



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Dunstable College

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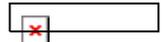
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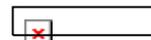
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Basic information about the college

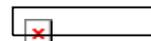


Name of college:	Dunstable College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Ms C Vesey
Address of college:	Kingsway Dunstable Bedfordshire LU5 4HG
Telephone number:	01582 477776
Fax number:	01582 478801
Chair of governors:	Tim Boatswain
Unique reference number:	130598
Name of reporting inspector:	Christine Langton HMI
Dates of inspection:	18-22 November 2002

Part A: Summary

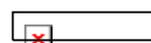


Information about the college



Dunstable College is a general further education (FE) college that provides 10 of the 14 areas of learning. Some of the areas have small numbers. It is situated in South Bedfordshire and is part of the urban conurbation of Luton and Dunstable. It draws its students mainly from Luton, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. In addition to the main site, the college operates from the Kingsland site, a former community college in Houghton Regis, as well as from a number of community-based locations. The college operates in a competitive environment. A general FE college and a sixth form are situated five miles away in Luton. Bedfordshire secondary education is organised into middle and upper schools, so that pupils have a break at 13 and most upper schools operate sixth forms. The college provides the vocational alternative for students from Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard and South Bedfordshire. The college anticipates the enrolment of 568 full-time students aged 16 to 18 in 2002/03. A wide range of provision for adults is also offered. Adult students account for approximately 80% of the provision. Dunstable College Training Agency provides work-based learning foundation modern apprenticeships, advanced modern apprenticeships and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) to approximately 258 learners, mainly in computing and information technology (IT) and foundation programmes. The new principal took up post in February 2002 and a major management restructuring was undertaken. The senior management team was streamlined, middle management was strengthened and a team of cross-college co-ordinators put in place. The new management team became fully operational on 1 November 2002.

How effective is the college?



The college provides satisfactory teaching and opportunities for learning for most of its students. It has developed good partnership arrangements, which are effectively attracting students traditionally under-represented in FE. Provision for adult students is good. Provision for work-based learning has improved significantly and the majority is satisfactory or better. Provision is satisfactory in five curriculum areas, but unsatisfactory in three. This unsatisfactory provision is mainly that for students aged 16 to 18. There is insufficient provision at foundation level for students aged 16 to 18. Some students are on courses that are too difficult for them. However, overall there have been improvements in retention and pass rates to around national averages. Guidance and induction procedures are generally effective, and personal and pastoral support for students are good. However, students who have basic skills needs are not always identified. The college has not yet developed ways of encouraging all students who have been identified as in need of basic skills support to take up the help that is offered.

Key strengths

- improvements in retention and pass rates
- strong leadership and management of change

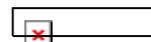
- good development of partnerships to widen participation
- effective personal and welfare support for students
- good provision for adult students.

What should be improved

- the unsatisfactory provision in information and communication technology (ICT), business administration and professional courses, and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- the standard of teaching and learning
- the consistency and rigour in the application of quality assurance arrangements
- some ineffective curriculum management
- insufficient provision at foundation level for students aged 16 to 18.

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

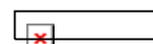
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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)

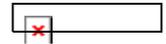
Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Engineering and motor vehicle	Satisfactory. Retention rates are good and improving. Work-based learning programmes and the motor vehicle full-time programme are particularly good. There is good practice in the monitoring and assessment of work-based learners, but unsatisfactory assessment practices for college-based courses. Some unsatisfactory management of student support adversely affects student learning and attainment.
Business administration and professional	Unsatisfactory. Provision in business and administration is poor. Retention, pass rates and attendance are low on most courses. Professional and trade union studies are satisfactory. On-the-job learning opportunities for work-based learning are good. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Curriculum leadership and management are weak.
Computing and information technology	Unsatisfactory. Good provision for adult students effectively widens participation. On full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18, attendance, punctuality and retention and pass rates are poor. Tutorials are ineffective. Students have access to good IT facilities, but resources to support teaching and learning are inadequate.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Flexible, part-time programmes effectively provide for adult students. Teaching and learning are good in most lessons. Students develop high levels of practical skills. However, attendance rates are low. Some students are on an inappropriate NVQ course. There is insufficient accommodation for sports therapy and inappropriate use of classrooms for hairdressing and beauty therapy practical lessons.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. Students demonstrate good levels of interpersonal and vocational skills in the workplace. Most students on health and social care and counselling courses stay on their courses and achieve their qualification, but on a few courses retention and pass rates are low.
Art design and media	Satisfactory. Good pass rates on level 2 courses, but poor pass rates on creative skills courses. Retention rates on two-year vocational art and design courses are unsatisfactory. Students' practical skills are developed well. Progression to higher education (HE) is good. There is effective support for individual students. Some of the accommodation is unsuitable and resources in textile and print are inadequate.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates on ESOL courses are good. However, provision for literacy and numeracy is poor. Planning does not address the needs of individual students and there is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Assessment practices are weak. There are deficiencies in curriculum management.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Satisfactory. Teachers and support staff work well as a team to help students in lessons. Effective use is made of work placements to develop students' knowledge and skills. Students progress very well on to other courses or into employment. The curriculum gives insufficient emphasis to the development of vocational skills. There are too few opportunities for students to gain accreditation. There is a lack of challenge in some lessons.

How well is the college led and managed?



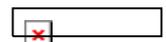
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvements in retention and pass rates have brought the college in line with national averages. The new principal and senior managers are providing strong leadership and working hard to drive up standards. A period of structural and cultural change is being managed well. The college mission, plans and objectives are understood and strongly supported by most of the staff, who recognise the need for significant change. Senior managers acknowledge that some ineffective curriculum management still needs to be improved, that there is inconsistent rigour in the application of quality assurance arrangements, and that the overall standard of teaching and learning needs to be raised. The management of work-based learning has been restructured and this change has been well managed. Good progress has been made in work-based learning to address many of the weaknesses identified by a previous re-inspection of the area. The governing body is now closely involved with college strategic planning. The standards committee has appropriately refocused governors' attention on the importance of students' achievements.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college is socially, but not always educationally inclusive. It actively promotes a supportive, welcoming and friendly environment that is appreciated by students. There is a clear commitment to the development of equal opportunities. This is highlighted in practice and in links with the local community. Successful work with pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools has encouraged them to stay in education and to progress to further study. Community partnership arrangements are enabling homeless students to gain employment. The college works with tenants' associations to identify local learning needs and appropriate venues for delivery. Several of these venues provide crèche facilities to allow parents of young children to return to study. The college has produced a draft race equality policy and action plan, but is behind schedule in fulfilling its statutory obligations under the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000. Procedures are in place to support the monitoring of race and equal opportunities issues. However, the analysis of race and equal opportunities data is insufficiently thorough. Equal opportunities and race equality are promoted through student induction. Recent staff training has focused on the promotion of equal opportunities in teaching and learning. There is student representation on a cross-college equal opportunities committee. The college provides good opportunities for students from a wide range of experience and educational backgrounds. Arrangements for personal and welfare support are effective. However, the narrow range of courses available at level 1 means that some students are inappropriately placed on higher level courses. In many areas, there is insufficient attention to encouraging students to become effective learners and learning plans do not always take sufficient account of individual needs. There is appropriate access to most parts of the college for students with restricted mobility.

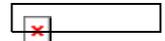
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support arrangements for most students are satisfactory. Students value the informal and one-to-one advice provided by teachers, tutors and support staff. The emphasis placed on individual support contributes to the welcoming ethos of the college. The college holds a guidance council award for the quality of its advice and guidance.

are offered to pupils from local schools. College staff regularly attend school careers sessions. Effective induction enables full-time students to settle into their college course quickly. All full-time students complete an initial assessment during induction to identify their individual learning support needs. However, the extent to which issues arising from initial assessment are followed up differs between curriculum areas. One-to-one learning and individual tutorial support are generally good. Some group tutorials, however, are less effective and students do not always value the experience. There is an appropriate range of support services available. These include welfare, financial and counselling services. Students receive effective advice and guidance on progression to employment or to HE. Procedures for following up on poor attendance are well documented. However, these are not systematically applied across the college and overall attendance is below the national average for general FE colleges. Arrangements for monitoring the impact of guidance and support services on retention and pass rates are not well developed.

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

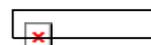
- friendly atmosphere
- one-to-one support offered by teachers
- adult learning environment
- good enrichment opportunities
- IT facilities.

What they feel could be improved

- availability of learning support tutors
- some group tutorials

- some accommodation
- car parking.

Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



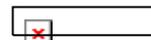
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	37	51	12
19+ and WBL*	54	37	9
Learning 16-18	38	47	15
19+ and WBL*	51	40	9

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



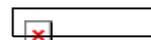
1. The college recognises that some of the centrally held data available to monitor students' retention and pass rates have been unreliable. If a student withdrew or failed during the year, the data still recorded the student as having an unknown outcome. This issue has been addressed and, generally, rectified. In-year retention figures were correct for two-year or three-year programmes, but not shown correctly for the full length of the programme. This too has been mostly rectified and the corrected data used for purposes of self-assessment.

