



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Dudley College of Technology

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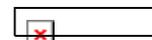
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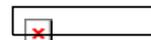
Basic information about the college



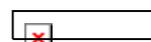
Name of college:	Dudley College of Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education/Tertiary College
Principal:	Jeanne E Harding
Address of college:	The Broadway Dudley West Midlands DY1 4AS
Telephone number:	01384 363000
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Chair of governors:	Eric Stott

Unique reference number: 130475
Name of reporting inspector: Alan Warrington
Dates of inspection: 1-11 March 2004

Part A: Summary

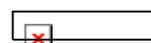


Information about the college



Dudley College of Technology is one of the largest general further education (FE) colleges in the country. It is situated in the town of Dudley close to the border with Sandwell. Dudley is a large metropolitan borough with a population of 305,164 in the heart of the Black Country and covering 38 square miles on the south-east edge of the West Midlands region of England. The borough is predominantly urban in character, although approximately 25% of it is open space. The proportion of Dudley's minority ethnic origin residents was 6.32% (2001 census). The southern and western fringes of the borough are relatively affluent, while around a quarter of Dudley's wards are among the most deprived nationally. Dudley is ranked at 142 out of 354 districts in the Indices of Deprivation 2000 comparison. The average gross weekly income in Dudley is the lowest in the Black Country and significantly lower than the regional average. The college has four campuses close to the town centre, a further site in the neighbouring township of Rowley Regis in Sandwell and a facility at Longbridge providing for a vehicle manufacturing workforce. Courses are also provided at community venues throughout Dudley and Sandwell, reflecting the college's commitment to widening participation. The college has plans to renovate existing accommodation and is currently considering options for its Rowley Regis site within the developing Sandwell 14-to-19 plan. The college provides programmes in all areas of learning identified by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), apart from land-based provision. The areas of learning with the largest numbers are engineering, information technology (IT), and health and social care. Courses are provided from entry level to level 5 in most areas of learning. The college provides a wide range of learning in the community and has a large work-based learning programme. During 2002/03, there were 36,154 students, of whom 28,293 were on LSC-funded programmes; of these 84% were aged over 19, 30% of minority ethnic origin and 57% from widening participation postcodes. Some 78% of students were following FE courses with 20% of these enrolled on full-time courses and the remaining 80% on part-time courses.

How effective is the college?



and performing arts, and travel and tourism. It is satisfactory in a further nine curriculum areas and unsatisfactory in construction, hospitality and sports and literacy and numeracy. The work-based learning provision is unsatisfactory in construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy and health and social care.

Key strengths

- responsiveness to community needs

- range of courses to widen participation

- extensive and effective partnerships

- good advice and guidance

- individual support for students

- good retention rates for students aged 16 to 19

- good success rates on level 1 courses

- promotion of equality of opportunity.

What should be improved

- the implementation of quality assurance and internal verification

- the effectiveness of curriculum management across the college

- the pass rates of modern apprentices

- the use of data on students' prior attainments and results for course planning and target setting

- the quality of teaching and learning

- the uptake of literacy, numeracy and language support

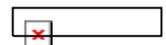
- the effectiveness of individual learning plans

- the success rates of adults on level 3 courses

- aspects of accommodation.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Retention rates on general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses are high, but pass rates in mathematics at advanced subsidiary level (AS level) and in physics are low. Science and mathematics resources are good, but some laboratories are inadequate. There is some challenging GCE A-level teaching and IT is used effectively in mathematics and physics lessons. A wide range of courses meets the needs of students.
Construction	Unsatisfactory. Leadership and management of construction are inadequate. Retention and pass rates on many courses are low. Teaching is generally satisfactory and some is poor. Teaching resources are good except for electrical installation.

Engineering technology and manufacture	Satisfactory. High pass rates on college-based courses. Poor planning and teaching of key skills. The college has developed a wide range of partnerships. There is inadequate co-ordination of some programmes.
Business administration, management and professional	Satisfactory. There is an extensive range of provision that widens participation and aids progression. There are high pass rates on some business and finance courses. There are low pass rates on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) foundation, AS-level business, and the certificate in supervisory management. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates in GNVQ intermediate are excellent, while pass rates on level 3 courses are low. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but in some lessons teaching is uninspiring. Individual support for students is good. Students' progress in most local learning centres is not effectively monitored.
Retail, customer service and transport	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on most programmes. Teaching and learning are good. National vocational qualification (NVQ) assessment is well planned and carried out. There are poor advice and guidance for some students.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Unsatisfactory. The standards of achievement on sports programmes, teaching and learning on vocational sports programmes, assessment of sports courses and curriculum management are unsatisfactory. There is poor accommodation. Travel and tourism is good with high retention and pass rates and good teaching and learning.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on most courses. Retention rates are low on NVQ level 2 courses. Teaching is satisfactory and the teaching of key skills is good. There are good facilities and student support. There is poor internal verification, target setting and reviews. There are an insufficient number of clients in practical classes for students to work on.
Health, social care and public services	Satisfactory. Pass and retention rates are satisfactory with some poor pass rates for 2003. Teachers link theory to practice well and use resources effectively to support learning. Support for students is good, but targets for improvement and achievement are poorly recorded and monitored.
Visual and performing arts	Good. Pass rates are high on most courses. Most teaching is good. A wide range of courses offer good progression opportunities. There are impressive purpose-built accommodation and specialist resources that are conducive to learning. In 2003, there were low retention rates on a significant minority of courses.
Humanities	Satisfactory. There is inconsistent performance across the subjects in both retention and pass rates. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but a few lessons are dull and uninspiring. All programmes are well planned with teaching resources of a high quality. However, there is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) and access to IT; and there are weaknesses in the management of the curriculum.
English language	Satisfactory. Student pass rates are high on advanced courses, but low on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses. There is good monitoring of student attendance and progress. Teachers give effective support to help students with coursework. Teaching is satisfactory, but few lessons are stimulating. English is not well co-ordinated across the college.

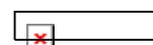
English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Students benefit from good initial and diagnostic assessment and teaching and learning which is stimulating. Students gain from developing their language skills. Attendance is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient reviewing and monitoring of individual students' learning and progress. Co-ordination of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) across the college is unsatisfactory.
Literacy and numeracy	Unsatisfactory. Most teaching is satisfactory, but is unsatisfactory in key skills provision. The provision for students with literacy and numeracy needs across the college is inadequate. Student learning programmes are poorly planned and the co-ordination of foundation programmes is ineffective. There are some good initiatives to widen participation and develop basic skills provision and support for those returning to education is effective.

How well is the college led and managed?



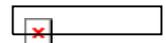
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior management provides strong and supportive leadership. Staff at all levels have recently been extensively consulted on the future direction and the vision of the college. The college is well supported by its governing body. Governors bring a wide range of skills and experiences to the college. Formal links for meetings between staff and governors are beginning to take place. Governors have not effectively monitored their own performance to date. The college's strong features are its responsiveness to local needs and its commitment to widen participation. The college has a significant number of franchised students from the Black Country and in the Birmingham and Solihull area. Management of work-based programmes is poor. Data on retention and pass rates are unreliable and there is no over-arching strategy to resolve very poor completion rates on the modern apprenticeship programmes. A weakness identified in the last inspection report related to insufficient thoroughness and consistency in quality assurance processes. This weakness has not been resolved and there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of course reviews, the use of management information by course teams and in the co-ordination of course management and self-assessment in many areas. A college strength is the way it promotes and sustains equal opportunities. Equal opportunity is part of all staff and students' induction. There is continuing staff development on specific issues, for example, on the amendments to the Race Relations Amendment Act and the requirements of the new legislation on the Special Educational Needs Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). The financial management and control is satisfactory. The finance team is most effective, well resourced and experienced. Budget holders receive good support from the finance team. Budgeting is prudent and the college has been in financial category A since incorporation. Value for money is generally assured through the deployment of staff and resources.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



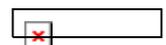
been effective in widening participation and encouraging students who are not traditionally represented in FE to take up education and training opportunities. Collaboration with other providers of education and training, employers, social and public services and voluntary organisations is effective. The college is an active partner in the Dudley Life Long Learning Partnership, with representation on numerous groups tackling specific issues arising from Lifelong Learning discussions. Community-based courses are offered in venues around the region. The college has responded well to the needs of people in the local community whose first language is not English. A multilingual guidance worker is employed. ESOL courses are provided in a range of community venues. Family learning is available in many schools around the area. There are very effective links with schools. An active programme to support disaffected young people is well established. The college is fulfilling its duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act. It has approved a race equality policy and an action plan that is being implemented. There has been staff development to support the action plan. The college has assessed its accommodation against the SENDA criteria and developed an action plan. Support for students is comprehensive, although systems to ensure take up of learning support are ineffective. There is a good range of help for personal, financial, domestic, childcare, transport and health problems that allow students to stay in education. Child protection measures have been in place for over six years. Student diaries given at induction clearly outline the protection all students, including those aged over 18, can expect.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are mainly good. Initial assessment is satisfactory, although information in individual learning plans is often incomplete and its use in planning inadequate. Access to specific learning support is insufficiently monitored to ensure students take up the support offered. The management of additional support services is fragmented and unclear. Induction is satisfactory with full-time students completing a four-day induction. All students are given a high-quality student handbook with comprehensive information on support services. Pastoral support is good with very good medical and counselling services. The tutorial system is used well to support individual students. Specific basic skills about how to get and keep a job are also given in tutorials as well as help with specific tasks like filling in applications for university. Student services are used well to ensure students have high-quality careers advice.

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

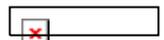
- friendly and supportive teachers

- good atmosphere at the college
- good specialist resources in some curriculum areas
- the courses leading to appropriate qualifications
- flexible arrangements for teaching of some courses
- helpful learning resource centre staff
- often good library resources.

What they feel could be improved

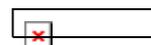
- sport and recreational facilities including social areas
- food and vending machine prices
- security at some sites
- quality and accessibility of computers
- some tutorial activities.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



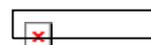
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & 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	52	39	9
19+ and WBL*	61	32	7
Learning 16-18	51	40	9
19+ and WBL*	56	36	8

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

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Most retention rates are at, or above, the national average from 2000 to 2002. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 are above the national average over the three-year period at all levels. However, while the retention rates of adults are at, or above the national average for most qualifications they have declined to well below the national average for levels 2 and 3 and higher qualifications in 2002. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have been at, or well above, the national average at all levels of qualification. Most pass rates for adults are at, or just above, the national average for the three-year period. In 2002, all levels had at least satisfactory pass rates.

2. There are good standards of work and well-developed practical skills in several curriculum areas. Generally, students' work in retailing, customer service and transportation is good and to a high industrial standard. Some students' work is outstanding in glass work, which is part of visual arts, and demonstrates high levels of skill and technical understanding. Good use is made of students' work placement experiences in health and care; in one case this resulted in students providing an

effective care plan for elderly people. Most travel and tourism students demonstrate high levels of ability and knowledge of their industry. However, students of all ages and at all levels show low standards of attainment in lessons in many areas of learning. Some students in construction fail to understand basic methods of construction and are unable to solve simple problems. Fitness training principles, critical evaluation methods, and understanding of safety hazards in sport, are poorly understood and not used in practical activities by sports students. In literacy and numeracy lessons, students have poor verbal skills. Many key skills lessons fail to resolve the individual needs of students; they find the work either too easy or too difficult.

3. At level 3, pass rates are high for GCE A-level law, sociology and history and GCE A2 English language, but are well below the national average in physics, AS-level mathematics and GCSE mathematics and English language. There are high pass rates on GNVQ intermediate courses in information and communications technology (ICT), travel and tourism, and health and social care. Pass rates are high on NVQs in engineering, retail and customer service and transport, but low for construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and sports. The use of data on students' prior learning is not well established in the college.

4. In 2003, the success rate, the proportion of enrolled students who achieve the qualification, for the key skills of application of number, communications and ICT, was 30%. The rate in 2002 was higher at 39%. These success rates are low, but similar to the rate for the sector as a whole. The retention rate in 2003, at 74%, was satisfactory, reflecting the adequate retention rates in the college for students' main qualifications. The pass rate, at 53%, is much better than that found in similar colleges.

5. The average attendance rate in the lessons observed was 75.3%. This is the same as the national average attendance in lessons observed in similar colleges in the period 2001 to 2003. Attendance was highest, over 83%, in literacy and numeracy, and lowest, at just over 64%, in retailing, customer service and transportation, and in hair and beauty.

