufficiently detailed to enable progress to be reviewed effectively.

101. Resources are satisfactory. Most staff are well qualified, although new staff have not yet completed their training in the national core curriculum for literacy, numeracy and language. Volunteer tutors who work in lessons for adults have relevant qualifications. Students appreciate the support they give. The accommodation is generally good, but one GCSE mathematics lesson was inappropriately timetabled into a science laboratory. Students have satisfactory access to computers in most lessons.

102. There is inadequate initial assessment on courses for adults. No formal diagnostic assessments are undertaken. Teachers seek to determine students' needs during the first weeks of their course through an evaluation of their work. This process lacks the rigour of formal diagnostic assessment and limits the effectiveness of initial target setting. All full-time students taking key skills undertake a diagnostic assessment. The results are used effectively to plan teaching and learning.

103. There is a satisfactory range of provision. Recently introduced courses in mathematics and English provide well-planned routes into GCSE studies. There are some good community initiatives to support hard-to-reach students. For example, there is literacy and numeracy provision at a residential centre for the rehabilitation of people with substance abuse problems. There is an insufficient range of ESOL provision. There is no separate level course for ESOL students.

104. There is very effective additional support. Over 320 students receive support, either in-class or from study tutors in the learning centre. Students speak highly of the quality of this support. The retention rate of students receiving additional support is 6% above the college average. There is good support for students with dyslexia and good personal support for adult students.

Leadership and management

105. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Effective action has been taken to address low retention and pass rates. This includes thorough monitoring of attendance and the introduction of more appropriate curriculum options. There is good management of additional learning support. There are well-planned procedures to monitor the progress of supported students and regular communication, regarding their progress, with staff teaching the students' main programmes. There is insufficient co-ordination of key skills and literacy and numeracy, which are managed separately. There is no regular sharing of good practice and very little joint professional development. Data are

not used sufficiently to analyse students' achievements during self-assessment. For example, the GCSE teachers did not discriminate between high grade passes and other passes in their self-assessment report.

Part D: College data

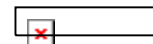
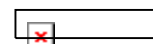


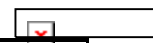
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	13	53
2	38	12
3	47	13
4/5	0	3
Other	2	19
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2005

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2003/04



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	743	373	8
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	97	1
Engineering, technology and manufacture	312	319	5
Business administration, management and professional	197	767	7
Information and communication technology	674	724	10
Retailing, customer service and transportation	9	141	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	515	900	10
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	302	458	5
Health, social care and public	206	1,341	1

services			
Visual and performing arts and media	674	1,603	16
Humanities	405	231	5
English, languages and communication	674	914	11
Foundation programmes	303	908	9
Unknown	0	96	1
Total	5,014	8,872	90

Source: provided by the college in Spring 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	206	220	253	1,008	953	1,343
	Retention rate %	67	73	76	73	74	75
	National average %	76	76	*	71	71	*
	Pass rate %	83	84	72	75	83	70
	National average %	69	73	*	70	77	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	990	859	666	1,923	1,566	456
	Retention rate %	67	68	67	47	42	80
	National average %	71	71	*	68	67	*
	Pass rate %	83	83	74	81	70	88
	National average %	70	73	*	71	73	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,990	2,001	1,490	1,209	904	654
	Retention rate %	78	79	81	66	67	72
	National average %	77	77	*	70	69	*
	Pass rate %	79	83	78	77	77	78
	National average %	77	80	*	71	74	*
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	**	**	**	112	119	97
	Retention rate %	**	**	**	82	69	95
	National average %	**	**	**	68	69	*

	Pass rate %	**	**	**	53	49	59
	National average %	**	**	**	54	58	*

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 Pass rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.*

2. *College rates for 1999/2000 to 2001/02: College ISR.*

* *data unavailable*

** *fewer than 15 students enrolled*

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)	63	27	10	60
Level 2 (intermediate)	55	45	0	29
Level 1 (foundation)	93	7	0	14
Other sessions	82	18	0	11
Totals	67	28	5	114

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