2. College data suggest that pass rates improved at all levels in 2002. Overall pass rates at all levels are now at or just above national averages. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 have declined, but show an improvement at level 3. Overall retention rates are above national averages.

3. At level 1, achievement of students remains below national averages. However, college data suggest a clear improvement in 2001/02. Retention rates improved in 2002 to considerably above national averages. At level 2, in 2001/02, there was a considerable improvement in pass rates from well below national averages to at or above national averages. Retention rates also improved. At level 3, although both retention and pass rates improved in 2001/02, both remained just below national averages. Rates of retention vary considerably across the areas of learning. It is particularly poor on the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma in IT at between 15 and 29 percentage points below the national average. Retention rates on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation and advanced courses in health and social care and council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate courses are also well below national averages. In business and administration, both pass and retention rates are poor in most areas. In art and design, pass rates are good on the GNVQ intermediate course. Progression to HE is very good in art and design. Some 93% of students on the BTEC foundation in art and design went on to take related degree courses in 2001. Progression from the national diploma in design on to the Higher National Diploma (HND) course within the college is also good. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, most students display good standards of practical skill. They demonstrate skills of a higher standard than expected for the level and for the time they have been on their courses. Many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and move on to vocational courses in the college, or into employment.

4. The college has arrangements to enable full-time students aged 16 to 18 to achieve up to five of the key skills. Pass rates by full-time students aged 16 to 18 in key skills are improving. Level 2 is the target for most students and pass rates in communication, application of number and IT have risen to well above the national average. Pass rates in key skills by work-based learners remain low. For many full-time students and work-based learners, the key skills are not effectively linked to their vocational studies. There are significant variations in the quality of teaching in key skills between curriculum areas.

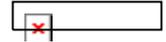
Adult learners



5. In 2001/02, pass rates at level 1 improved to well above national averages. Retention rates declined, but remained above national averages. Pass rates at level 2 improved from well below national averages to considerably above, and the consistently good retention rates improved further. Pass rates at level 3 improved considerably to at or above national averages and retention rates remained high. Adult students do well on courses in childcare and health and social care. Pass rates are good on Open College Network (OCN) courses. Retention and pass rates are outstanding on NVQ level 2 early years and childcare

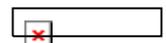
and vocational skills in the workplace. In the business and administration and professional area, there are good retention and pass rates on trade union courses. Adult students following courses in sugarcraft and patchwork quilting develop very good practical skills. Students studying ESOL achieve well. There is good support for part-time adult students on courses in IT and retention rates are good. Some evening class students have produced outstanding web sites that can be viewed on the Internet.

Work-based learners



6. Retention rates in engineering, care and customer service are good. All three areas have an overall retention rate of 72% or better for the last three years. Retention rates in construction are very low. Business administration retention rates have improved to 70%. Pass rates in all aspects of the individual learning plan, over the last three years, and across all levels, are very low in construction and care. Engineering and business administration are low, but improving, at 48% and in customer service programmes at 57%. NVQ pass rates in construction and care are very poor. Customer service has the best NVQ pass rate at 85%, with business administration and engineering rates at 70% and 58%, respectively. The college has stopped recruiting learners to construction programmes. Key skill completion rates over the last three years for those learners who require key skills as a part of their qualification, for example, a modern apprenticeship framework, are at their best in engineering, where 57% have successfully completed all key skill requirements. In all other areas of learning, key skill completion rates are low, but improving. In construction and customer service programmes, no key skills qualifications have been completed, whilst in care and business administration only 2% and 28%, respectively, have completed. Overall 19% of learners have completed their key skill requirements.

Quality of education and training



7. Most of the teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 158 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 44% of these and satisfactory in 45%. The highest proportion of excellent and very good teaching was seen on courses for adult students. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was seen on courses for students aged 16 to 18. In the lessons observed by inspectors, there was a slightly higher proportion of good teaching at level 2. Overall, the college needs to raise the standard of teaching and learning. The best teaching was in hairdressing and beauty therapy, child health and social care and in the development of practical skills in art and design. In the most effective lessons, the aims and objectives are shared with students and revisited during the lesson to confirm that learning is taking place. Teachers work productively with a wide range of abilities using question and answer, demonstration, discussion, small group and individual work to promote learning. Clear explanations relate theory to practice and relevant demonstrations reinforce learning. Good use is made of praise and constructive criticism to challenge students to improve their performance. Teachers use commercial and real work examples to illustrate key points. Good use is made of students' own experiences to reinforce learning. Teachers use up-to-date and relevant visual aids and resources well to stimulate interest and motivate students to participate. In the weaker lessons, the lesson planning is poor and does not address the individual needs of all the students in the group. Teaching is often undemanding and does not challenge students to achieve. Teachers do not adapt their learning materials and style

students' own experiences. Students have too few tasks arranged for them to participate actively and be stimulated and they quickly lose interest. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was seen in business administration, management and professional, and literacy, numeracy and ESOL lessons.

8. Full-time teachers are well qualified and experienced. Many part-time teachers bring with them valuable experience of current working practices, to the benefit of students. Of the 92 full-time and 102 part-time teachers, 71% and 55%, respectively, have a recognised teaching qualification. Staff responsible for work-based learning are occupationally competent. Some 10% of college students and staff are from minority ethnic communities.

9. The college has two sites and two main outreach centres. It also provides learning in approximately 24 community centres. The main site has no crèche facility. However, most of the community centres provide crèche facilities. The main site is located close to the centre of Dunstable. The second smaller site is approximately three miles from the town centre. Since the last inspection, the college has improved the co-ordination of the use of learning resources. The accommodation is well maintained and clean. A recent room utilisation survey shows poor room usage, mainly on the main site. The college uses a small number of poor quality temporary buildings for teaching purposes and, in hair and beauty, inappropriate areas are used for practical training on the college's second site. The accommodation strategy has recognised that the main site requires refurbishment and redevelopment.

10. There are appropriate learning resources in all curriculum areas, with good library facilities and specialist equipment in engineering, motor vehicle and hair and beauty therapy. Foundation students have access to a wide range of learning resources, including a local garden centre, kitchen, laundry and IT facilities. The college has developed an extensive range of health and safety policies and procedures. It closely manages and monitors its own health and safety arrangements and those of other subcontracted provision and employers. Computing teachers lack some specialist teaching equipment in classrooms. Art teachers lack sufficient weaving, screen printing and knitting machines, and there are some shortages of library books in care, the arts, and business administration. All staff rooms and communal learning areas are linked to the college internal computer network. Students have good access to computers and other learning support material at various points throughout the main college and they are able to open an e-mail account. The use of learning resources is monitored and a shortage of computers in the main library during busy periods has been identified. The library is open in the evenings, on Saturdays and during holiday periods. Library facilities are not available on the other college site. Access for students with restricted mobility has been improved since the last inspection and they can now reach most areas of the college. The college has a range of specialist equipment to allow access to learning for those with sight, hearing and speech difficulties.

11. The college has standardised procedures for the assessment and monitoring of student progress. However, implementation of these processes across curriculum areas is inconsistent. Assignments are scheduled appropriately and in most areas marked regularly. However, teachers do not always meet the college target to return marked work in 13 days. Students' work is fairly and accurately assessed. In the majority of subjects, students receive appropriate written feedback. In art and design, for example, teachers offer regular and helpful guidance on how students' work could be improved. However, in a few cases students' work is returned without basic grammar or spelling corrections. In some areas, for example, business and engineering, feedback is insufficiently detailed. Well co-ordinated initial assessment for students aged 16 to 18 and work-based learners ensures the accurate diagnosis of individual learning needs at the start of their course. However, this is not used effectively to plan individual programmes of work and, for many students, learning targets are not well developed. Individual reviews of student progress are scheduled three times a year. In health and social care, reviews are particularly effective. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are kept informed through written reports and parents' evenings. The monitoring of student progress through individual learning plans in literacy, numeracy and key skills is insufficiently rigorous. Internal verification is good in hairdressing, beauty therapy and NVQ

care courses. However, internal verification lacks consistency across curriculum areas. It is ineffective in raising the standards of assessment practice in literacy, numeracy and engineering. There are no standard procedures for sharing good practice in assessment and verification across the college.

12. The college concentrates on providing vocational courses. It provides a satisfactory range of vocational pathways for both full-time and part-time students. The range at intermediate and advanced levels is good. However, there are insufficient courses at foundation level to meet the full ability range of school-leavers. Some students are inappropriately placed on intermediate courses. In several areas, such as art and design and care, there are strong progression routes from levels 1 or 2 through to HE. The college has developed high quality provision in a few specialised areas, such as sugarcraft and furniture and joinery, which attracts some international students. The range of courses in literacy, numeracy, and ESOL is too narrow to meet all local needs. Courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not adequately promote the acquisition of vocational skills and qualifications. The college currently provides work-based learning programmes for 110 modern apprentices and 120 adults, primarily in engineering, care, administration and customer services. There are insufficient procedures to ensure that the skills needs of local employers are clearly identified and used to inform curriculum planning.