16 to 18 year olds

6. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 are at, or above, the national average over the four-year period at all levels from 2000 to 2003. In 2003, retention rates at level 3 improved significantly, placing the college in the top 25% of colleges in comparison with the 2002 retention rates for similar colleges.

7. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have been at, or well above, the national average at all levels of qualification over the last four years. In 2002, level 1 pass rates were high, but declined in 2003 to the national average. Levels 2 and 3 pass rates have remained constant at the national average from 2000 to 2003.

8. Success rates, the proportion of enrolled students who achieve their qualification, were high at level 1 from 2000 to 2002, but declined to just below the national average in 2003. At level 2, for three years until 2003, the success rates were satisfactory, but they declined to below the national average in 2003. Level 3 success rates have improved and have been good for the last two years. Success rates on short courses have been high for the last four years.

Adult learners

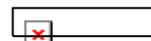
9. Retention rates are at, or above, the national average in most levels and qualifications. In 2003, there was a substantial improvement over 2002 with retention rates at level 3 being just below the national average.

10. All pass rates for adults are at, or above, the national average for the four-year period from 2000 to 2003. In 2003, pass rates for adult students were high at levels 1 and 2, placing the college in the top 10% of similar colleges. Level 3 pass rates were at the national average for 2003. In the past two years, pass rates have improved at all levels except in higher education (HE) courses where there was a slight fall to the national average in 2003.

11. Success rates are high at level 1 for the past four years. From 2000 to 2002, level 2 success rates were low, placing the college in the bottom 25% of colleges but improved well to the national average in 2003. In the past four years, success rates at level 3 are poor placing the college in the bottom 10% of colleges. Success rates in HE have fluctuated around the national average in recent years. Success rates in short courses have been good for the last four years.

12. The college has 728 work-based learners, of whom 148 are advanced modern apprentices, 474 are foundation modern apprentices and 106 are on NVQ courses. The areas of learning include construction, engineering, business administration and management, ICT, health and care, hairdressing and beauty therapy, retail, and hospitality, sports and recreation, visual and performing arts. The completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor in all areas of learning in the past four years. Of the 728 apprentices who have started a foundation modern apprenticeship at the college since 2000, 59% are still on the course. Of those who have left the course, 5% achieved the full framework; and 36% did not gain the full framework. Of the 162 apprentices who have started an advanced modern apprenticeship since 2000, 54% are still on the course. Of those who have left, 10% achieved the full framework, and 36% did not gain the full framework. The completion of work-based NVQs is also poor. Of the 185 students who started a work-based NVQ at the college since 2000, 33% are still on the programme. Of those who have left the programme, 12% achieved the award; and 55% did not gain the NVQ.

Quality of education and training



13. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 263 lessons covering 14 curriculum areas and work-based learning provision in 5 areas. Teaching was good or better in 56% of these lessons, satisfactory in 36% and less than satisfactory in 8%. Learning was good or better in 56% of lessons, satisfactory in 36% and unsatisfactory in 8%. This grade profile is below the national average for general FE colleges. Teaching and learning were better for adults than for students aged 16 to 18. The highest proportion of good teaching was observed on level 3 programmes, with 62% good or better and the lowest on level 1 with 38% good or better.

14. Consistently good teaching was observed in retailing, customer service and transportation and in visual and performing arts where over 75% of lessons were graded good or better. The weakest teaching was in construction, engineering, business and professional studies and sports programmes.

15. There were some good lessons in all curriculum areas inspected, but too much teaching was only satisfactory. In the lessons that were good or better, detailed schemes of work and careful lesson planning with clear learning objectives ensured that the teaching took into account the range of individual needs and the learning activities interested and motivated the students. There were examples of good attention to individual learning needs in lessons in travel and ESOL. In performing arts, there was imaginative teaching that created realistic vocational settings and good use was made of audio-visual stimuli to encourage creativity and interest the students. In retailing lessons, lively and stimulating discussions enabled students to use and share their current occupational expertise and provided opportunities for students to participate in the learning. On travel courses, a well-planned range of activities including discussion and debates on relevant current affairs topics provided interest and motivation. In these lessons, there was good planning to ensure that the needs of individual students were met. Several curriculum areas including English, humanities and retail used high-quality supportive learning packs and workbooks covering a range of topics to help meet individual learning needs. There was effective use of information and ILT in science, retail and ESOL, but in many curriculum areas there was insufficient use of ILT in situations where it would have improved learning. There was effective linking of theory to practice in health and social care, hair and beauty, construction and engineering. Practical activities were used well to stimulate interest in mathematics, science, performing arts and childcare. Many of the lessons for adults carefully developed their confidence, took account of previous educational experiences and

extended their learning well.

16. In the best lessons on vocational courses, teachers planned well to ensure that effective use was made of their own industrial expertise and students' experiences in industry and the workplace to illustrate the theory being covered. Students were interested and motivated. This was particularly evident in retail and hairdressing. In hairdressing, the on-the-job training for work-based students met individual training needs and covered a wide range of relevant practical skills. In the best examples of practical work on vocational courses, tasks and timings were clearly defined, made relevant to the students and supervision was unobtrusive but supportive. However, in some practical lessons, students' techniques went uncorrected; in others, the range of activities was narrow. In some lessons, the tasks set, although giving opportunities for students to practise appropriate skills, were insufficiently interesting to enthuse the students.

17. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers failed to take sufficient account of the individual needs of students and there were examples of this in business, ICT, health and social care and humanities. There was frequently insufficient use of students' individual learning plans in planning lessons to ensure that learning needs were fully met. In some lessons, the activities, tasks and time limits set were not demanding enough for the students, while in others there was a failure to match teaching and handouts with students' abilities and prior attainment. Some teachers failed to use group tasks well to consolidate students' learning. There were examples of students not being sufficiently challenged in lessons in construction, business, care, sport and fine art. In other lessons, an insufficient variety in the teaching and learning activities had an adverse effect on students' interest and motivation. In a small minority of lessons, the pace of students' learning was slow and went unchecked, particularly when there was excessive copying from whiteboards. A feature of a number of unsatisfactory lessons was the failure of teachers to make regular checks on students' learning.

18. The teaching of key skills varied considerably between curriculum areas where there were some good lessons and others where key skills lessons failed to motivate students. The college policy is to integrate key skills with students' other courses. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, and construction, key skills were carefully integrated with assignments and group activities. On public services courses, opportunities were taken to assess the broader key skills through outward-bound activities. Not enough effort was made by many teachers to identify and gather evidence for key skills through assignments and activities in lessons. In several support lessons for key skills, there was too wide a range of ability levels in the class and the class sizes were too large for the teachers to successfully meet the needs of all the students.

19. Overall, the equipment and learning resources in the college are satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory for many students. Three of the seven centres used by the college have drab or inadequate accommodation. The college is aware of the shortcomings of its accommodation and has an appropriate accommodation refurbishment programme. The newly refurbished rooms are well decorated and furnished with relevant wall displays. Students' artwork is used well to enhance the corridors and the reception areas. Most of the buildings at the Broadway campus are effectively maintained and well equipped. Other accommodation is less effective. For example, teaching takes place in pre-fabricated buildings at the Rowley Regis centre. The refectory, cafeteria and communal areas are well used. Access to most buildings at the Broadway campus is good for students with restricted mobility and other physical disabilities. However, Castle View and Rowley Regis campuses do not yet meet the requirements of the SENDA. For example, access to upper floor classrooms is poor for those with restricted mobility at these sites.

20. The library at the main site is well stocked with sufficient books, software packages, and research and project materials to support students' learning. Liaison between library staff and most curriculum areas is good. However, library facilities at Castle View and Mons Hill are insufficient.

21. Most teachers are academically well qualified, have relevant vocational expertise and are appropriately matched to the courses on which they teach. A satisfactory proportion of teachers have appropriate teaching qualifications. The college employs 516 full-time equivalent teachers. There are 260 full-time and 36 part-time teachers on fractional contacts. The college also employs 220 hourly paid part-time teaching staff.

22. Arrangements for staff development are generally satisfactory. Priorities for staff development are identified through the strategic-planning and self-assessment processes. A professional development centre with expert support, teaching resources and computer workstations provides good additional facilities to all teachers. However, a significant proportion of staff have not received an annual review of their development needs.

23. A three-year replacement cycle ensures IT workstations reflect workplace standards. Access to computers for students outside their timetabled lessons is adequate. The availability of ILT and resources are generally good. Many classrooms are suitably equipped with teaching aids, data projector and interactive whiteboard. The college has a strategy in place to promote online learning across all areas of the college. However, progress towards this has been slow. Students do not have adequate access to network storage space. Only 10% of full-time students have individual access to the network.

24. In accountancy and humanities there are some good assessment practices. They are thoroughly and effectively carried out. Planning of assessments is also good in hair and beauty, science and mathematics and leisure and tourism. Practice and planning are satisfactory elsewhere. Most students are aware of assessment requirements. However, humanities and ICT students do not receive sufficiently clear assessment schedules.

25. The quality of feedback given to students following assessments varies, but for most students it is clear and effectively given. Staff development activity has already taken place or is planned. Most teachers give thorough, timely and particularly developmental feedback to students on their work indicating how it can be improved. Tutorials are used to review and monitor progress. In most curriculum areas, results are recorded on a spreadsheet which can be used to anticipate grades. Results are also recorded in course files. Students can monitor their own progress on individual wall charts.

26. The internal verification and moderation procedures are satisfactory in all but work-based learning in hair and beauty and construction. In these areas, there is little ongoing internal verification and insufficient forward planning. The college has recently improved the assessment procedures for all programmes of study. External verification reports are analysed effectively. Course teams are required to respond to any concerns raised and take action in a timely way. Heads of division sample work formally once a year. Any actions are fully recorded and reviewed to ensure remedial work is completed. In addition, the quality department issues a list of students each year to be sampled centrally.

27. All full-time students do initial assessment at the start of their studies to identify any additional learning needs and to plan an appropriate programme of work. The college has recently introduced a computer-based system for diagnosing students' needs. There is inconsistency in recording the results of this assessment. Many students who are identified as needing support do not then subsequently receive it. The college is aware of this weakness and is restructuring to enable more systematic support to be put in place. Initial assessment for English and languages, hair and beauty, and humanities is effective in identifying students additional support needs. For foundation students, the results of initial assessment are taken into account when drawing up individual learning plans. Some part-time students receive an assessment for their literacy, numeracy and vocational needs at the start of their course. For a few work-based learners, vocational aptitude tests are not effective in identifying their needs.

28. There is ineffective setting of targets both on individual learning plans and in many reviews. This affects most curriculum areas. Many areas fail to set adequately specific and measurable short-term goals. There are inconsistencies in how targets are set both in the curriculum area and across the college. Students in some areas are not sufficiently clear about their progress. In ESOL and literacy and numeracy, students are usually fully involved in the planning of learning but targets again lack sufficient detail to enable them to plan in sufficient detail. For example, some literacy targets are recorded as an improvement in spelling. This does not sufficiently guide the student to build specific skills to pass the national test. Information gained through the assessment of students aged 16 to 18 is used to inform parents or guardians of students' progress. For some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, joint reviews are held with student, key workers, parents and college

staff. Communication with work-based employers is satisfactory. The college sends regular progress reports to employers for learners on most work-based programmes.

29. The provision supports the college strategy for widening participation well. There is a wide range of courses for full-time and part-time students aged 16 to 18 and for adults. Many programmes are offered through several modes of attendance to improve the flexibility of the provision. The broad range of provision and progression routes from entry level to level 3 and to some higher level courses at the college meet the needs of the community and a range of employers. There is considerable provision of literacy and numeracy, ICT and ESOL in the community as well as the college. These programmes are popular. There is work-based learning provision in nine curriculum areas. There are good links with industry in a number of curriculum areas and through the business development unit. The range of training courses offered includes full-cost customised courses to industry. There were over 800 new enrolments to programmes run through this unit in 2003. The college is leading on the development of a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in engineering. Work placements are offered to many full-time students studying vocational courses. The college has a learndirect centre. Market research is beginning to identify innovative strategies for encouraging more students aged 16 to remain in education.

30. Key skills and basic skills are not promoted consistently across the college. The college policy is to integrate key skills development within the curriculum and there are key skills champions in each division in addition to a cross-college key skills co-ordinator and central team of assessors. The emphasis teachers and managers place on key skills varies and progress in planning and implementing key skills teaching through schemes of work and learning materials and assignments varies considerably. There is good practice in hairdressing and construction and for the broader key skills in public services.