13. Almost all full-time students aged 16 to 18 based at the main campus are participating in a good and varied range of enrichment activities. Enrichment activities have yet to be extended to the small number of students at the Kingsland campus. There is well-managed and valuable work experience provision for a significant proportion of full-time students.

14. The college has effectively developed the curriculum and teaching locations to widen participation. This is particularly the case in engineering, ICT and hair and beauty. Strong local partnerships have led to learning opportunities being provided in venues in the local area. Franchised provision in ESOL, combined with a vocational skill, is successfully overcoming barriers to accessing education for Asian women in particular. The college has developed very effective vocational provision for disaffected and excluded 14 to 16 year olds in collaboration with local schools and the local education authority. Many of these pupils progress into FE or full-time employment.

15. Students are appreciative of the range of support services available to them. There have been improvements in the co-ordination and staffing of this area. Services include welfare, personal, financial and learning support. A full-time personal adviser offers careers education and guidance for students progressing to further study or to employment. This academic year there is an increased emphasis on tutorial support. Arrangements for the initial assessment of full-time students aged 16 to 18 and work-based trainees have improved. However, systems for monitoring the impact of these services on retention and pass rates are not well developed.

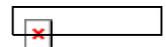
16. The college has achieved external recognition for advice and guidance processes. It currently holds a guidance council award. Appropriate guidance is given to students before they start their college course. Taster courses are offered to local schools, and 14 to 16 year olds are enrolled on college courses in motor vehicle, hairdressing and health and social care. College staff regularly attend school careers events.

17. There is a common induction programme that includes an assessment of individual learning styles. All full-time students undertake an initial assessment of their basic or key skills within tutorial sessions. Information is shared with subject teachers. However, teachers make insufficient use of this information when planning teaching for individuals or groups of students. The system for referring students for additional support is not effective across all curriculum areas and college sites. Some students do not automatically receive the specialist support they need. Comprehensive arrangements for initial assessment have resulted in an increase in demand for learning support. Because of staff shortages, some students assessed in September were still waiting to be assigned a support tutor in November.

18. Most students speak highly of the informal and one-to-one guidance they receive. Some tutorials are purposeful and effective in supporting and monitoring students' progress. However, too many students do not see the relevance of whole group activity. Formal reviews are held three times a year. Tutors review progress and use individual learning plans to set targets with each student. However, in some areas plans are not specific enough and learning targets lack clarity. The entitlement of part-time adult students to tutorial support is not well defined. Arrangements for the sharing of good practice through a tutor mentor scheme are in the early stages of development.

19. Attendance by students during the inspection was poor. In a few areas, poor punctuality caused disruption. The college recognises this weakness and has recently introduced standard procedures for reporting and following up student absence.

Leadership and management



20. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The entire senior management team is new. A comprehensive programme of change is being managed effectively. The new principal has implemented a range of actions to raise retention and pass rates. After consultation, the college has been restructured at all levels. Curriculum areas are now managed in one of four programme areas. A more co-ordinated approach to the management of resources across the college and its different sites and better management of work-based learning is leading to change and improvements.

21. A comprehensive and effective range of strategies to communicate the college's recovery plan has been drawn up. Staff and governors are clear about most of the new systems, policies and procedures. Strategic and operational plans address the development and support needs of a wide range of key priorities, identified following a series of consultations with staff, governors and external agencies. The principal and the newly appointed senior managers have demonstrated strong leadership in these matters. Most of the staff recognise the need for significant change and the new college mission, plans and objectives are understood and strongly supported by them. In 2001, overall improvements in student retention and pass rates brought the college in line with national averages. However, there remain weaknesses in performance in some of the areas of learning inspected where retention and pass rates are poor, especially for students aged 16 to 18. During the inspection, student punctuality and attendance were poor in many areas. Of the eight curriculum areas inspected three are unsatisfactory. It is too early to assess the impact of all the changes on the achievements of students. Actions taken so far indicate that governors, the principal and senior managers have the skills to improve the college. The trend of improving retention and pass rates has given Luton council and other key partners of the college the confidence to move their work-based off-the-job training to the college. The college is a key partner in a consortium of school, colleges and private sector trainers involved in developing a new joint learning centre at Leighton Buzzard.

22. Following an earlier inspection and re-inspection of the college's work-based learning provision many aspects remained poor. An emergency action plan was agreed and is being implemented and monitored effectively. Improvements have been made to manage and resource work-based learning more effectively. The co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training between subcontracted training providers, employers and the college curriculum teachers and assessors is now clearer. The college has discontinued training in aspects of work-based learning provision that were ineffective for learners and which represented poor value for money.

23. The four programme area managers report regularly to the deputy principal. Reports are prepared and key staff are given the responsibility to take action to progress the priorities

identified. Cross-college issues and developments are the responsibility of a newly appointed range of managers. These include managers for 14 to 16 year-old school students, ICT and key skills. Curriculum management is effective in hairdressing, beauty and sports therapy and in aspects of several other curriculum areas such as art and design, and the two learning shops which provide computer training mainly for adult part-time students. Curriculum management and leadership in business studies are weak. Inspectors identified weaknesses in aspects of curriculum management in five of the other seven curriculum areas inspected. These included weak quality assurance arrangements in care programmes, poor co-ordination, staff training and a lack of clarity of staff roles in literacy and numeracy, and weak management of some programmes in engineering. The college lacks sufficient learning opportunities at foundation level in IT, business administration and care, or for those with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

24. There is a sound framework for quality assurance. However, these arrangements are not applied consistently across all the college's activities or used effectively to secure improvements. Data still contain many inaccuracies and are not used well to influence decision making, inform action planning or to set targets. Staff appraisals are planned and scheduled, but many do not take place in a timely manner. The lesson observation process is not sufficiently robust. It is not rigorous enough to identify key issues such as weak teaching methods for groups of mixed ability students. No external validation of the college lesson observation process has taken place to consider its accuracy and effectiveness. There are effective procedures to monitor health and safety. The college has robust arrangements to evaluate health and safety issues and the equal opportunities arrangements of employers and subcontracted training providers. However, arrangements to monitor the standard of teaching and learning undertaken by these other parties are weak.

25. The college has identified an over reliance on income from franchised provision. To lessen the risk, the college has reduced its franchised activity from 25% to 16%. Governors are now routinely informed about franchised provision and plans are in place to give programme area managers more responsibility for the quality assurance of franchised work.

26. The importance of staff development, as a means of developing the skills of staff to raise students' achievements and support learning, has been highlighted by senior managers. A programme of intensive staff development has been introduced with weekly training sessions for all teachers, covering issues such as what makes a good tutorial, target setting for improvement, managing diversity and widening participation. Payment for part-time teachers has been introduced to encourage their participation.

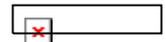
27. Self-assessment is generally critical and realistic. The report and the action and development plans are key working documents at the centre of much of the college's drive for continuous improvement. There is good analysis of student feedback to support self-assessment. Most support service areas are working to agreed service standards. There is a good clearly documented complaints procedure, that requires all actions to be identified and reported back through the line management structure. There are good links with employers participating in work-based learning. Plans are in place for a high level employers' forum to inform college strategic planning, but currently there is no detailed and regular survey of employers' views.

28. There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities and actions are taken to widen participation from students from a wide range of cultural and financial backgrounds. The provision in the community for speakers of English as a second language and the community centres are good examples. One community centre has received a Beacon Award. However, four curriculum areas do not have sufficient opportunity for foundation level study. There are satisfactory policies in place for equal opportunities. The college celebrates diversity and success through its award events, staff development and collaborative community work. These actions indicate a strong commitment, but, at the time of the inspection, the college was overdue in its obligation to produce an established race equality policy.

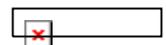
29. The college's financial position currently places it in the weakest category of financial security according to the local LSC. The financial management of the college has been substantially reformed. A new director of resources has been appointed. The financial position is now monitored closely by the senior management team. The college considers its strategic plan to be its recovery plan, but it has yet to agree a formal financial recovery plan with the local LSC.

30. The governing body is now closely involved with college strategic planning. A change in the chairmanship of the governing body and in most of its committees reflects a realisation by the college that it was facing serious difficulties. The governing body has most of the essential skills and expertise required. The college governors' standards committee has appropriately refocused governors' attention on the importance of students' achievements. There are thorough arrangements to conduct and monitor the appraisal of the principal, clerk and other senior post holders. The principal and governors have recognised the need to provide best value by engaging consultants to provide the college with clear benchmarking data covering a range of cost indicators for most college activities.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Engineering and motor vehicle



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**
Contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good and improving retention rates
- good work-based programmes
- particularly effective motor vehicle full-time programme
- good access to IT resources.