31. There are productive links with local schools to improve choice and encourage participation in education and training. There are approximately 325 pupils aged 14 to 16, including those on the Increased Flexibility (IF) programme who attend the college one day a week to study for a vocational qualification and a small number of pupils who are on student apprenticeships in hairdressing. A pilot programme with one school provides NVQ tuition in ICT, business administration and childcare. 'Master classes' for Year 10 pupils have involved over 1,000 pupils in one-day taster programmes. The college is a key member of the local 14 to 19 steering group.

32. There is a satisfactory range of enrichment activities. These include individual and team sports and an additionality programme that in many instances can complement students' main programme of study, but can also provide personal development or useful hobby skills such as foreign languages and computer repairs. There are a number of international trips and social activities promoted by the students' union.

33. Advice and guidance are good for students at Dudley College. Students have ongoing advice and guidance from qualified and experienced workers individually and in tutorials. Open evenings for new recruits are held twice a year. They are well organised and appreciated by students and parents. Curriculum teams hold parents' evenings to give information on students' progress. A range of course information and brochures are produced. Many are translated into relevant community languages. A student diary is given at induction which clearly outlines all the support services available. A schools liaison team works well with schools to help students make the move to college. The guidance staff link with this team to provide specific advice. There are good partnerships with Connexions staff. Specialist staff from Connexions are assigned to particular curriculum areas, for example, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The guidance team are responsive to community emergencies. For example, in redundancy situations the team go out to companies to provide information to encourage workers to retrain. There are good links with employers and Jobcentre Plus.

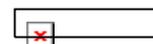
34. Pastoral support for students is good. Staff give advice on welfare issues such as benefits, homelessness and specific issues affecting asylum seekers. There is a well-used student support fund. Medical resources are good. There are two full-time nurses who hold appointments both on site as well as in the community. They talk to groups of students to promote health. They link well with specialist groups who advise on issues like pregnancy, drugs and alcohol misuse. There is a

good counselling service which is well used by students on an individual basis. The team also works with groups of students to raise awareness of issues like stress or anger management. Both medical and counselling staff are active in giving staff training to ensure they best support students. There is an active child protection procedure. This covers all students and adults, as well as young people. Counsellors effectively deal with issues which arise from this process. They have very good links with the police and social services. The student union gives informal support for students as well as a range of social activities. Tutorials are used effectively to support students. Staff are approachable and helpful. They use tutorials to identify individual issues. Tutorials are also used imaginatively in group work not only to prepare students for employment and university entry, but to tackle wider diversity issues. For example, some sessions given by guest speakers from the police explore social problems such as carrying weapons, street violence and the drugs culture.

35. Systems to ensure students take up learning support are ineffective. The study support centre gives all initial assessment in literacy and numeracy. All full-time students are assessed in this way. Results are returned to teachers and recorded on individual learning plans. This recording is weak in quality. Many students identified as needing support are not receiving it. Support for students with specific learning disabilities is usually effectively and efficiently organised, though provision for students with dyslexia is insufficient for the scale of need. Some students are given individual support, but do not attend. Some follow-up is done, but attendance has not improved. In cross-college literacy and numeracy, only approximately 200 students are receiving support out of around 5,000 full-time students. Most support is given in the study centre. Students are not sufficiently challenged, or monitored with enough thoroughness, to ensure attendance. In lessons where students are supported in group sessions, the intervention is usually about correcting of mistakes rather than active teaching of basic literacy or numeracy skills. In some curriculum areas, such as hair and beauty, there is good practice in integrating literacy and numeracy with the vocational area. Take-up of support is ensured, since it is fully integrated with knowledge skills being taught as a central part of the course. This good practice is not widely shared, though some other curriculum areas are changing to meet student need. The college is aware of this weakness and is planning actions to achieve change.

36. The management of additional support is fragmented. Roles and responsibilities of staff are unclear. Individual members of staff are unsure about who has responsibility for parts of the provision. Cross-college literacy and numeracy support is organised in a different faculty from the management of separate special literacy and numeracy courses. ESOL cross-college is managed separately to the community provision. Dyslexia and specific learning disability support is organised by a third faculty. This faculty has responsibility for pre-vocational, cross-college provision which also includes adults. On a separate site, similar pre-vocational programmes are again managed independently. The college is aware of this weakness and plans to restructure. A 'skills for life' strategy has been drafted outlining the importance of re-organisation to ensure effective achievement of national targets.

Leadership and management



37. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior management provides strong and supportive leadership. Since September 2003, there has been a refocus on the work of the college to improve the quality of teaching and learning and students' experience. College governors, managers and staff have welcomed the improved communication in the college. Staff at all levels have recently been extensively consulted on the future direction and the vision of the college. There is an enthusiasm among staff and students. College managers and staff are confident that the proposed changes to the curriculum structure will provide clearer responsibilities and accountabilities and help the college in raising standards.

38. The college is well supported by its governing body. Governors bring a wide range of skills and experiences to the college. They systematically monitor how far the college meets its strategic

objectives, particularly those relating to widening participation and financial performance. There is effective communication between governors and senior managers. Senior managers attend governors' meetings and regularly bring issues to governors' attention. The standards committee of the corporation puts a particular emphasis on retention, pass and success rates. The data presented by college managers are appropriately discussed and governors are now beginning to ask for effective actions to improve performance. Detailed induction and training arrangements are now in place for governors and an annual governors' training residential event has also taken place. Formal links for meetings between staff and governors are also beginning to take place. Governors have not effectively monitored their own performance against their targets to date.

39. Teaching, learning and attainment graded by inspectors are below the national average observed for general FE colleges. Teaching and learning were better for adults than for students aged 16 to 18.

40. The college is responsive to local needs and has a commitment to widen participation. In recent years, there has been an increase in the volume and the range of community-based learning opportunities. The college has effective partnerships with a number of community, employer and professional bodies aimed at supporting the regeneration of the community. An extensive programme of long and short specific courses is taught in the workplace and the community by flexible modes of attendance. A wide range of provision is offered from literacy and numeracy entry level 1, through to level 5 qualifications. ESOL provision has been extended to respond to the growth in asylum seekers and refugees. In addition, both separate and integrated provision is offered to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

41. The college offers dedicated provision for students aged 14 to 16 through the IF project, and through youth skills for those who have been excluded from schools. Dudley is the lead college for a CoVE in engineering. The college has well-established links with a number of employers, particularly with a vehicle manufacturer at Longbridge. A centre for learning has also been developed at the vehicle manufacturer, providing learning opportunities for the local community. One particular feature of the college is its international glass centre, which attracts students from many parts of the world to learn glass techniques. The college foyer features impressive examples of students' work. Some has gained prestigious awards including an award at an exhibition in India.

42. The college has a significant number of franchised courses in the Black Country and the Birmingham and Solihull area. Last year, the volume of out-of-area franchised provision was reduced. There are effective central quality assurance measures in place to monitor the financial performance and standards in teaching and learning of this provision. Both community and commercial partners are fully engaged in the monitoring of the effectiveness of the provision, including the production of the college's self-assessment reports. However, the involvement of college curriculum teams in this provision is not well established.

43. The college is the largest single work-based training provider with the Black Country LSC. The current work-based contract is valued at approximately £1.8 million, with the largest numbers in engineering, construction, hairdressing and care. Management of work-based programmes is poor. Data on retention and pass rates are unreliable and there is no over-arching strategy to resolve very poor pass rates on the modern apprenticeship programmes. There is ineffective co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Learners are visited at work for assessment, but in some vocational areas, long-term staff absence has resulted in insufficient work-based assessment and internal verification. Individual learning plans are poor. They do not correctly identify all aspects of learners' programmes, and are not routinely updated. The college has recognised this weakness and appropriate measures have recently been put in place.

44. A key weakness identified at the last inspection related to insufficient thoroughness and consistency in the implementation of quality assurance processes. This weakness has not been resolved and there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of course reviews, the use of management information by course teams and in the co-ordination of course management in many areas. Leadership and management of construction and sports provision are inadequate. Some data are inaccurate and are not effectively used to monitor and improve the performance of courses. Procedures to assure the quality of the provision are not thorough. Course review and evaluation

reports and the self-assessment report are insufficiently critical. The development plan contains no milestones to monitor the effectiveness of the actions proposed. Internal verification does not ensure consistent and thorough implementation of assessment practices. The management of motor vehicle and fabrication and welding students in particular has been poorly co-ordinated. Responsibilities for the management of these programmes have been poorly defined and the co-ordination of their activities has also been weak. There are still weaknesses in the planning and monitoring of individual learning plans, progress reviews and target setting. There is insufficient curriculum development on sport and hospitality programmes. New staff and those who have recently changed job roles have not received sufficient support. There is ineffective management of health and safety and inadequate arrangements to ensure the welfare of sports students. Students experience problems with their timetable and sometimes find it difficult to locate their classroom. There is little sharing of good practice within and across the curriculum. The identification of trends or issues is insufficient and little action is taken to bring improvements.

45. It has not been possible to determine effectively the number of students who have had an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy. The number of students receiving specific literacy and numeracy support is low.

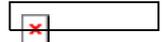
46. There are examples of good course management in business studies, humanities, ICT and retail areas, but there is no clear strategy for the sharing of these good practices. The teaching of key skills is good in hair and beauty and health, social care and public services, but this practice has not been adopted across the college. In science, the course reviews are effective and have resulted in improvements in provision. The management of visual and performing arts is good. Effective lines of communication are maintained through regular, scheduled team and faculty meetings.

47. A strength of the college is the way it promotes and sustains equal opportunities. The vice-principal for resources takes the lead on equal opportunity matters and the principal chairs the diversity group meetings. The Dudley Racial Equality Council has been invited to comment on the college race equality policy and action plan. The percentage of minority ethnic students in the college is much higher than in the local population. A useful number of college staff speak community languages. They encourage students in the community who have traditionally been reluctant to enter college to take up financial and other forms of support. The college charter and student services leaflets are produced in a wide range of languages and formats, for example, Braille, audio and in large print. The college celebrates a wide range of annual cultural events and festivals, for example, Chinese New Year, international women's day, and Vaisakhi. There is an annual competition event where staff and students promote awareness of issues such as discrimination and harassment, handling conflict and promotion of equal opportunity within the curriculum. The college has strong links with the mental health promotion unit, the national schizophrenia fellowship and other support groups. Recruitment, retention and pass rates are analysed for different ethnic groups and performance is compared with national averages. Governors receive the breakdown of student success by gender, age and ethnicity. However, little specific action has been taken to improve the performance of under-performing groups. Equal opportunity is part of all staff and students' induction.

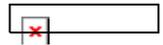
48. Staff development opportunities are good for all staff. They are appraised on a two-year cycle through their professional development review and are encouraged to develop their specialised skills. Performance management and setting of key targets are not consistently used during the appraisal. Staff development activities which focus on the improvement of teaching and learning take place. The role of ILT champion is used across the college to enable staff to use ILT developments. Equality and diversity issues have been part of the college management team training days and focused on recruitment, the SENDA and accessibility issues in ILT.

49. Financial management and control overall are satisfactory. The finance team is most effective. They are well resourced and experienced. Budget holders receive good support from the finance team. Budgeting is prudent and the college has been in financial category A since incorporation. Value for money is assured through the efficient deployment of staff and other resources.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on GCE A-level and AS-level courses
- challenging and effective teaching on some GCE A-level courses
- effective use of IT in teaching
- good resources for learning
- wide range of courses responsive to the needs of students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in GCSE mathematics, GCE A-level physics, AS-level physics and mathematics
- some inadequate accommodation in science
- no use of value added data on students' prior attainments for target setting
- insufficient sharing of good practice in science teaching.

Scope of provision

50. The range of GCE A-level and AS-level science courses is wide and includes biology, chemistry, environmental science and physics and AS-level science for public understanding. There is good progression between the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first science and national diploma in applied science courses. Students at GCE A level can combine pure mathematics with either mechanics or statistics. Part-time provision is responsive to local needs and includes GCSE science, GCE A levels in biology and mathematics and the national diploma for dental surgery assistants. Mathematics and science form part of the access programme. There are just over 1,000 enrolments.