Weaknesses

- weak assessment arrangements on college-based courses

- ineffective use of student support arrangements
- poor management of some programmes.

Scope of provision

31. Engineering includes motor vehicle, mechanical, electrical, electronics, maintenance, welding and computer-aided engineering. Programmes are taught on two sites and provide for a good range of modes of attendance including full-time, part-time, evening and work-based learning. Qualifications offered range from foundation level to level 4. The programme area has good links with local industry, which benefits learners. For example, up-to-date equipment and components have been donated for students to use. NVQs at level 3 are taught in the workplace and managed by Dunstable College Training Agency. Modern apprenticeship programmes are provided at foundation and advanced levels. Currently, there are 6 and 42 undergoing training. There are 208 students on college programmes, 60 full time and 148 part time.

Achievement and standards

32. Retention rates are good and improving. All are above national averages. The City and Guilds 2301-6 computer-aided engineering competencies and the NVQ in engineering manufacture (foundation) are particularly good at 100% and 95%, respectively. Overall, retention rates have improved from 79% in 1999/2000, to 88% in 2001/02. Overall pass rates have fallen in the same period from 66% to 61%. Pass rates in the NVQ engineering manufacture (foundation) are unsatisfactory, at 46%. The motor vehicle repair and maintenance programme pass rates are at the national average. However, many students enter this programme with very poor or no prior achievement of qualifications. The fact that most of these students gain a qualification is a significant strength. In 2001/02, 80% of the full-time students on this course progressed to employment in the motor vehicle repair industry. Retention rates for work-based learners are good. Achievement of the full framework is satisfactory. Practical work is carried out to a good standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair maintenance	1	No. of starts	42	10	20
		% retention	71	70	75
		% pass rate	47	86	73
City and Guilds 2301-6 computer- aided engineering certificate	2	No. of starts	8	15	18
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	50	93	67
City and Guilds 435-01 draughting and design	2	No. of starts	67	59	41
		% retention	82	83	83
		% pass rate	56	58	68
NVQ in engineering	2	No. of starts	28	44	41

manufacturing (foundation)		% retention	60	75	95
		% pass rate	33	38	46
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	30	37	14
		% retention	97	92	86
		% pass rate	66	88	67

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

Quality of education and training

33. There are excellent working relationships between teachers and students, which encourages students to learn. The best lessons are in the practical engineering subjects where teachers make good use of praise and constructive criticism to challenge the students to improve. Often students are able to progress at their own pace, either because the activity is based around practical tasks or because particularly good written resources support independent learning. However, most schemes of work are merely lists of topics to be covered. Neither these nor the lesson plans focus sufficiently upon how student learning is to be developed. In the best lessons, teachers clearly stated the objectives, planned the activities carefully and often related the topic to an industrial practice or process. In a good evening welding class, students were able to work through a series of practical tasks which included gas and arc techniques producing different weld types; the work was of a high standard. Lessons that are not well planned have too few tasks that actively involve the students in learning. The topics are covered too slowly and the students lose interest.

34. There is good practice in the assessment and monitoring of work-based learners. Learners have regular contact with the college training officer, who also works closely with the employers. This effective liaison ensures that the companies' training schemes blend with the NVQ requirements and learners are able to gather appropriate evidence of competence. Assessment in the workplace is fully documented and feedback to the learners is given immediately. The training officer and learner review progress and set new targets. There are weak assessment arrangements on college-based courses. Often performance criteria are not well defined. The content of students' work is not fully marked and spelling, grammar and punctuation are not corrected. Marking mainly consists of a summary comment. Students are not given sufficient guidance about how to improve their work. Verification is often completed at the end of the students' programme and not continually so students' progress can be monitored and reviewed throughout.

35. Students are generally guided on to appropriate learning programmes. Most are assessed to identify any additional learning needs. There are good systems in place that allow for student self-referral or for tutor referral for learning support. However, not all students take up the support offered and the needs of such students are not being met. There is good practice in tutorial support. The best examples include regular reviews of progress followed by action planning to set individual targets for improvement. However, this good practice is not applied to all students. Employers receive regular reports on students' progress.

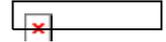
36. Specialist resources are adequate. Some teachers have recent industrial experience, others take advantage of liaison with local industry to keep abreast of modern developments. A significant number of teachers are undergoing professional training and completing assessor awards. Accommodation is good and provides a stimulating work environment. IT facilities are readily available for all students, who speak highly of the resources available. The library has a good range of specialist engineering texts.

Leadership and management

37. There is a new management structure. Changes are being implemented rapidly and

programme management is being improved. Student progress and performance are regularly discussed at course team meetings. However, some course teams meet too infrequently. Targets for performance are set by course teams, but progress towards improving target setting and monitoring performance more effectively is hampered by the lack of management information. The curriculum area produced a generally good self-assessment report with actions to improve identified weaknesses. However, it is insufficiently critical of the standard of teaching and learning.

Business administration and professional



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on trade union courses
- good on-the-job learning opportunities for work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates in most areas
- much unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- unsatisfactory assessment of modern apprentices' key skills in the work place
- inadequate use of targets to improve student performance
- no foundation programme in business
- weak curriculum leadership and management.

Scope of provision

38. There is a small range of full-time and part-time courses. There are 84 full-time students across intermediate GNVQ, a diploma in administration that combines level 1 and level 2 students, and an Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in business. There are 85 part-time students studying management courses at levels 3, 4 and 5, book-keeping and Institute of Legal Secretaries. There are 150 enrolments on part-time trade union courses with students taking day release or short courses lasting up to 4 days.

Achievement and standards

39. The retention and pass rates on trade union courses are good. On most other programmes they are below national averages. Both full-time and part-time trade union courses regularly have 100% retention rates, and pass rates rose several percentage points above the national average last year to 90% for the advanced representatives award. Last year retention rates on the intermediate GNVQ programme improved to the national average and pass rates rose to just above it. In advanced GNVQ, retention rates declined to below the national average last year though the pass rate was just slightly above. In the AVCE in business, retention and pass rates are significantly below national averages. Although retention rates on management programmes are very good, the pass rate for supervisory management is 20 percentage points below the national average.

40. Retention and pass rates in work-based learning have improved. There are small numbers of advanced modern apprentices. Only 40% achieved their framework from those who started in 1999. In 1999/2000, only 29% of foundation modern apprentices achieved the full framework, but for the following year this rose to 33%, with a further 42% still in training. Achievements on the NVQ programme are satisfactory although there has been a decline of 10 percentage points, from 70% to 60%, over the last two years. Levels of attendance are low on all courses and punctuality is poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate in business	2	No. of starts	20	34	19
		% retention	65	59	76
		% pass rate	92	47	73
NVQ in administration	2	No. of starts	70	62	30
		% retention	84	58	93
		% pass rate	64	54	*
GNVQ in advanced business	3	No. of starts	41	37	23
		% retention	76	65	57
		% pass rate	53	83	*
Professional development award in supervisory management	3	No. of starts	12	27	21
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	67	59	*
TUC representatives advanced	3	No. of starts	**	49	40
		% retention	**	100	100
		% pass rate	**	86	91

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

*** course did not run*

Quality of education and training

41. There is a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is often undemanding, does not challenge students to achieve and lacks sufficient pace. Teachers do not adapt their learning materials and style to cater for the full range of ability of the students in their classes. Teachers make insufficient checks on students' learning and progress during lessons. Business concepts are not related to students' own experiences and examples of business practice are not developed. For example, in one lesson, the organisation of businesses was considered in isolation from what students might have experienced in part-time work. In another, the explanation of cash flows and business planning was not placed in a context which students could understand. In the better lessons, teaching is lively and students' interest is aroused. Students are encouraged to consider their own experiences of the world of work and to apply this to concepts such as customer service or quality control. Students work co-operatively in pairs or groups. In one lesson, pairs of students worked purposefully discussing a set of statements about information issues in an organisation. They then fed back their findings to the whole group. At the end, each pair also fed back a summary of what they had learnt during the lesson.

42. The standard of assessment is satisfactory. However, most written feedback on students' work is too general to help them to improve. There is no coherent system for recording students' progress, with individual members of staff creating their own systems. Students speak highly of the support they receive from teachers. However, tutorials are ineffective in reviewing students' progress and motivating them to achieve more. There is little use of individual learning plans and where targets are set with students they are too general, for example 'practice keyboarding'. The targets do not provide students with realistic goals or timescales. Internal verification ensures that the assessments of evidence meet the required standards, but does nothing to improve assessment methods and techniques. On professional courses, which only have end-of-year examinations, little or no written work is set in the first two terms, which makes it difficult to gauge students' understanding, competence and progress.

43. Off-the-job training in work-based learning is satisfactory. Learners have highly supportive employers who ensure that they undertake a range of activities and tasks at work in order to be able to develop and demonstrate their competence. However, the teaching and assessment of modern apprentices' key skills are only dealt with at college workshops. This leads to learners duplicating evidence that they can produce at work.

44. All full-time students have a thorough initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. There is, however, no foundation programme for students who are diagnosed as being at pre-entry or entry level. This has resulted in some students being inappropriately placed on a level 2 course. Although two thirds of the students in this group are receiving additional support, a significant number are not coping with the level of work.

45. Resources are generally satisfactory and staff have appropriate industrial experience and qualifications. Often classrooms are not arranged to ensure all students participate in group work. Computers are not used to teach business studies except in IT classes. The library has a small stock of business books, which are largely out of date. It does have a collection of classic management texts. In some rooms, presentations are given using materials projected against marked whiteboards, which prevents students from being able to read information.

Leadership and management

46. There is weak leadership and management. Quality assurance arrangements are ineffective and there is little focus on improving teaching and learning. Inaccurate data have hampered the thorough analysis of course performance. Course reviews lack rigour. The

self-assessment report was not sufficiently critical and has not led to improvements in students' performance. There are instances of inappropriate timetabling.

Computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- effective part-time course provision for adult students
- good widening of participation
- good IT facilities for students.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on full-time courses
- poor punctuality and attendance on full-time courses
- inadequate information learning technology resources to support teaching and learning
- ineffective tutorial system for full-time students
- lack of foundation provision for full-time students.

Scope of provision

47. The range of full-time courses is too limited. There are full-time courses in IT and computing leading to the European computer driving licence (ECDL), the first diploma, the national diploma, the City and Guilds 7262 qualification and the Integrated Business Technology (IBT) qualification at stage II. There is no full-time provision at foundation level.

There is a good range of part-time courses that are effective in widening the participation of adult students. In particular, the learning shops attract large numbers of adults who would not normally take part in college courses. Part-time programmes include computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), spreadsheet and desktop publishing courses at beginners' level and word-processing at both beginner and intermediate levels. There are introductory courses to computing and the Internet. These courses are available at the main college site and in outreach centres. There are 207 full-time students, 71% of these are aged 16 to 18. Nearly all the 1,800 part-time students are aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

48. Retention and pass rates on full-time courses are below, and sometimes well below national averages. In contrast, retention rates on part-time courses are generally above average and pass rates are satisfactory. Retention rates on the BTEC first diploma have been as much as 30 percentage points below national averages during the past three years, in 2002 they were 12 percentage points below. The national diploma course has been between 15 and 29 percentage points below the national average for the past three years. In contrast, several part-time courses are at, or close to, 100% retention rates and are generally 10 percentage points above national averages. All full-time computing courses have pass-rates below national averages. The national diploma course is over 20 percentage points below the national average. Adults learn to use technology with confidence during evening classes. Some adult students have produced outstanding web sites that can be viewed on the Internet. In almost every full-time lesson observed, students arrived late. This had a detrimental effect on learning. The average attendance rate during the inspection was 58%. Attendance at full-time lessons was 47% and that for part-time lessons was 75%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NICAS desktop publishing (beginners)	X	No. of starts	28	48	69
		% retention	82	100	100
		% pass rate	91	72	54
CLAIT short	1	No. of starts	478	616	447
		% retention	96	98	98
		% pass rate	66	64	72
City and Guilds 7261 IT cert (one year)	1	No. of starts	11	130	509
		% retention	100	75	78
		% pass rate	45	30	38
First diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	35	47	47
		% retention	46	74	64
		% pass rate	63	56	63
IBT stage II (one year)	2	No. of starts	160	165	92
		% retention	91	98	97
		% pass rate	63	38	70
IBT stage II (short)	2	No. of starts	102	63	180
		% retention	94	97	98
		% pass rate	56	52	71

National diploma in IT	3	No. of starts	45	46	47
		% retention	62	63	60
		% pass rate	71	57	64

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

Quality of education and training

49. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from unsatisfactory to good in a few lessons. Teaching and learning are generally better on courses for part-time adult students than they are for those involving full-time students aged 16 to 18. Full-time students are generally poorly motivated and carry out their work without enthusiasm. Many dull lessons would be enlivened if teachers demonstrated as well as giving verbal explanations about the topic being addressed. For example, in a lesson introducing databases, the teacher gave a very slow, pedantic explanation which some students failed to understand. A demonstration would have enlivened the lesson and shown how the database worked. There are insufficient ILT resources such as data-projectors and laptop computers to enhance teaching and learning in general computing classes. During computer workshop sessions, adult students on part-time courses are at different stages of a course or even on different courses. These students undertake individual work matched to their individual levels of ability. They are well supported and helped by staff. These students also have access to high quality, useful learning materials. Links with industry have improved since the last inspection, particularly in respect of the part-time provision, but full-time students are still not given sufficient opportunities to gain industrial experience.

50. There are no overall policies or procedures to ensure consistency in the assessment and monitoring of students' progress. Practices vary from course to course and teacher to teacher. Full-time national diploma students in particular are set regular and appropriate assignments. These are accurately marked and appropriate feedback is provided. Students are clear about what action needs to be taken in order to improve their work. There is less effective monitoring of progress of students on the first diploma course. Part-time students on a number of courses work mainly on an individual basis at their own pace. Teachers on these courses monitor individual students' progress well. Internal verification is satisfactory and assessment practices meet all the awarding body requirements.

51. All students have access to good quality computer resources to help them with their individual learning. This is both on a timetabled and open-access basis. All computer workstations are networked and offer access to the Internet. All full-time students have e-mail, which they can access from home, and storage space on the network. There are no CD re-writers available for student use, so it is impossible for part-time students to transport large graphic files between home and college. Learning materials and specifications for coursework are beginning to be available on the college intranet.

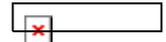
52. Arrangements for tutorial support are unsatisfactory. There is no common approach and for some full-time students, the tutorial arrangements are ineffective. Although tutorials do take place on most courses, some BTEC first diploma students had not had a tutorial after eight weeks at college. A review week was held during week six, when every student who attended was interviewed, but prior to that many students had already left the course. The tutorial system does not include effective measures to address poor punctuality and attendance.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management of the full-time courses are unsatisfactory. Insufficient action has been taken to improve retention and pass rates on these courses. Too little is being done to improve students' attendance and punctuality. Course teams meet on a regular basis, but too little attention is paid in meetings to identifying action required to raise

the standard of teaching and learning. Although teaching and learning observations are undertaken as part of the appraisal process, they are too infrequent. Good practice is not shared as a result of classroom observations. The recent restructuring of the computing provision has started to improve the sharing of good practice between staff and full-time and part-time teachers are beginning to work as a unified team. Self-assessment paid too little attention to assessing the quality of teaching and learning. Aspects of the part-time provision, including the learning shops, are effectively managed.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- good and improving pass rates in complementary therapies
- good teaching and learning in most lessons
- flexible timetabling arrangements support individual programmes of study
- effective tutorial and individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- low attendance in many lessons
- some students on inappropriate NVQ level of study
- inappropriate use of classrooms for practical lessons
- insufficient college-based facilities for sports therapy.

Scope of provision

54. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty and sports therapies on two sites and within specialist accommodation in the community. Courses allow progression from NVQ levels 1 to 2 in hairdressing and NVQ levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy and sports therapy. There is an extensive range of complementary therapy programmes including holistic therapies, reflexology, aromatherapy, cosmetic make-up, manicure and pedicure, body massage, Indian head massage, beauty specialist and international beauty therapist courses. Sports therapy courses include sports therapy at levels 2 and 3, exercise and fitness, sports massage and health and fitness. Students select a range of modules to create a course appropriate to their needs and personal circumstances. There are 158 full-time hairdressing, beauty and sports therapy students and 204 complementary therapy and other part-time students, the majority of whom are adults.

Achievement and standards

55. Retention rates are good on most courses. For example, NVQ level 2 beauty therapy is 13 percentage points above national averages for the last academic year and NVQ level 3 complementary therapy courses has risen to 5 percentage points above national averages for the last academic year. Attendance in many lessons is low, at 71%. This reduces opportunities for students' practical assessments. Retention rates on hairdressing NVQ level 2 were poor at 67%, against a national average of 76%. Pass rates are good on NVQ level 2 complementary therapies at 8 percentage points above national averages. Pass rates on NVQ beauty therapy courses at levels 2 and 3 are consistently good. Pass rates for NVQ level 3 complementary therapies are poor at 10 percentage points below national averages. However, these have improved over the last three years.