Achievement and standards

51. Retention rates on most courses are high for students of all ages. Pass rates in some AS-level and GCE A2 courses are at, or above, national averages, but significantly below average in AS-level mathematics and in AS-level and GCE A-level physics. Pass rates in GCSE mathematics are low. This has now been replaced by a modular course and early indications are that pass rates are improving. Pass rates in GCSE science are well below national averages. The college has previously offered the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in science. In the last year of the course in 2002, pass rates showed improvement over earlier years and were well above national averages. In 2003, students on the newly introduced first certificate in science achieved satisfactory pass rates. Progression to university is good for students completing GCE A levels. In most lessons, students show a good understanding of basic concepts and are able to apply them. In mathematics, students are confident in the use of technical terms. Students' work in mathematics is well presented. Students on physics and mathematics courses use IT confidently in interpreting data. Students have competent practical skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	230	215	169
		% retention	80	90	90
		% pass rate	32	32	32
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	53	58	57
		% retention	89	97	93
		% pass rate	66	73	72
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	63	61	90
		% retention	83	80	91
		% pass rate	54	53	68
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	102	99	101
		% retention	88	87	80
		% pass rate	12	59	44
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	40	56	37
		% retention	95	91	95
		% pass rate	47	57	49
GCE A2 physics	3	No. of starts	*	21	22
		% retention	*	100	95

		% pass rate	*	67	67
GCE A2 chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	35	18
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	94	89
GCE A2 biology and human biology	3	No. of starts	*	29	20
		% retention	*	97	100
		% pass rate	*	86	90
GCE A2 mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	23	41
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	74	80

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

52. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers are well qualified in their subjects and their lessons are mostly well planned and supported by good schemes of work. Teaching in GCE A-level chemistry and in some mathematics lessons is challenging. In a chemistry lesson, very good directed questioning was used to involve all students in predicting the outcomes of the hydrolysis of halogenoalkanes. The results of their experiments were used effectively by the teacher to explore reaction mechanisms. A practical investigation of potential and kinetic energy changes enhanced learning in mathematics. Most teachers provide good support to individual students. Some teaching in mathematics inspires confidence in adult students returning to study and students enjoy the subject. In the less effective lessons, there is too little questioning of students. In these lessons, students are passive, the pace of work is slow and unchallenging and there are insufficient checks on their understanding. In one lesson, students spent excessive amounts of time in copying dictated notes from a whiteboard. In most lessons, students are involved, interested, and work well on written tasks. Working relationships between staff and students are good. In mathematics lessons, there is good collaboration between students in discussing and solving problems. Most teaching uses well-presented materials. A wide range of resources, such as a video and Internet research to introduce cosmology, including topics such as the solar system and black holes, enhanced the teaching of physics. ILT is used effectively in the teaching of some subjects. In physics, computer simulations enhanced the review of radioactive decay using different sources. There were sufficient computers for the students to conduct experiments for themselves and to plot data to determine radioactive half-life. In mathematics lessons, good use was made of interactive whiteboards to support learning. In some lessons, excessive use is made of computer graphics presentations with too much detail for students to readily assimilate. Students have good practical science skills. Attendance in lessons is satisfactory. Students are usually punctual for lessons, but in some lessons students are insufficiently questioned about their lateness.

53. Resources for teaching science and mathematics are good, with ample access to computers, including a set of laptops with wireless Internet access, and interactive whiteboards. Software is especially good for physics and graph drawing software is used in mathematics. Equipment is appropriate for the courses taught, with an extensive range of instrumental analysis equipment. Chemistry students, for example, can run an infrared spectrum of the compounds they have synthesised. Teachers and technicians are well qualified and experienced. Library, resource centre and study centre facilities are good. Physical science laboratories are satisfactory and the biology laboratories at the Rowley site are good. Other laboratories need refurbishing.

54. Assessment of students' work is thorough and includes examination questions, practical exercises, extended writing and assignments. All work is carefully marked, but some written feedback on work gives the students little indication of how to improve their performance. Opportunities to relate marks to a target grade are missed. Coursework is accurately marked and

annotated against examination criteria. There are no standard front sheets for access course assessments. The best examples indicate which learning outcomes have been met and when. BTEC vocational courses assessment tasks are appropriate. Students have a clear record of their grade in each unit. Some criteria are being over assessed.

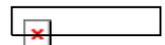
55. BTEC first science and national diploma in applied science course students do not currently have work experience. Enrichment activities are few, being mainly linked to course requirements, such as biology fieldwork. There are few links with local schools, but the imaginative annual quiz provides a good mathematics link.

56. There is good support for students. Each course has a comprehensive information leaflet and a detailed handbook. Initial assessment followed by a diagnostic test during induction week is effective in identifying students needing extra support and in placing them on the appropriate key skill level. Tutors refer students to the study centre for extra help. Attendance is well monitored. Timetabled weekly sessions provide valuable subject support for GCE A-level students. During their tutorials students receive valuable advice and guidance on entrance to HE. However, although students have predicted grades, insufficient use is made of target grades. There is good support for those with personal problems.

Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. An effective review of courses, including regular team meetings, has resulted in significant improvements in provision. This includes the introduction of Salters science across the GCE A-level science provision, a change in vocational courses and the introduction of GCSE modular mathematics. The self-assessment process has been effective in the identification of the need to update laboratory accommodation. It has been less effective in evaluating lessons and in developing effective strategies to share good practice in science teaching. Revised management structures provide for better co-ordination of provision. The use of data on students' prior attainments to predict results and set targets is not well established. Issues of equality of opportunity are resolved satisfactorily. Resources are deployed efficiently to achieve value for money.

Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on the National Open College Network (NOCN) level 1

- high standard of portfolios in plumbing, gas installation and heating and ventilation

- good specialist resources at Mons Hill

- effective school links.

Weaknesses

- very low retention rates on a range of vocational courses

- low and declining pass rates on level 2 programmes

- poor achievements on modern apprenticeship programmes

- inadequate resources for practical activities in electrical installation

- inadequate leadership and management.

Scope of provision

58. The college offers craft courses at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. These include wood occupations, trowel trades, mechanical services and electrical installation. Technician and HE courses are also offered. Currently, there are 163 students aged 16 to 18 and 24 adults on full-time programmes, and 53 students aged 16 to 18 and 777 adults on part-time programmes. There are 60 learners on modern apprenticeship programmes. The college also provides subcontracted training to local and national providers.

Achievement and standards

59. Overall, pass and retention rates are low. Pass rates for the City and Guilds electrical installation part 2 have declined from 44% in 2000/01 to 26% in 2002/03. In 2002, the pass rate for the intermediate construction award was 100%, but declined to 57% in 2003 and is now below the national average. For the NVQ level 2 in wood occupations, the pass rate has sharply declined from 60% in 2000/01; in 2003, no students achieved this qualification. However, there are high pass rates on the NOCN level 1 programme. In 2003, the pass rate was 18% above the national average. Retention rates on City and Guilds 2360 part 1 electrical installation, intermediate construction award and wood occupations are low. In 2003, only 1 of the 91 students who started on the City and Guilds course stayed on the course. Similarly, for the intermediate construction award, only 7 of the 50 students who started on this course were retained in 2003. For the NVQ level 2 in wood occupations, none of the 27 students who started in 2003 completed the course.

60. Pass rates on modern apprenticeship programmes are also low. Until recently, there have been no achievements of modern apprenticeship frameworks. However, in recent months, there is a slight improvement and 14 learners have now completed the frameworks. The progress of many apprentices is slow and at least 16 have not completed the framework within the planned duration.

61. Some students work well in theory and practical lessons. In a theory lesson, on conservation and sustainable development, students acquired good presentation skills. They used the Internet effectively to download technical papers and articles relating to timber frame construction, wind

power and daylight factors. They designed artistic layouts for the following week's presentation graphs.

62. The quality of students' practical skills is generally satisfactory. The standard of portfolios in plumbing, gas installation and heating and ventilation is high. These portfolios contain students' curriculum vitae, thorough assessment plans, and well-written, word-processed assignments. They include a good range of diverse evidence including witness testimonies, assessor observations and very good use of photographs.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Credit achievement code (NOCN) (short)	1	No. of starts	23	330	292
		% retention	91	94	90
		% pass rate	100	79	89
Electrical installation part 1	1	No. of starts	110	92	91
		% retention	28	8	1
		% pass rate	100	71	100
Electrical installation part 2 (City and Guilds 2360)	2	No. of starts	48	63	84
		% retention	75	87	87
		% pass rate	44	40	26
Intermediate construction certificate/award	2	No. of starts	*	40	50
		% retention	*	25	14
		% pass rate	*	100	57
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	28	33	27
		% retention	18	27	0
		% pass rate	60	11	*
Electrical installation course City and Guilds 2390	3	No. of starts	**	20	27
		% retention	**	95	93
		% pass rate	**	68	24

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

* data unavailable

Quality of education and training

63. Teaching is generally satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers share the learning outcomes with students. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and make good use of ILT. In the poorer lessons, there is insufficient use of differentiated learning materials. The more able students are not given sufficiently challenging activities. For example, in a wood occupations practical lesson, experienced part-time students who work on house refurbishments were required to make elementary products such as nail boxes. Students found this frustrating as it slowed their progress. In some lessons, particularly in electrical installation, there is insufficient co-ordination between practical and theoretical activities.

64. In some occupations, for example, in plumbing and carpentry and joinery, key skills are well integrated with the programme. Key skills are taught in a vocational context. Students enjoy these lessons and appreciate the value and relevance of key skills.

65. There are good specialist resources at the Mons Hill site. Purpose-built workshops are equipped with adequate tools and equipment. Classrooms are spacious, well maintained and decorated and equipped with good teaching aids. In contrast, the resources for practical electrical installation, at the main site, are inadequate. There are insufficient realistic training areas and specialist equipment such as test meters.

66. Teachers have relevant vocational qualifications. They possess or are working towards teaching qualifications and assessor and verifier awards. Staff development tends to concentrate on curriculum related issues with little opportunities for industrial updating. There are an adequate number of technicians to support practical training.

67. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and assessors visit students in the workplace to carry out observations. For practical exercises in the workshops, students have workbooks that clearly specify the standard of work that must be achieved. The quality of written feedback on students' work by assessors is satisfactory.

68. Internal verification is generally poor and has recently resulted in an awarding body withdrawing the college's ability to claim students' certification directly in wood and trowel occupations. External verifiers have to check the quality of assessment and students' portfolios before certificates can be applied for. This action delays students obtaining their certificates.

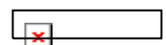
69. There are effective links with schools. The college works with the Construction Industry Training Board through the construction curriculum centre to promote construction as a career to school pupils. More than 100 pupils from 7 local schools attend the college for construction training. Additionally, a large number of pupils, including females, enrol on short taster courses.

70. Most students are assessed to identify additional support needs, including numeracy and literacy needs. There is no vocational aptitude testing. Work-based students are well supported by their supervisors and employers in the workplace. They move them about from job to job to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop their competences. Individual and group tutorials are used to guide and support full-time students in their technical subjects and career opportunities.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management of construction are inadequate. Weaknesses, identified in the previous inspection report, have not been resolved. Data are often inaccurate and are not effectively used to monitor and improve the ongoing performance of courses. Procedures to assure the quality of the provision are not rigorous. Course review, evaluation reports and the self-assessment report are insufficiently self-critical. The development plan contains no timescales to monitor the achievement of the actions proposed. Internal verification is poor and does not ensure consistency and thoroughness of assessment practices. An acting head of division has been recently appointed and communication is improving. A number of actions have been put in place recently to improve retention and pass rates. These include the appointment of additional staff to carry out workplace assessment; the provision of additional support staff in lessons and the increased support to teachers to improve the quality of teaching. However, it is too early to make a judgement on the impact of these actions. The management of work-based learning is also poor. Reviews are ineffective. There is poor setting of measurable targets and no evidence of monitoring the equality of opportunity in the workplace. New members of staff have not received an adequate induction or training to carry out reviews in the workplace. There are insufficient work placement opportunities for full-time students. There is little sharing of the good practice that exists.

Engineering technology and manufacture



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- good linking of theory and practical in many lessons

- highly effective partnership arrangements

- good progress towards achieving CoVE status.

Weaknesses

- very low retention and pass rates on work-based learning programmes

- poor planning and teaching of key skills

- inadequate co-ordination of some college-based courses

- poor management of work-based learning programmes.

Scope of provision

72. The college offers a wide range of courses to meet individual students' needs and aspirations. Courses cover qualifications from level 1 to level 3 and offer progression to HE courses. Programmes in engineering include: engineering manufacturing; computer-aided engineering competences; motor vehicle repair and servicing, performing engineering operations, GCSE manufacturing and a range of other vocational certificates in engineering. NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 are also offered. There are currently 1,869 students on engineering programmes, of whom 104 are students aged 16 to 18 and 1,417 are adults and 106 are aged 14 to 16. Work-based and modern apprenticeship programmes account for 13% of the students.