56. Students demonstrate skills of a higher standard than expected for the level and time they have been on their courses. Students' portfolios are well ordered with a comprehensive range of evidence to support assessment decisions and they show a good understanding of key concepts. Most students display good standards of practical skills and are encouraged to attempt difficult treatments early in their course. In a practical lesson for combined hairdressing and beauty, students were carrying out a range of treatments in a commercially acceptable manner despite only being on the course for eight weeks. In a theory lesson for sports therapy, students were asked to produce a diet plan for a busy life style. They too had only been on the course for eight weeks, but were able to relate theory lessons to the practical task and produce some good diet options. High standards are achieved in holistic therapies. Two students have been successful in national competitions, winning first prize in their class for Indian head massage and complementary therapy and one was overall winner in all classes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	22	21	11*
		% retention	86	71	90*
		% pass rate	95	100	70*
Complementary therapies	2	No. of starts	23	47	193*
		% retention	83	91	87*
		% pass rate	79	84	84*
Beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	13	13	6*
		% retention	92	85	83*
		% pass rate	92	82	60*
Complementary therapies	3	No. of starts	24	39	148*
		% retention	75	72	89*

		% pass rate	56	64	79*
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Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* data supplied by the college

Quality of education and training

57. Most teaching and learning is good. The aims and objectives of the lessons are shared with students and revisited during the lesson to confirm that learning is taking place. Teachers work effectively with a wide range of abilities and use question and answer, discussion, demonstration and small group work well to promote learning. There is a good rapport between teachers and students, which develops students' confidence and motivation. Demonstration techniques are well developed. Clear explanations relate theory to practice and students are encouraged to practise what has been demonstrated immediately after to reinforce learning. Teachers use commercial examples to illustrate key points. In a practical lesson for first-year hairdressing students, the teacher demonstrated a layered cut and maintained a continuous running commentary to explain the reasons for the angles and techniques being used. Reference was made to timings and pressure within busy salons and the need to ensure accuracy at all times. In less effective lessons, students are being taught at the wrong level. For example, a level 1 group was being taught the theory of perming, which is not part of the NVQ level 1 criteria. Most students are actively involved in both theory and practical lessons. Teachers make good use of question and answer techniques to draw out knowledge and check on learning. Students' responses to questions indicate good levels of understanding. In a theory lesson for NVQ level 2 sports therapy, students were involved in a quiz. They were all able to give clear, appropriate answers quickly and demonstrate that they had understood the complex anatomy relating to fitness techniques. There is constructive feedback by teachers on beauty and sports therapy assignments and in hairdressing and beauty therapy practical lessons.

58. Internal verification systems ensure a standardised approach to assessment and set action points for improvement. Internal observations of teaching and learning are included within the remit of internal verifiers to ensure assessment is seen as a means of influencing individual learning and lesson planning. Feedback from teachers on assignments in beauty and sports therapies is constructive and detailed. This enables students to see what has been missed or how they might improve the quality of their work. Initial assessment is carried out at the beginning of the course, which concentrates on basic and key skills ability. It does not measure practical skills, despite 80% of the course being practically based.

59. Group tutorials are timetabled weekly and focus on personal ability in relation to the wider key skills of working with others, improving own learning and problem solving. Portfolio building and action planning are key features in monitoring progress and setting targets for assessment. Good one-to-one support is given through individual tutorials during group tutorial lessons. However, there is a lack of privacy.

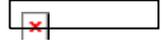
60. Teachers have good relevant commercial experience that enables them to put knowledge into context. Salons and practical areas are equipped to commercial standards to create a real working environment in hairdressing and beauty therapy. The commercial hair and beauty salon on the main site provides a real working environment in which students can work in an independent way to develop speed and dexterity. Some classrooms are being used for practical lessons and have slippery floors, leading to health and safety risks. Sports therapy accommodation is based in a local leisure centre. There are no dedicated classrooms for sports therapy courses.

Leadership and management

61. There is strong leadership and management. Teachers feel involved in the development of both the curriculum and the section and there is a team approach to management. Systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the area are understood

and clearly followed. There is a high reliance on part-time teachers who are also required to act as course tutors.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- outstanding pass and retention rates on the NVQ level 2 in early years and childcare education
- good pass rates on the access to health and social care course for adults
- good linking of theory to work practice
- purposeful, extensive community links
- students' good levels of interpersonal and vocational skills.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on CACHE diploma in childcare and education and AVCE in health and social care
- poor retention rates on GNVQ foundation and advanced level courses and the CACHE certificate
- students inadequately challenged in some lessons
- weak aspects of curriculum management.

Scope of provision

62. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time provision in childcare, and health and social care. Students are able to work towards NVQ, GNVQ, AVCE and CACHE awards and units accredited by the national OCN. Part-time day and evening courses are available. Students can enrol on some courses at several points in the year. Courses for employers and in community locations are available. In health and social care, students can progress from foundation level through to HE courses, employment or professional training. However, there is no foundation level provision in childcare. There are 147 students aged 16 to 18 and 17 adults enrolled on full-time courses, 2 learners on government-funded work-based training schemes and 9 foundation modern apprentices in training. Of the 212 part-time students, 96% are aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

63. The standards and pass rates students achieve are satisfactory. Most students complete their programmes and achieve their awards. There are some excellent, but also some very low retention and pass rates on some courses. Pass-rates on the NVQ level 2 in childcare and the CACHE certificate in childcare and education programmes are excellent. All of the students achieved their qualifications in 2002. Pass rates for adults on the NOCN access to health and social care course have improved from 79% in 1999 to 91% in 2002. Some pass rates are poor. On the CACHE diploma in childcare and education, pass rates have declined and are well below national average. On the AVCE course, pass rates are improving, but are still very poor. The proportions of students completing the CACHE diploma in childcare and the NVQ level 2 in care are above national averages. Retention rates on the CACHE certificate programme and the GNVQ foundation course have declined to below national averages. The retention rate on the AVCE has declined and is very low, at 40%. Attendance in the lessons observed during the inspection was 75%, against the national average of 80%.

64. Most students demonstrate knowledge and understanding appropriate for the level of course. They develop high levels of vocational skills. Childcare students and foundation modern apprentices demonstrate very good interpersonal and vocational skills in the workplace. One modern apprentice who had received good health and safety training suggested ways that a care home could advertise first aiders' duty rotas. The suggestion was incorporated into practice for the home. Another apprentice demonstrated how to promote clients' rights through offering clients choices to encourage them to make their own decisions. Childcare students are involved in assessing and recording children's development in nurseries.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	7	20	17
		% retention	86	80	71
		% pass rate	67	38	75
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	22	28	25
		% retention	77	75	68
		% pass rate	53	76	100
NOCN access to health and social care	2	No. of starts	71	30	25
		% retention	89	73	89

		% pass rate	79	82	91
NVQ 2 early years care and education	2	No. of starts	12	**	25
		% retention	83	**	100
		% pass rate	80	**	100
GNVQ/AVCE advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	13	10	7
		% retention	54	50	40
		% pass rate	43	60	67
CACHE diploma child care and education	3	No. of starts	*	31	11
		% retention	*	84	100
		% pass rate	*	81	64
National diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	18	18	10
		% retention	78	67	80
		% pass rate	86	92	88

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

* course did not run

** data unavailable

The quality of teaching and learning

65. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. In the most effective lessons, teachers link theory to current work practices and make good use of students' experiences to reinforce learning. In an access to health and social care lesson, students used materials from their everyday lives to learn about a human cell's microstructure. A chef made a model using icing and a fruitcake. A gardener produced a liquid model contained in a transparent bag. Two weeks after the models had been made the students could remember the names and functions of each organelle within the cell. Teachers on the childcare courses used the charitable fundraising efforts of students to develop and assess key skills. In the less effective lessons, learning activities fail to motivate and challenge all students. Some worksheets do not have tasks that are sufficiently demanding for more able students.

66. Assessments are generally appropriate and fair. However, students do not always receive enough constructive feedback on their written work to help them to improve the standard of their work. Internal verification for NVQs is good, but it is not sufficiently rigorous on other courses. At times, it is just a countersigning of assessment decisions.

67. In a few lessons, teachers did not have sufficient expertise to teach the topics being studied. Learning resources, handouts and overhead transparencies are generally satisfactory.

68. Support for students is satisfactory. Students value the good personal support they receive from teachers and tutors. Learning support needs are assessed, but some students' support needs are not met. Tutorials are valued by students. However, tutors do not always set individual students clear targets to improve their learning. Work-based learners speak highly of the support they receive from training officers.

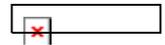
69. Community links are purposeful and extensive. Students have access to a wide range of work experience with a variety of client groups. The department is responsive to the needs of local employers. Effective community links have resulted in students' fundraising for the local children's hospice. As a result, the hospice has allowed students access to its sensory room and allowed the college to train health care assistants in the local hospital. Links in the

community have enabled the department successfully to target and recruit groups of students who do not usually enrol on FE courses.

Leadership and management

70. There are weak aspects of leadership and management. Quality assurance procedures do not focus sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching and student achievements. Course teams meet weekly, but full course reviews only take place in June. Students' feedback is sought regularly and issues raised are acted upon. There are no systematic arrangements to provide curriculum managers with information on the quality of teaching. Lesson observations, although planned, have not been carried out this academic year. There is no clear plan for training to improve teaching and learning. Some first-year and second-year student groups are jointly taught. The retention rate of students on these programmes is low.