Achievement and standards

73. There are high pass rates on several courses. There are high pass rates on the computer-aided

engineering, NVQ performing manufacturing and mechanical production courses. However, retention and pass rates are low on the national certificate in engineering and retention is low on the computer-aided engineering competences programming course. In work-based learning, no foundation modern apprentices have successfully completed the full apprenticeship and only six advanced modern apprentices have been successful in the last four years. NVQ pass rates are also low. Of 33 students who started on an NVQ work-based programme in 2000, only 4 achieved their qualification. Retention rates are low across work-based learning programmes. Currently, almost a third of students have failed to complete their qualification in the normally accepted timescale.

74. Students are developing a wide range of skills in the workshops and are making products to a satisfactory standard. During practical work, the students demonstrate good awareness of workshop safety.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ performing manufacturing operations	1	No. of starts	41	234	296
		% retention	90	77	56
		% pass rate	89	88	78
Computer-aided engineering competencies machine setting (City and Guilds 2301)	2	No. of starts	32	43	*
		% retention	94	95	*
		% pass rate	93	88	*
Mechanical production competencies (City and Guilds 2280)	2	No. of starts	24	16	*
		% retention	71	81	*
		% pass rate	94	92	*
Computer-aided engineering competencies programming (City and Guilds 2301)	2	No. of starts	32	16	*
		% retention	91	56	*
		% pass rate	55	89	*
Engineering systems maintenance (City and Guilds 2140)	2	No. of starts	26	35	22
		% retention	35	46	82
		% pass rate	56	81	80
NVQ performing manufacturing operations	2	No. of starts	94	21	596
		% retention	89	67	82
		% pass rate	86	57	100
National certificate engineering	3	No. of starts	25	32	52
		% retention	76	66	29
		% pass rate	74	76	40

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

75. There is satisfactory teaching in most lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use well-chosen

examples from the branch of engineering being studied. In computer-aided drawing practical, samples of manufactured components are brought into the lesson to clarify computer-aided drawing principles. Lessons and practical tasks are often revised in succeeding lessons to allow students the opportunity to reflect and develop skills at a pace suitable to them. There are good links between theory and practical in some lessons. However, teaching aids are poor in some lessons and teachers made effective use of ILT in only a few lessons. There is poor teaching in some motor vehicle lessons; there are insufficient resources for all the students to be involved effectively and alternative tasks are not found. Students are not always adequately supported when undertaking tasks for the first time. Teaching of key skills is poor.

76. Work-based students acquire good practical skills. Portfolios of evidence are good, well structured and contain a wide range of relevant evidence. Students have good relevant on-the-job training experience. Employers are supportive and create opportunities for assessments.

77. Most resources are satisfactory for the programmes and courses offered. Teaching staff are well qualified and have good subject knowledge. Some professional development for staff has taken place and the college has fully supported and funded this training. There is a variety of machining equipment in the workshops. A new engineering training centre is being developed with specialist areas for fluid power and computer controlled machining. Some expensive and highly technical equipment is readily available and frequently used by students. However, some workshops are drab and untidy.

78. Assessment and recording of students' progress is satisfactory. There are frequent on-going assessment and reviews of practical work, but there is insufficient recording of the feedback given to students and they are not always aware of their progress. There is good practice of assessing work-based students every three weeks, but this is not universal and there is insufficient work-based assessment for some students. Initial assessment is mainly satisfactory, but some work-based students are not assessed. Where additional learning needs are identified these are adequately recorded on individual learning plans. Little classroom support is given. Students may attend additional support lessons during the week.

79. There is good promotion of engineering in schools. There are effective links with a number of local schools with courses for pupils aged 14 to 16, enabling progression into FE or apprenticeships. A wide range of engineering programmes is offered including GCSE engineering awards, and taster courses. College facilities and materials are provided to participating schools for this venture. There are very effective partnerships with local industry and community groups. The links with major manufacturing companies in the region have a positive impact upon what courses the college offers. Buildings and equipment supplied by these companies are allowing a range of qualifications to be developed and offered throughout the community.

80. There is a wide range of enrichment and additional qualifications taken by students. For example, engineering students are completing first aid and welding qualifications. There are opportunities for students to attend local engineering events and exhibitions. Some students are involved with the national robotic wars competitions. Some full-time motor vehicle students regularly attend local garages for work experience. Many students take part in sporting activities.

Leadership and management

81. The management of college-based engineering programmes is satisfactory. There are examples of good management in all of the engineering training centres, but there is no clear strategy for sharing these good practices among all training centres. The management of motor vehicle and fabrication and welding students in particular has been poorly co-ordinated and responsibilities are poorly defined. Key skills are also poorly implemented. A college reorganisation has recently been completed and staff training for key skills has taken place, but it is too early to judge the impact of these developments on the overall management of the programmes.

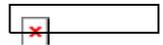
82. There is poor management of work-based programmes. Data are unreliable and there is poor co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. There is no over-arching strategy to rectify the

poor retention and pass rates. Individual training plans are poor. They do not correctly identify all aspects of students' programmes, and are not routinely updated.

83. The college is leading a consortium of colleges in developing CoVE status and has made good progress towards achieving this objective. Funding already received has been distributed to develop each of the identified strengths among the partners. The college has actively sought to develop the skills of staff through a wide range of training initiatives. The college is able to make use of a range of business programmes previously developed for one major employer and offer these to other employers in the region. Through partnership agreements, they have developed a range of courses that offer very good progression opportunities from levels 1 to 4.

84. Internal verification is satisfactory and some monitoring of assessment takes place. The college has taken steps to improve this process for the work-based learning programmes. This has only recently occurred and is not yet having any influence on the programmes or students' progress.

Business administration, management and professional



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

Strengths

- extensive range of provision that widens participation and aids progression
- high pass rates on NVQ accounting, AVCE and the national certificate
- good development of occupational, personal and learning skills.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates on GNVQ and NVQ levels 2 and 3
- low pass rates on GNVQ foundation, AS-level business, and certificate in supervisory management
- ineffective teaching to meet individual needs.

Scope of provision

85. Business administration, management and professional courses are managed in several divisions and are offered at two sites and on employer premises. There is a wide variety of courses, ranging from foundation to post-graduate levels. They include GNVQs, the AVCE, NVQs, AS levels and GCE A levels and HE courses in business and accounting. Many other specialist management and professional qualifications are available through different study modes. There are 444 full-time and 1,027 part-time students currently on programmes.

Achievement and standards

86. Development of occupational, personal and learning skills are good, particularly on professional and management programmes. During lessons, particularly effective use is made of part-time students' experience at work and they are encouraged to put newly developed skills and knowledge into practice at work. In one lesson, students reviewed the theory of prescriptive and emergent strategic practices and were able to evaluate critically their own organisation's strategic management practices against the theory and make appropriate suggestions for improving their organisation's practices. Students also show good development of personal and learning skills and many make confident contributions to class discussions. On higher-level courses, students demonstrate growing skills in independent research, reflective thinking, analysis and critical evaluation. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory and appropriate to the stage and level of their programme. Many students progress to higher levels of study. Pass rates on NVQ accounting, AVCE business and national certificate in business and finance are high, but pass rates on GNVQ foundation, AS-level business and the certificate in supervisory management are low. Retention rates are low and declining on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses, NVQ accounting level 2 and NVQ administration level 3 courses. In addition, there is a general trend of declining retention rates across the curriculum area although this year's retention rate has marginally improved.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Text processing (1 year)	1	No. of starts	96	22	25
		% retention	100	95	84
		% pass rate	52	57	81
GNVQ intermediate (1 year)	2	No. of starts	35	57	84
		% retention	69	68	65
		% pass rate	79	72	76
NVQ accounting (1 year)	2	No. of starts	52	49	54
		% retention	85	78	69
		% pass rate	91	84	81
NVQ administration (1 year)	3	No. of starts	42	39	25
		% retention	88	74	12
		% pass rate	59	41	100
AS-level accounting (1 year)	3	No. of starts	15	112	89
		% retention	80	93	85
		% pass rate	58	55	72
AS-level business/management/office studies (1 year)	3	No. of starts	82	116	100
		% retention	91	86	88
		% pass rate	68	87	64
Advanced VCE single	3	No. of starts	52	34	64

award in business (1 year)		% retention	75	94	78
		% pass rate	92	91	86
Certificate in supervisory management (2 years)	3	No. of starts	146	169	235
		% retention	23	38	37
		% pass rate	36	100	64

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

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching is satisfactory. The best lessons are carefully planned and well structured. Teachers set varied activities that stimulate students and engage their attention and interest. Good consideration is given to students' previous learning and experience and, for part-time students, there is good linking of on-the-job experience with college training. Full-time students are introduced to the realities of business through a wide range of simulated activities. Some national certificate students were introduced to assessment requirements and were urged to use their work experience to show how theoretical principles are applied. Good consideration is given to students' abilities and rates of progress; they are suitably challenged when work is set. In weaker lessons, planning for individual learning is inadequate and sometimes inappropriate. Use of individual learning plans is ineffective with few short-term targets to drive learning and against which progress can be measured. Lessons are sometimes dull and uninspiring and there is insufficient variety in the teaching methods used to take account of individual needs and abilities. Inadequate consideration is given to students' prior experience and qualifications in some lessons and some students are insufficiently challenged. Many students have poorly developed keyboarding skills. Checking of individual learning is inadequate and in lessons teachers do not direct questions enough to named individuals to check their learning.

88. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are experienced and well qualified, with appropriate teaching qualifications. Satisfactory arrangements for industry updating for staff have recently been implemented. Library resources are adequate with an appropriate range of books, journals and videos. Programme handbooks and lesson handouts for students are satisfactory and there are good study packs for use on ICT courses. Classrooms provide appropriate learning environments.

89. Assessment and internal verification are fair and valid with appropriate standardisation of marking. Regular homework is set, fairly marked and promptly returned to students. Oral and written feedback are generally constructive, but written feedback is sometimes brief and does not provide sufficient information to help students understand what they need to do to improve their work. Initial assessment is satisfactory, but it is not always used effectively when planning lessons and students' programmes. Progress reviews are satisfactory, although often briefly recorded, and target setting is not uniformly effective. Appropriate reports on students' progress are sent to parents of students aged 16 to 18 and to sponsoring employers.

90. An extensive range of provision widens participation and aids progression from level 1 to level 5, particularly for adult students. It includes a wide range of courses to suit students' needs, opportunities for progression and modes of attendance including full-time and part-time courses, flexible and distance learning and in-company courses. The curriculum consultancy team provides specific in-company training for a range of local organisations with which there is good liaison. Students benefit from a variety of study visits to an array of organisations. However, there are no arrangements for full-time students to do work experience and NVQ accounting students are struggling to reach the required standard. Arrangements for key skills are satisfactory, although there is no integration of key skills with students' main studies.

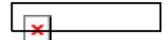
91. Arrangements for student support are sufficient. Teachers are sensitive to pastoral needs and are willing to provide extra support, including individual coaching, outside class time. Although initial and diagnostic testing for full-time students adequately identifies additional learning needs, many students ignore the support that is available in literacy, numeracy and language lessons. Support in

lessons is provided, however, for GNVQ foundation students. Pre-course advice and guidance, and induction effectively help students to settle quickly into their learning. Useful tutorials are timetabled for all students.

Leadership and management

92. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are good. The programme review system is adequate. It makes effective use of student feedback from focus groups and directly feeds into the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses identified during inspection, but it lacks clarity and tends to be overgenerous. Quality assurance is satisfactory, but there are inconsistent practices in the drawing up of individual learning plans, progress reviews and target setting. Promotion of equal opportunity is effective.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates on GNVQ intermediate

- good skills' development in practical lessons

- good individual support

- effective response to students' concerns.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates and declining retention rates on level 3 courses

- late arrival and poor attendance in many lessons

- uninspiring teaching in some lessons

- ineffective monitoring of students' progress in the community centres.

Scope of provision

93. The college offers an appropriate range of ICT courses from entry level to level 4, including computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and the European computer driving licence (ECDL), AVCE ICT course, the GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate level and the higher national courses and part-time specialist courses such as the systems support. Entry level courses are offered in community venues. There are approximately 2,900 students studying ICT courses of which 25% are studying full time. There are also 726 students studying key skills IT and 335 students studying on franchised ICT courses.

Achievement and standards

94. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate ICT course are nearly 30% higher than the national average in 2003. However, pass rates on level 3 courses are low. The AS-level IT pass rate has been below the national average over the last three years, while the AVCE single award pass rate has fluctuated significantly and in two of the last three years it has been well below national averages. Retention rates on these courses and several others have declined over this period.

95. Students generally have developed good ICT skills and those students at community venues with little prior experience confidently use ICT applications software. Students demonstrate a good understanding in a range of topics covering computer network design, workstation maintenance and repair. For example, in one lesson, students worked well in groups to identify the main characteristics of different network topologies. There was late arrival and poor attendance in a third of the lessons inspected which disrupted the lessons and students' progress. The college takes absences and lateness seriously.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	26	32	50
		% retention	77	91	88
		% pass rate	50	38	77
CLAIT - short	1	No. of starts	293	466	239
		% retention	92	93	79
		% pass rate	51	79	72
ECDL (1 year)	2	No. of starts	118	176	254
		% retention	92	88	76
		% pass rate	67	68	63
GNVQ intermediate (1 year)	2	No. of starts	88	93	72
		% retention	89	78	75
		% pass rate	85	79	89
AVCE in ICT (1 year)	3	No. of starts	47	55	87
		% retention	98	84	80
		% pass rate	26	91	46

AS-level IT (1 year)	3	No. of starts	47	143	136
		% retention	91	80	76
		% pass rate	58	58	57

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

Quality of education and training

96. Teaching was good in a range of lessons, but the overall quality of teaching and learning was below the national average for ICT. In the best lessons, the teachers are very enthusiastic about the subject, use good questioning techniques and prompts throughout the lessons and set tasks which encourage students to use and develop their analytical and logical reasoning skills. Students are well engaged and keen to contribute to discussions. The integration and use of learning support staff in lessons is good. In one lesson, foundation GNVQ students, many of whom had additional learning needs, were able to draw on their knowledge gained during previous lessons on the use of software to design membership cards and set up a membership database, while others were able to design a financial spreadsheet. Friendly teachers provide the adult students with effective individual instruction and respond well to students' queries.

97. Teaching in some lessons is uninspiring. In some lessons, teachers do little to engage the students in the lessons and, for example, ask questions which fail to get students to contribute to the development of new topics. In other lessons, there is no variety of learning activities to maintain students' interest and motivation. In some community learning centres, students starting entry level courses did not get adequate support from the teacher present. In other lessons, the language used in handouts did not take account of students' abilities.

98. Overall computing resources are good, but some accommodation is unsatisfactory. All laboratories and classrooms have up-to-date computing equipment of industrial standard. There is satisfactory equipment for computer maintenance and repair courses. However, some teaching rooms are too small for the classes using them while others have computer bays in a large room where noise from adjacent classes distracts students and inhibits learning. Several classrooms in one centre were very cold and some students were wearing outdoor clothing. In one centre, computers were situated in a cold and draughty school corridor with through-traffic from school pupils.

99. Assessment for full-time courses is thorough. Students have ongoing assessments and assignments to do throughout their course. The results are used to review the students' progress during tutorials. Tutorials take into account attendance, punctuality, conduct in class, and progress and trends in assignments or coursework. Targets are set and reviewed in the next tutorial. This is not the case with key skills IT projects where there is insufficient progress monitoring to ensure that students complete the work in time for final assessment. Assignments and assessments are cross-moderated by other teachers.

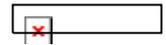
100. Monitoring of students' progress in most of the local learning centres is ineffective. Short-term targets are not set in individual learning plans and progress reviews are not consistently completed. There is good individual additional learning support for students requiring it, including support for dyslexia and other learning disabilities. Teachers also provide good support outside of formal timetabled lessons. Teachers and course managers respond quickly to students' concerns about the organisation of courses. Full-time students receive good individual tutorials. Students' progress on their course, their attendance and punctuality are discussed. Targets and action plans are reviewed regularly. Students participate fully in setting future action plans and targets.

Leadership and management

101. There is no overall accountability for the provision of ICT across the college. Four heads of divisions share the responsibility for managing ICT and computing programmes across the college, community-based and franchised courses. Communication across divisions at strategic level is

satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified. Appraisals are regular and there is an appropriate programme of staff development to support teachers. Staff involved in office type ICT courses use standardisation meetings effectively to share good practice. Teachers within the ICT division share good practice, common approaches and resources through the appropriate use of the college server. However, progress towards the development of learning resources available to students online has been slow. Arrangements for course reviews are satisfactory and involve appropriate staff. However, some course reviews are not sufficiently critical and do not identify key weaknesses. College lesson observations are insufficiently critical.

Retail, customer service and transport



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**
The contributory grade for work-based training is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most programmes

- good teaching and learning

- highly effective NVQ assessment.

Weaknesses

- inadequate advice and guidance for some students

- poor management of modern apprenticeship programmes.

Scope of provision

102. The college offers NVQ programmes at levels 2 and 3 in customer service, retail operations and warehousing and distribution, qualifications in transport, introduction to airline cabin crew operations and professional qualifications in purchasing and supply and production and inventory management. There are 395 students attending these courses; most are adults and all are studying part time.

Achievement and standards

103. Pass and retention rates are high and most are improving. The results for fork lift truck training are outstanding and overall NVQ pass rates are very high. Most examination courses are for

professional and chartered bodies and the pass rates are high. The standard of students' NVQ work is good. Portfolios include well-researched student statements, photographs, detailed witness testimonies and assessor observations that indicate high standards are being achieved. Coursework is well presented and demonstrates the professional and management status of many of the students. Students are proud of their work and have a good understanding of it. One course had no passes in its first year of operation because students were unable to complete all six modules in the year. The course now runs over two years. Many of the students have subsequently passed all the modules. Modern apprenticeship retention and pass rates are low, and for foundation modern apprentices they are declining.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ customer service	2	No. of starts	107	132	78
		% retention	68	76	96
		% pass rate	21	78	84
Fork-lift truck operations	2	No. of starts	288	197	149
		% retention	100	99	100
		% pass rate	98	95	96
NVQ warehouse and distribution	2	No. of starts	86	57	112
		% retention	88	72	93
		% pass rate	65	44	73
NVQ customer service	3	No. of starts	62	28	47
		% retention	66	75	74
		% pass rate	71	81	80
Introductory certificate in production and inventory management	3	No. of starts	*	32	34
		% retention	*	66	94
		% pass rate	*	90	91

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

104. Teaching and learning are good and lessons are vibrant and stimulating. Lessons are well planned and teachers make full use of students' occupational expertise. There is very good student involvement in all lessons and teachers facilitate lively discussions. Teachers are able to weave current practice and examples into lessons that students see as relevant and are then able to supplement with their own experiences. Good use is made of computer graphics presentations, overhead projectors and interactive whiteboards to enliven lessons. Students give short presentations which also introduce current commercial practice. Attendance is low at around 65%. Most students hold responsible positions in the workplace and in recognition of the difficulties of attending every lesson, teachers maintain contact with students through e-mail and send out course notes to all students a few days before each lesson. Good use is also made of workbooks and handouts.

105. NVQ assessment is highly effective with well-prepared and relevant assessments and good feedback. NVQ assessor observations are detailed. There are frequent, often weekly, assessor visits. Assessors meet weekly to discuss individual student progress and carry out internal verification. Students' coursework is frequently assessed and feedback to students on the quality of

the work is detailed.

106. Classroom accommodation is satisfactory. All teachers have good subject and occupational knowledge and several are active practitioners. Workplaces are of a high standard and carry out good commercial practice that provides the students with high-quality relevant experiences.

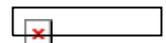
107. Students in college are mainly on vocationally specific courses that lead to a professional qualification. They recognise the value of these qualifications for their careers and are very motivated. Work-based students are all following NVQ programmes that build on their occupational experience. Most work-based students feel well supported. They are frequently visited weekly and assessors are easily contacted at other times. Tutorials in the college are supportive and help students identify strategies to overcome both learning and personal problems.

108. Advice and guidance given to students are not always comprehensive or recorded. Individual learning plans are often incomplete and are not helpful for workplace reviews or college tutorials. There are no interim NVQ targets on individual learning plans and monitoring students' progress and attainment is difficult. The identification of learning support is inadequate and often relies on teachers identifying problems or students asking for help. This poor practice has recently been identified by the college which is taking steps to remedy it. There have been some poor advice and guidance for the foundation purchasing and supply course, for example, students were advised to attempt all modules in one year and some students were not advised about alternative NVQ options.

Leadership and management

109. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. Six divisions of the college teach the range of courses. Three of the divisions all teach NVQs and two of them cover NVQs in customer service, retail and warehouse and distribution but use different awarding bodies. There is inadequate sharing of good practice or rationalisation across the divisions. The self-assessment report was critical and identified the key strengths and weaknesses of the college and action has been taken to deal with the issues raised. The small modern apprenticeship programme is poorly managed. There are no reliable data and the results and operation of the programme have been identified as poor, particularly the slow students' progress and the poor training in key skills. Slowly, the college has put corrective strategies in place, but has failed to adequately resolve the poor quality individual learning plans. The monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace is not always effective.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**
The contributory grade in travel and tourism is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates in travel

- good teaching and learning in travel.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory standards of achievement on sports programmes

- poor teaching and learning in vocational sports programmes

- very poor accommodation

- poor assessment on sport courses

- weaknesses in curriculum management.

Scope of provision

110. There are 1,085 students on courses. Of these students, 131 are full time. Approximately, 70% of full-time students are on sports courses and the remainder are on travel courses. There are 954 part-time students, of whom 331 are on sport, leisure and travel courses and 754 are on hospitality courses. There are 10 learners on modern apprenticeships within sport and recreation. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in hospitality, leisure, sport, travel and tourism. Students are able to progress from entry to higher level. There is insufficient provision for additional awards that are industry recognised. There are no full-time hospitality courses.

Achievement and standards

111. Pass and retention rates on travel courses are high. Advanced level travel students' work is of a good standard and includes a wide range of evidence. Key skills are fully integrated with the travel courses and there are high pass rates. Students on travel courses demonstrate good levels of attainment and ability. On sports courses, achievement is poor but the rate of retention is satisfactory. Students on sports programmes show low levels of attainment. On sport and leisure, students' work is poor and not at the appropriate level expected at this stage of their programme. Students' standard of work is good in sugar work and satisfactory in food preparation and cooking.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	32	29	*
		% retention	75	79	*
		% pass rate	75	87	*
AS-level sport, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	*	33	36
		% retention	*	73	92
		% pass rate	*	63	73
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	15	21	27
		% retention	87	86	78

		% pass rate	85	67	76
National certificate and precursor in sports	3	No. of starts	22	*	23
		% retention	36	*	78
		% pass rate	75	*	61

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

112. Teaching and learning on travel courses are good. Lessons are well planned and managed effectively. Teachers use a wide range of different teaching methods, including debates and discussions on current affairs; they make good use of questioning to check students' understanding and learning. There is a clear focus on equal opportunities in most lessons. There are some good examples of differentiation in lessons. Teaching and learning on vocational sports courses are poor. The worst lessons are poorly planned and students are not sufficiently challenged. Students are incorrectly prepared for activities, with little warm up or cool down time. Classroom management is poor and students are left unsupervised in the gymnasium. Teachers do not carry out risk assessments of the classroom before lessons take place and fail to identify important health and safety issues. There is little effective use of ILT in teaching.

113. Resources are satisfactory. Travel courses have adequate learning materials and resources, but the working environment is not realistic. Students are unable to link theory to practice. The college has identified this in the self-assessment report. In hospitality, the kitchens meet the current needs of students. The external facilities in hospitality are satisfactory and some of the franchised provision is well organised. Accommodation for sports programmes is very poor. The learning environment is very poor; there are examples of wiring hanging off walls, large holes in the walls and poor cleanliness. Changing areas are unhygienic. Managers, staff and students have poor health and safety awareness. Many health and safety hazards were not identified by staff and seen as acceptable. One member of staff covered risk assessment and hazards as part of a lesson, but the issues raised in the risk assessment were not followed-up to rectify hazards.

114. Assessment on sports courses is poor. Planning of assessment is insufficient and unclear. Some students' assessments were at the incorrect level. Written feedback is inadequate. On a level 3 programme, 50% of the students failed their full qualification as they had been inaccurately assessed. Some students have assessment work outstanding. Assessment is adequate on travel-related courses. On the AVCE in leisure and tourism written feedback was good; it included constructive criticism and advice as to where improvements could be made. Key skills are integrated within the main programme for travel courses. Assessment within hospitality is satisfactory. There is evidence of planning and feedback taking place to an adequate level. Students are assessed at the appropriate level to meet the qualification criteria.