Art design and media



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on full-time and part-time level 2 courses
- good progression to HE
- effective support and guidance for individual students
- well-developed practical skills.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on interior design and soft furnishing courses
- unsatisfactory retention rates on two-year vocational art and design courses
- much unsuitable accommodation
- inadequate resources in textile and print.

Scope of provision

71. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses attracting over 320 students. There are 111 students on full-time courses at GNVQ intermediate level, national diploma and pre-degree foundation levels. There is no provision at GNVQ foundation level for full-time students. Local people are being attracted to study on part-time courses. The part-time curriculum offers a range of creative studies including sugarcraft, interior design, upholstery, floristry, photography, patchwork and quilting. Approximately 200 students study part time. The department offers full-time and part-time HE courses. It has useful links with schools, community groups and employers. Taster courses are provided for local schools and students from one school take GCSE art.

Achievement and standards

72. Pass rates are satisfactory on advanced vocational full-time courses. Student achievement is good on the GNVQ intermediate art and design course with pass-rates significantly improved and above the national average in 2002. There is good achievement for adult students at level 1. In contrast, courses in soft furnishing and interior design have pass rates significantly below the national average. The retention rates on two-year, full-time vocational courses are mainly below the national average. There was a significant decline in retention rates on the national diploma in design in 2001, over the previous year. Retention rates are above the national average on part-time adult programmes.

73. Students demonstrate satisfactory practical skills. Portfolios demonstrate students'/learners' knowledge and skill in techniques and contain evidence of exploratory work and well-presented artwork. Students have good practical vocational skills in sugarcraft, patchwork quilting, textiles, mixed media, three dimension and ceramics. Photography students demonstrate good standards of technical and creative skill. Students studying advanced courses have underdeveloped skills in research and critical analysis. They are, however, developing their own ideas and individual styles. Students' skills and confidence in discussion and oral work are immature. Underpinning drawing skills are underdeveloped. The attendance rate is below the national average. Students progress at a satisfactory rate to other courses within the college, and progression to HE is good. For example, 93% of students completing advanced courses in the foundation diploma progressed to HE in 2001.

A sample of retention and pass rates in art design and media, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	*	14	14
		% retention	*	86	79
		% pass rate	*	67	82
City and Guilds 7802 creative skills interior design	2	No. of starts	27	24	26
		% retention	96	88	73
		% pass rate	100	81	58
City and Guilds 7802 creative skills soft furnishing	2	No. of starts	6	6	15
		% retention	83	100	87
		% pass rate	80	67	23
NOCN art and design	2	No. of starts	*	*	157
		% retention	*	*	90
		% pass rate	*	*	94
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	24	18	13
		% retention	67	61	69
		% pass rate	75	45	88
National diploma design	3	No. of starts	15	16	17
		% retention	67	81	65
		% pass rate	100	69	91
Foundation diploma art and design	3	No. of starts	12	15	18
		% retention	83	73	94
		% pass rate	80	90	88

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

74. Teaching is mainly satisfactory. In the better lessons, planning is thorough. The teaching is appropriately varied and extends the students' use of materials. Once students have developed basic understanding, they are given freedom to interpret ideas and explore their interests. In pottery, students built a clay form based on a poppy head. Each student was encouraged to develop an individual style and experiment with new techniques and materials. Many teachers use their experience as practising artists and designers to motivate students. In a media lesson, a teacher with recent experience of the advertising industry led a lively discussion which focused on current social issues, including drugs and homelessness, and their suitability for advertising campaigns. Teachers use visual aids and resources well to stimulate ideas and to link practical work with historical and contemporary aspects of art and design. In a visual studies lesson, for example, the teacher brought in personal sketchbooks. In less effective lessons, the needs of individual students are not identified in lesson plans. This leads to some inappropriate teaching methods being used. For example, in one session, students with poor reading skills were given written instructions on the blackboard. The teacher had low expectations, the students were not challenged by the task and became bored, the activities lacked variety and there was little stimulus. Teachers make insufficient checks to ensure that students are understanding and learning what they are being taught. They do not structure lessons to sustain interest and motivate students to do their best and improve their knowledge and skills. Teachers rely too heavily on secondary sources. In one art lesson, for example, students painted over photocopies. The quality of assessment is satisfactory and teachers provide regular feedback that enables students to improve their work.

75. The department has useful links with schools, community groups and employers. Taster courses are provided for local schools and students from one school take GCSE art. London museums are used for research. There is positive feedback from students who use field trips and visits as a basis for their work. A feature of sugarcraft courses is that students are often successful in winning national competitions. Media and graphics students benefit from links with the advertising industry and the recent industrial experience of some teachers. There are few opportunities for students to undertake work experience placements.

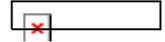
76. Resources are generally satisfactory in meeting the needs of intermediate programmes. However, they are insufficient to support advanced courses, particularly in textile and print. Second-year students who specialise in these areas are disadvantaged. They do not have access to weaving looms, knitting machines or screen-printing equipment. Much of the accommodation is unsuitable. The arrangements in the open-plan studio and the huts are incompatible with effective student learning. Although teachers use the open plan studio creatively, there is often noise and disruption from shared use. There is insufficient space for fine art students to work on a large scale. The huts are dreary, with poor light. They are often vandalised and provide an uninspiring environment for art students. Students have insufficient dedicated work areas. Housekeeping is poor and there are high levels of dust and untidy conditions in the three-dimensional studio. Technician support is good.

77. There is effective support for individual students. Teachers have a friendly, professional relationship with students. Students value the constructive help and support they receive which helps them to learn and improve the quality of their work. Full-time students have tutorials and appreciate regular meetings with their personal tutors. Students receive satisfactory careers guidance and specialist advice from teachers.

Leadership and management

78. There is supportive leadership and good communication. Teachers are enthusiastic and there is good teamwork. The regular meetings at section and course team level are improving practice. They focus on student progress, attendance and retention and pass rates, but central data are not yet used effectively in order to do this rigorously. Insufficient attention is paid to evaluating systematically the quality of teaching and learning in course reviews and self-assessment. The management of centralised and departmental timetables is poor.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on OCN courses in franchised ESOL provision
- good retention rates on ESOL provision.

Weaknesses

- poor planning to meet the individual needs of students
- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- weak assessment practices
- deficiencies in management.

Scope of provision

79. During the week of inspection, there were 4 discrete basic skills classes in the college and 2 in the community, with a total of 17 enrolments. There were 5 discrete ESOL classes at the college and 1 class in an outreach centre, with 31 enrolments. All of the students were adults. Most of the franchised ESOL provision, with 240 full-time enrolments and 90 part-time enrolments, was not inspected, because the centres where the classes are run were closed for Ramadan. Inspectors were only able to see a class at one centre that did not close. During 2000/01, there were 259 referrals for additional learning support. At the time of the inspection, 163 students were receiving additional learning support and 22 were on the

waiting list. Inspectors looked at lessons across all aspects of provision, including programmes for students with learning difficulties, and considered evidence from other inspectors about the quality of key skills provision.

Achievement and standards

80. The pass rates for ESOL franchised provision for 2000/01 were good. Data available to date for 2001/02, for this provision, show good achievement for the OCN level 1 awards. Rates of retention have been good for the last two years on all ESOL provision. Across all aspects of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision, the identification of students' learning needs and targets are unsystematic and poorly documented. The standards of work on the majority of key skills courses are satisfactory. There are no mechanisms for evaluating the added value of additional support. There are no significant differences between the achievements of students aged 16 to 18 and students aged 19 or over on college courses.

Quality of education and training

81. The planning of teaching and learning is poor. Across all aspects of the provision, the planning does not address the individual needs of students in relation to developing their literacy, numeracy and language skills. There were no schemes of work or lesson plans for three classes. Where there are schemes of work, they often do not specify any developmental activities. Some lesson plans do not contain any learning objectives. There is much unsatisfactory teaching. In too many classes, the focus is on whole class teaching that does not take account of the diverse abilities of the students. There are very few examples of adequate development of literacy, numeracy and language skills. In the best discrete, basic skills class, the teacher successfully integrated IT skills into individual literacy project work, and one student was developing numeracy skills by researching the workings of a car engine, using the Internet. Key skills teachers in some areas, for example, care and sport and leisure, satisfactorily integrate communication and application of number skills into the students' vocational work. Teachers do not make sufficient checks during lessons or support sessions to find out if students are understanding and learning. There are very few examples of students being involved in evaluating or recording what they have learned. Exceptions to this were two classes where students were encouraged to reflect and comment on each other's effectiveness in developing oral skills through role-play or presentations.