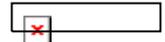
115. The range of provision is satisfactory. Travel and tourism courses are well structured to meet the needs of students. Sports programmes are inadequately structured. These programmes are intended as specialist qualifications for either mature students working in the industry or as additional qualifications for students following either an AVCE or GCE. The current structure restricts the potential for high grades. Students do additional qualifications and work experience at course level. There are few part-time courses in sports and travel. In hospitality, there are basic and intermediate food hygiene courses that run on a regular part-time basis.

116. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Students are provided with advice and support in order to get them on to a suitable course. Induction is satisfactorily planned and includes an appropriate range of activities. Initial assessment and support for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. A dedicated study support person attends all lessons on a level 2 programme. During some tutorials, records of students' progress reviews are not used effectively to monitor the students' performance.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management are poor. There is insufficient curriculum development on sport and hospitality programmes. There is an over-reliance on non-managerial staff to carry out leadership activities such as curriculum planning. New staff and staff who have recently changed job roles have not received sufficient support. The management of health and safety is poor and arrangements to ensure the welfare of sports students is weak. Risk assessments do not identify significant hazards. Managers do not have a full awareness of the programmes in their area. Students experience problems with their timetable and often find it difficult to locate their classroom. On one course, the timetable required students to attend lessons almost continuously in the day without breaks. Attendance is poor in some lessons. This has not been effectively tackled by managers. There is little sharing of good practice within the curriculum. Management do not sufficiently carry out data analysis of programmes and groups. The identification of trends or issues is ineffective and insufficient action is taken to bring about improvement. The self-assessment report is not sufficiently critical and does not identify most of the key weaknesses identified during inspection.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- effective key skills teaching

- good on-the-job training for work-based learners

- good specialist facilities

- good additional support for students.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates on NVQ level 2 courses

- low achievement on modern apprenticeship framework

- insufficient clients to create a realistic working environment

- inadequate internal verification

- weak target setting and progress reviews.

Scope of provision

118. There are 604 students in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Some 289 are part-time and 315 are full-time students; of these, 213 are aged 16 to 18 and 391 are adults. Of all students, 10% are male and 27% are from minority ethnic groups. The college offers a satisfactory range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty, and holistic therapies. Full-time courses range from levels 1 to 3. Part-time courses include a range of holistic therapy courses and NVQs in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are 51 foundation modern apprentices in 65 work placements working towards NVQ level 2 and the appropriate key skill qualifications.

Achievement and standards

119. Pass rates are high on most courses. NVQ level 3 beauty therapy and Indian head massage have had 100% pass and retention rates for the past three years. However, the retention rates are low and declining on hairdressing NVQ level 2 and beauty therapy NVQ level 2 programmes. The pass rates of the modern apprenticeship framework are low. During the period 2000 to 2003, of the 103 learners who joined the programme only 9 have achieved their full qualifications. Most learners demonstrate satisfactory written work and practical hairdressing and beauty therapy skills. Attendance and punctuality in lessons are satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	129	114	122
		% retention	56	39	27
		% pass rate	96	93	94
NVQ beauty therapy (2 year)	2	No. of starts	22	46	37
		% retention	55	39	41
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Indian head massage (short)	2	No. of starts	49	77	51
		% retention	96	94	98
		% pass rate	96	99	100
Reflexology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	54	48	49

		% retention	85	67	92
		% pass rate	98	100	100
Body massage (1 year)	3	No. of starts	66	41	55
		% retention	79	80	84
		% pass rate	90	100	80

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

Quality of education and training

120. Teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers plan effectively and the teaching is enthusiastic. Students are motivated and develop useful skills. In one successful microbiology lesson, students experimented by testing for bacteria on various items of beauty therapy equipment. The results graphically demonstrated the need for good hygiene practices. In some lessons, teaching is dull and lacks variety. In many practical lessons, students are not given demanding deadlines to complete their work. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teaching is slow and does not adequately stimulate students. On-the-job training is good for work-based learners. Individual training is carried out by well-qualified staff. Work-based learners produce a good standard of work. In one lesson, a student demonstrated good skills when completing a scalp plait. Most employers offer extra courses to work-based learners, including hair colouring and cutting specialist courses. Students develop good practical hairdressing skills early in their training that enables them to work on clients.

121. Key skills teaching is effective. A vocational specialist has been appointed to co-ordinate key skills teaching and to integrate them with the core curriculum. Key skills lessons observed were good or better. In one lesson, students worked well completing a marketing survey for hairdressing treatments. Application of number skills were used to work out percentages and mean averages and IT skills to produce bar and pie charts.

122. Hairdressing and beauty therapy facilities are good. Specialist accommodation provides students with modern pleasant salons. There are three professionally designed hairdressing and three beauty therapy salons, which are well furnished and resourced. Hairdressing salons and the reception areas have computers. Classrooms are well equipped, have computers and one has an interactive whiteboard. The college also has a salon in the community to cater for local needs. Staff have appropriate qualifications with industrial experience and regularly up date their skills.

123. There are insufficient clients to promote a realistic working environment. Students are unable to develop the realistic speeds and interpersonal skills experienced in a working environment. There are insufficient clients to cover the range of work required for both hairdressing and beauty therapy. In some practical lessons, students spend long periods of time working on practise heads, while others act as models and miss the opportunity to develop their skills. Often, students supply their own models for assessment, but this does not conform to awarding body regulations.

124. The assessment process is satisfactory. However, the lack of sufficient clients on some courses in the college limits the assessment opportunities for students to progress quickly through their studies. Internal verification is inadequate. Student portfolios have little evidence of ongoing internal verification. Internal verification activities in hairdressing are not adequately well planned. Some workplace assessments have not been internally verified and improvements identified during internal verification are not always implemented.

125. The college offers a satisfactory range of courses that meets local needs and students have access to appropriate enrichment activities such as demonstrations, manufacturer product training exhibitions, competitions and external visits. The college is actively attempting to widen participation and attract non-traditional students by providing courses in the community for Asian women in henna bridal make-up and hairstyling. The college has also developed courses for pupils from six local schools that provide tasters in hairdressing and beauty vocational skills.

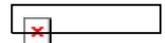
126. Target setting and the monitoring of students' progress are insufficiently thorough. Students are given some short-term targets. They are set targets for whole units of the NVQ which do not adequately focus on particular tasks within those units. Most students are unclear about their targets. Long-term targets are not effectively recorded on individual learning plans. Students cannot easily measure their progress towards their qualification.

127. Students receive good additional support. Initial assessment is effective in identifying students' additional learning needs. Support tutors work well with teachers to provide students with helpful coaching. In one lesson, the support teacher worked hard and in a sensitive manner to provide students with demanding targets for the completion of written work. Tutorials are satisfactory and students are aware of the range of pastoral support available and appreciate the informal support offered by staff.

Leadership and management

128. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Significant improvements have recently been made to improve key skills training. The college has effective initiatives in place to attract more clients by the development of two commercial salons on the main site. Staff are well informed and there are regular team meetings. The self-assessment report does not identify some key weaknesses. Current retention rate data identify an improving trend on NVQ courses.

Health, social care and public services



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates in counselling, NVQ level 3 in early years care and GNVQ intermediate

- good linking of theory to practice in teaching and learning

- effective use of resources

- effective support for individuals

- broad range of provision to meet needs.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some courses in 2003
- insufficient sharing of good practice
- poor target setting and action planning
- weak self-assessment
- unsatisfactory management of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

129. There is a wide range of courses for full-time and part-time students including early years care and education, health and social care, adult care, counselling and public services. Courses range from levels 1 to 4. There are 363 students aged 16 to 18 and 69 adults on full-time courses. There are 2,825 adults and 310 students aged 16 to 18 on part-time courses. Some 131 part-time students are on work-based learning programmes. The college has effective partnerships that offer NVQ programmes in care and early years care and education for adults at centres close to their homes. The modes of attendance at college and on placements are varied to meet the demands of students. Students on a counselling course attend weekend workshops. Training meets the requirements of recent initiatives such as the national care standards.

Achievement and standards

130. Pass rates are high on the counselling certificate, NVQ level 3 early years and GNVQ intermediate health and social care courses, but have declined to below the national average in childcare and education, AVCE health and social care, first and national diplomas in public services and the diploma in childcare and education. Retention rates are generally around national averages on most courses, but fell below on the certificate in childcare and education in 2003.

131. The standard of students' work in lessons, in their portfolios and coursework is satisfactory. Most students demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills at an appropriate level at this stage in their studies. Students work well together in small groups and demonstrate skills in giving clear feedback to their class. Work-based learners, however, are making slow progress towards achieving modern apprenticeship frameworks. Pass rates on key skills are low on many courses. Few foundation childcare students progress to level 2; however, progression from level 2 to the diploma in childcare is satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	29	25	25
		% retention	72	88	80

		% pass rate	81	77	95
Childcare and education	2	No. of starts	26	32	35
		% retention	73	88	66
		% pass rate	74	86	70
First diploma public services	2	No. of starts	19	32	36
		% retention	79	75	69
		% pass rate	80	88	76
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	15	51	50
		% retention	60	61	74
		% pass rate	78	84	59
National diploma public services	3	No. of starts	26	25	19
		% retention	42	64	89
		% pass rate	100	81	76
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	30	30	*
		% retention	80	94	*
		% pass rate	88	82	*
NVQ early years and education	3	No. of starts	47	30	37
		% retention	40	33	62
		% pass rate	68	90	91

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

132. Most teaching is good. Teachers carefully link theory to work practices. This enables students to make effective use of their experience in work placements and employment. In one lesson, students used case study information from a video extract, their own employment experience and the national care standards to produce an effective care plan for elderly clients. Teachers refer to students' workplaces and prompt them to recall experiences that demonstrate that they have understood. Students on a level 3 course showed well-developed skills for relating learning theories to management of behaviour in work placements. Students spontaneously provide relevant examples to illustrate their understanding.

133. Good practice in teaching is insufficiently shared. Teachers are observed annually, but reports describe positive aspects without identifying areas for improvement. Some teachers carefully plan sequences of varied activities. Many teach with enthusiasm. There are high levels of student participation in planning, discussing and reporting. More skilful teachers prompt students to explore issues fully including those relating to stereotyping. They praise and encourage the students. Some teachers give insufficient thought to how the activities can be used to extend students' skills and understanding. Not all tasks are well matched to the students' ability. A foundation group was asked to make notes while watching a video, but lacked the necessary skills. Some students' behaviour is poorly managed. Key skills that relate to classroom activities are identified on lesson plans, but few teachers promote or assess these skills during lessons.

134. Resources are effectively used to extend learning and skills. ILT is used extensively by students. There is good access to the computer suite and to ILT facilities throughout the college. Students use the computers in classrooms and in producing their assignments. A wide range of up-to-date textbooks and multiple copies of relevant texts are used in lessons. Library books are only

available on the main site, but all students receive one textbook they keep for the year. Specialist learning equipment is of a good standard. Students improve their baby caring skills by being responsible for a computerised doll that imitates a real baby's needs. Accommodation is good with large rooms organised thoughtfully to support a wide range of teaching and learning activities. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. The college supports them to maintain their professional skills and to gain further qualifications.

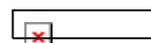
135. Support for individual students is good. Initial assessment is effective in identifying levels of basic and key skills and suitability for courses. Additional tutors work effectively with students in lessons. Liaison between personal tutors, subject tutors and support staff is beneficial. Regular discussion between individual students and tutors identifies issues related to academic and personal development. Tutors know their students well and identify those at risk. Tutors thoroughly monitor students' development of skills and understanding in work placements.

136. Students' progress targets and the action they need to take to succeed are ill defined and poorly recorded. Staff do not record students' existing skills and areas for development in sufficient detail in progress records and reviews. Students are unclear on their achievements. Progress notes are too brief with work-based learners merely advised to complete NVQ units.

Leadership and management

137. Management of the area is satisfactory. Staff work well together and managed the recent move to new premises appropriately. Communication is good and is assisted by a variety of meetings. Courses are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet local needs. Self-assessment is insufficiently thorough. Pass rate data are readily collected, but they are not effectively analysed nor used to identify actions to improve retention and pass rates. Internal verification is satisfactory. Lesson observations are insufficiently self-critical to ensure improvements. Weaknesses were not accurately identified in the self-assessment report. Management of work-based training is unsatisfactory. There is little achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks by learners. Staff training has taken place to standardise assessment practice between assessors. However, action to effectively support students to achieve their modern apprenticeship frameworks has been slow. There is insufficient observation by assessors of learners in their workplaces to aid their progress. A comprehensive report by the college realistically identifies the many improvements needed.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- very imaginative teaching in graphics and performing arts

- high standard of work in glass, ceramics, sculpture and on many creative studies courses

- high-quality, purpose-built accommodation and specialist resources to support learning

- wide range of courses with good opportunities for progression

- excellent provision for students on GNVQ intermediate art and design.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on diploma in foundation art and design and AS-level fine art in 2003

- low retention rates on a significant minority of courses in 2003

- insufficient challenge for able students in fine art subjects.