82. Most staff teaching on college courses have a teaching qualification. Two learning support staff are qualified at a higher level to teach and assess students with specific learning difficulties. One teacher has a diploma in teaching English as a second language. However, most staff have only a minimum level basic skills or ESOL qualification. Learning is adversely affected by staffing shortages. In a few cases, the accommodation is inappropriate. In one ESOL lesson, students were unable to see the teacher or the whiteboard and the cramped conditions prevented the use of meaningful, communicative learning activities. It is difficult for wheelchair users to gain access to the learning support centre. The level of lighting in the learning support area is low. Across the provision, learning materials are of poor quality and often not matched to students' vocational or personal needs.

83. Assessment practices are weak. There is scant mention of the skills development required for literacy, numeracy and language development on individual learning plans, and no reference to results of the learning styles questionnaire completed by students. The monitoring and reviewing of students' progress are not systematic and are generally unsatisfactory. It is not always clear whether the primary role of the additional support staff, working with students below level 2, is to help those students to complete their primary learning goal by assisting them in the completion of assignments, or to help them to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills. On programmes for students with learning difficulties, some students evaluate their own learning at the end of lessons, using checklists. However, these checklists relate mainly to student behaviour with minimal reference to specific literacy, numeracy or language skills. On discrete ESOL courses,

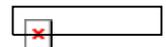
teachers mark students' work satisfactorily and provide helpful feedback during lessons.

84. In order to increase the take-up of additional learning support, the initial screening programme has been extended to all students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses and the results of the key skills diagnostic tests are also used to identify those at entry level. These measures have not been entirely successful. Because of staff shortages, not all of those identified have yet been offered support. There is a waiting list of 22 students for additional learning support. Those identified through key skills diagnostic arrangements as requiring support are not all receiving it.

Leadership and management

85. There are deficiencies in curriculum management. There is no whole college strategy for improving students' skills, although there are plans to address this. There has been a very slow response to the national strategy for basic skills. Following visits from the basic skills quality initiative facilitator in 2001, an action plan was developed and subsequently updated. However, few of the actions have been implemented and there is little awareness of the document amongst staff. A few teachers have attended training relating to the national strategy, but this has had little impact on practice. Aspects of provision are managed by different teams, and there is little cross-college co-ordination to ensure that staff resources are deployed effectively. For example, there are very low numbers of students on discrete courses, but there is a waiting list for additional support. There is little sharing of good practice across the college.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- good teamwork in lessons between teachers and support staff
- effective use made of work placement for skills and knowledge development
- very good progression.

Weaknesses

- insufficient balance between development of vocational and behavioural skills
- insufficient internal and external accreditation

- lack of challenge in some lessons.

Scope of provision

86. There are approximately 100 students on discrete courses for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, lasting between one and three years and including the Pathways and Step Up. Within these programmes, students study a core of literacy and numeracy and additional courses, including the basic food hygiene certificate and vocational options such as care, motor vehicle, car valeting, art and design, cooking, sport and recreation and IT. There are further options designed to develop personal skills that include music, drama, dance and fitness. Students gain work experience through the running of a coffee shop within the college and through work placements in retail shops, a garden centre and similar experiences. The college runs courses for students who have profound learning difficulties in four day centres. A small number of students take the Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) young enterprise certificate for starting and running a small enterprise for a short period.

Achievement and standards

87. Retention and pass rates are good, with about 90% of students retained in 2002. Most students progress satisfactorily, with about two thirds of those leaving in 2002 taking up jobs in the retail and service sector and the remainder moving on to higher levels of FE. A small number lack sufficient confidence to move on completely and they take up parts of other vocational courses, whilst also remaining on the Pathways programme. Students successfully improve their interpersonal and behavioural skills in speaking and listening, helping others, greeting people correctly and showing the ability to follow instructions. Some vocational skills such as customer care, safe working in kitchens and good time management are also developed. However, these are not adequately assessed. Student attainment is generally good, with students showing improved behaviour and being better able to benefit from the more vocational aspects of the course. Students make good use of work experience opportunities, working, for example, in a garden centre and a supermarket. They develop a good understanding of the workplace and the pressures associated with a real work environment. Within the college, students run the coffee shop effectively preparing refreshments, serving customers and keeping the area clean. They wear a uniform with pride.

Quality of education and training

88. Most of the teaching is satisfactory. Schemes of work have been improved since the last inspection to include the topics to be taught along with a useful list of the activities to be used to develop and assess the students' behavioural objectives. Teachers prepare lessons carefully based on the students' individual behaviour skills requirements identified in their learning plans. Lesson plans detail the individual objectives. During lessons, teachers and support workers observe students and give regular feedback. However, in most lessons, the objectives are limited to behavioural objectives. Insufficient emphasis is put on identifying and assessing the development of students' vocational skills. This results in students being unclear about how competent they are in the skills required in the vocational areas in order to help them to make progress into appropriate employment or FE. Some of the students' vocational skills are certificated through external accreditation, such as the basic food hygiene certificate. However, there are insufficient success criteria against which other vocational skills can be assessed. In only a few lessons, are vocational skills carefully identified and assessed. In one good lesson, students were asked open questions about bacteria and how they could be destroyed during cooking. Students measured the temperature at different places within a basin of mashed potato and were surprised to find

several degrees of variation. They then worked in groups to identify insects and other pests which might be found in a kitchen. The students learnt a lot from the discussion. The teaching and assessment of behavioural skills are good, with teachers and support staff working well as a team to observe, assess and give feedback. They intervene quickly when students display inappropriate behaviour and carefully record their assessments for student reviews each term. A few lessons lack challenge and do not take into account the age of the students and their previous experience, expecting them to undertake simple activities which fail to excite and motivate them. Although some classrooms contain computers, few opportunities are taken in option subjects to develop ICT skills.

89. When on work placement in a supermarket, students work in pairs and accurately follow the instructions of their supervisor. One group prepared an attractive display of fresh fruit that was seen when customers first entered the shop. The students were highly motivated and maintained high standards of customer care, making friendly approaches when speaking to customers. The development of these skills was assessed by the college staff and supermarket supervisors. The supervisors spoke highly of the improvement in students' skills in a short period of time.

90. Teachers are vocationally qualified and are teacher trained, although few have specific training in the teaching of students with learning difficulties. There has been recent staff development in making the best use of teaching and learning styles using ICT, and in the teaching of basic skills. However, this training has yet to have an impact on the teaching. Most student support staff are adequately qualified and have classroom assistant qualifications, some of which are in special educational needs. Students on fitness programmes make good use of the library and Internet to research, in their own time, information to be shared with other students.

91. During an extended induction, teachers effectively assess the skills of students on entry to help them to choose appropriate options and prepare individualised learning plans. Within the individual learning plans, there is too much emphasis on the development of behaviour skills and too little on the vocational skills which students need to develop. There is also inadequate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy. There are good links with parents who attend regular open events and receive formal reports twice a year.

Leadership and management

92. Teachers, support staff and curriculum managers work well together. Managers set clear targets for student progress. Teachers and support staff meet weekly to discuss student progress and curriculum improvements. The college has effective links with a number of local secondary and special schools, which helps students transfer easily from school to college. Staff work closely with social services and speech and language specialists in four day centres to support students with profound learning difficulties, although the students' improvement is slow. Programme options have tough recruitment, retention and pass rate targets for all new subjects taught in outside centres. All staff are involved in the quality assurance of their courses and undertake annual course reviews which they use to prepare the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report for 2002 is generally accurate. However, insufficient use is made of data on retention and pass rates or comparisons with provision in similar colleges. Managers have failed to place sufficient emphasis on matching the behavioural skills developments with vocational skills which prepare students for the world of work or FE. The college stopped running externally accredited courses following the last inspection (1999), which effectively removed the formal and focused assessment of vocational skills.

Part D: College data

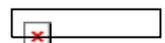


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	31	53
2	43	21
3	18	9
4/5	0	1
Other	8	16
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	375	584	8
Land-based provision	0	23	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	56	62	1
Business administration, management and professional	288	1,697	17
Information and communication technology	574	3,186	33
Retailing, customer service and transportation	20	63	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	112	181	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	73	289	3
Health, social care and public services	317	767	9
Visual and performing arts and media	175	423	5
Humanities	40	364	4
English, languages and communication	236	84	3
Foundation programmes	360	1,163	13

Total	2,626	8,886	100
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Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	499	652	407	756	719	1,323
	Retention rate (%)	77	85	86	77	83	94
	National average (%)	81	80	79	79	79	77
	Pass rate (%)	57	47	57	57	72	63
	National average (%)	60	65	69	61	65	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	491	476	639	708	626	850
	Retention rate (%)	75	76	80	80	83	90
	National average (%)	76	77	76	80	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	60	49	39	63	63	56
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	70
3	Starters excluding transfers	404	349	460	451	465	383
	Retention rate (%)	66	72	71	79	77	87
	National average (%)	75	76	78	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	70	60	54	57	55	51
	National average (%)	73	75	77	63	66	70

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 and tertiary colleges).

Sources of information:

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

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

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	44	52	4	54
Level 2 (intermediate)	46	39	15	46
Level 1 (foundation)	42	42	16	26
Other sessions	42	49	9	32
Totals	44	45	11	158

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