Scope of provision

138. The college offers a wide range of visual and performing arts courses. Full-time provision is mainly at level 3 and includes eight national diplomas in a variety of subjects including fine art, fashion and textiles, graphic design, 3D design, performing arts and dance. A wide range of subjects are also offered at AS-level and GCE A2 level. The professional development award in glass design is at levels 2 to 5 and both part-time and full-time level 2 and 3 courses in a variety of glass techniques. There are entry level courses covering art, music and performing arts. There is a good range of accredited part-time and adult provision offered in the day, evening and, for some courses, at the weekend. The college has a small HE provision. At the time of inspection, there were 222 students aged 16 to 18 and 1,189, mainly part-time, adults.

Achievement and standards

139. Most courses have high pass rates. Intermediate courses in art and design, garment making, the national diploma for graphic design and many part-time textile courses gained 100% pass rates. Pass rates for minority ethnic groups are very good, although retention and pass rates for the significant number of international students are not analysed. Retention and pass rates for BTEC foundation in art and design and AS-level fine art were unsatisfactory in 2003. There were low retention rates on a significant minority of courses in 2003. Retention rate strategies to improve the national diploma in design are beginning to take effect, although it is too early to judge their full impact.

140. The standard of work is good in most areas and of high quality in ceramics, sculpture, creative studies textile courses and the foundation diploma in art and design. Glass work is outstanding. Excellent progress is made by GNVQ intermediate students who demonstrate well-developed skills. Many students who complete this course gain high grades. Most national diploma students progress

at a good rate.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	18	36	16
		% retention	89	88	88
		% pass rate	88	80	100
Garment making intermediate	2	No. of starts	154	48	52
		% retention	90	98	94
		% pass rate	98	100	100
AS-level art studies/fine art	3	No. of starts	73	101	122
		% retention	68	78	72
		% pass rate	80	76	65
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	32	31	31
		% retention	53	52	74
		% pass rate	82	100	83

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

Quality of education and training

141. Most teaching is good or better. In graphics and performing arts, teaching is highly imaginative. In performing arts, the section is managed like a small theatre company to provide a realistic vocational setting. Students participate in all aspects of theatre production. In one well-managed drama lesson, students rehearsed for a production of *Pinocchio* based on life-size puppetry. The activity was highly demanding and effectively enabled students to develop and co-ordinate both their vocal and physical performance. Teachers creatively use interactive whiteboards to develop learning in graphic design. In one lesson on drawing development, the whiteboard was effectively used to stimulate students to think more widely about symbolism and graphics stemming from Dylan Thomas' poetry. Many assignments actively promote diversity and equality including an innovative competition-based project given at induction on diversity. There is insufficient challenge for more able students in fine art subjects. In less effective lessons, students are not developing skills appropriate to their ability and work slowly. In theory lessons, discussions are often led by the more confident students and teachers fail to involve those students who are less confident. Overall, the teaching of adults is good.

142. There is high-quality, purpose-built accommodation throughout the provision. This gives a stimulating working environment for students. Art studios and workshops are spacious and well equipped with good natural light. Most specialist equipment meets industrial standards. Facilities at the international glass centre are outstanding. The centre is part of the virtual glass academy project set up by the glass research institute in Sweden. This involves six European partners. Students use an excellent CD-ROM demonstrating various glass making and decoration techniques. Students are provided with many of the materials they need by the college. Vocational certificate of education (VCE) art and design students studying at the Rowley site do not use the extensive range of specialist provision at Mons Hill. Most academic and technical staff are well qualified. There is good technician support in practical areas.

143. Assessment practice is fair and thorough. Assignment briefs are clear and well written. Most verbal and written feedback constructively informs students of their development. There is a thorough system of internal verification.

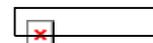
144. A wide range of courses provide good opportunities for progression. Many college general art subjects permit progress from levels 1 to 4. The extensive community textile provision is available in over 30 venues across the region. Enrichment opportunities are good on most courses. Effective use is made of live projects and trips to extend learning. Programmes are well promoted. There is good integration of key skills on most vocational courses. Lower-level literacy and numeracy is taught in the same way. Opportunities for collecting evidence for all key skills are clearly signposted within assignments, providing good subject context and relevance for students.

145. Pastoral support for students is good. All full-time and substantial part-time students receive regular tutorials in which personal or course-related issues are discussed. Induction is very effective in enabling students to settle into their courses quickly, including those who start late. There are successful procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Teachers are active in contacting and supporting students who are absent from lessons. In observed lessons, attendance was good. Individual learning plans are not effectively used. In many, short-term and long-term targets lack detail and often do not reflect the individual students' learning needs.

Leadership and management

146. The management of visual and performing arts is satisfactory. Effective communication is maintained through regular team and faculty meetings. However, management across all sites is not fully co-ordinated. Staff are generally well informed and supported by their managers. Opportunities for staff development are very good. Most quality assurance systems are effective. However, the self-assessment report and subsequent development plans lack critical analysis and sufficient detail. There is a strong commitment to, and promotion of, equality of opportunity. There is excellent deployment of resources. Adult and community provision are co-ordinated well.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high retention rates in AS-level and GCE A2 sociology and GCE A2 history

- high pass rates in GCE A2 law, sociology and history

- good levels of support for individual students in lessons

- consistently good planning of programmes

- good teacher-devised resources.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates in GCSE and AS-level psychology and access to HE

- low pass rates in AS-level history and access to HE

- some uninspiring teaching

- insufficient access to ICT and use of ILT

- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum.

Scope of provision

147. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in sociology, psychology, law, history, geography, government and politics, economics, general studies, religious studies and citizenship. Most of these subjects are available to all students. There are also GCSEs in sociology and psychology. In addition, access to HE courses can be taken as full-time and part-time programmes. There are over 700 enrolments to the courses and the majority of students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

148. Overall students' achievements are satisfactory, but inconsistent over time. There are few clear trends over the last three years. In 2003, in GCE A2 psychology, pass rates were at the national average, but below national averages for AS-level and GCSE psychology. Similarly, in history, AS-level pass rates are below national averages, but at GCE A2 pass rates are above national averages. Retention rates were unsatisfactory in GCSE and AS-level psychology and at the national average in AS-level history and sociology and GCE A2 psychology. In some programmes, such as access to HE, retention and pass rates were both below national averages for two of the last three years. In contrast, in GCE A2 history, retention rates were above national averages for both of the last two years and in GCE A2 sociology retention and pass rates were above national averages for the last two years.

149. Students on AS-level and GCE A2 courses produce satisfactory or good standards of work in most subjects. There is effective development of higher order skills of analysis and evaluation between their AS-level and GCE A2 studies. Students studying on access to HE programmes also reach a satisfactory standard of work and apply theory to practice and are developing the necessary skills to support progression to HE. Students achieve good levels of study skills in preparing for examinations.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
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GCSE psychology (1 year)	2	No. of starts	18	*	23
		% retention	28	*	43
		% pass rate	80	*	60
GCE A2 history	3	No. of starts	*	16	24
		% retention	*	94	100
		% pass rate	*	93	96
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	35	54	39
		% retention	80	81	82
		% pass rate	68	77	72
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	83	96	100
		% retention	81	83	87
		% pass rate	72	79	54
GCE A2 law	3	No. of starts	*	38	38
		% retention	*	87	92
		% pass rate	*	94	86
AS-level psychology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	127	169	178
		% retention	77	64	71
		% pass rate	84	67	71
AS-level sociology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	102	96	87
		% retention	83	64	71
		% pass rate	81	80	79
Access to HE (1 year)	3	No. of starts	101	99	107
		% retention	50	76	66
		% pass rate	94	73	60
GCE A2 sociology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	*	42	41
		% retention	*	90	93
		% pass rate	*	95	95

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

150. Most teaching is good or better. Schemes of work form effective planning documents against which the development of subjects are structured, but individual lesson plans in some subjects lack sufficient detail to indicate how the learning needs of all students are to be addressed. The more effective lessons are well structured and teachers use an appropriate range of activities, contemporary materials, and equipment. For example, in an access to HE psychology lesson, simple exercises that involved remembering letters and then numbers enabled students to grasp key concepts of encoding in memory. Good levels of support are given to individual students in lessons. In a GCE A2 sociology lesson, the teacher drew upon students' experiences at work to illustrate the difficulty in identifying perpetrators of white-collar crime such as illegal use of telephones. A well-prepared workbook for a GCE A2 psychology lesson presented students with a range of activities from a simple crossword to preparation of a detailed essay plan that enabled them to progress at their own pace. Students confidently tackled the tasks and clearly enjoyed learning. In a number of

lessons, poor planning and classroom management resulted in dull and uninspiring teaching. In these lessons the most able students were not challenged and teachers often failed to ensure that all students understood the work.

151. Teachers are well qualified in their specialist subjects, but a quarter of teachers have yet to gain the certificate of education teaching qualification. There is a formal appraisal system that identifies development needs that result in substantial professional development, but this is not always linked effectively to the college strategic priorities.

152. Accommodation is generally satisfactory. Teachers produce their own learning materials that are of high quality. There is good access to IT in the resource-based learning centre. However, access to IT facilities within classrooms is unsatisfactory and impairs the use of ILT as medium for enhancing teaching and learning. There are good library resources at both the Broadway Centre and the Rowley Centre which provide pleasant environments that are well used and are conducive to learning.

153. Assessment is well planned and the assessment practices in most subjects meet the requirements of awarding bodies. The objectives of assigned work are clear with a standard system for setting and returning work. The assessment of students' work is good with teachers taking care to point out specific ways in which students can improve their performance. Work is usually marked and returned promptly. The standards set are appropriate at both AS level and GCE A2 level.

154. Initial assessment of students' abilities effectively diagnoses any individual learning needs. However, there are inadequate systems for ensuring that students take up the necessary support to improve their chances of passing their courses. The outcomes of initial assessment are not used effectively to inform assessment practices or subject-specific skill progression. Individual learning plans contain target grades, but are not used well to set and monitor short-term targets for students. A system for measuring students' progress against previous achievements has recently been introduced, but is not yet being used consistently to identify students who are under performing. Some additional subject-specific support is offered in GCE A2 classes.

155. Enrichment opportunities are good. Students have opportunities to take part in a range of activities including learning to drive, play sport and take additional qualifications. There are also residential field trips undertaken in geography, visits in law and government and politics and a programme of visits to and from universities.

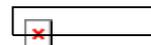
156. The promotion of key skills is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not follow college guidelines to identify and develop key skills through students' main subjects of study and many students regard them as largely irrelevant.

157. Advice and guidance for students are generally good. Students obtain good levels of support for progression to HE, including help in writing university applications and preparation for interviews. However, they also indicate that they receive less help for progression to employment. Parents and guardians receive reports on students' performance in advance of parents' evenings.

Leadership and management

158. Leadership and management are adequate. The humanities self-assessment report is generally self-critical and realistic, although the judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are optimistic. There is appropriate emphasis on equality of opportunity, with all students effectively supported and integrated into the courses. However, the management of the individual subjects is not uniformly good. There is significant variability in the quality of annual reports, the effectiveness in using data and in setting targets for improving retention and pass rates. Systems for reporting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are not used well. Weaknesses identified in previous inspection reports and previous self-assessment reports have not all been resolved.

English language



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many advanced courses
- effective monitoring of student progress
- good resource packs to support learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GCSE
- insufficient stimulating teaching
- English not well co-ordinated across the college.

Scope of provision

159. The college offers courses on both the Broadway and the Rowley Regis sites. Courses are offered in GCSE English language and AS-level and GCE A2 communication studies, English language and English literature. Modules in language and literature are also offered as part of the access programme. Courses are offered in the day and evenings and students have the opportunity to gain the GCE A level in one year. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and are studying full time. There are almost 300 students on the advanced courses and 110 on the GCSE programme. Links with schools are good. The college provides English courses for some schools either on their site or at the college.

Achievement and standards

160. Retention and pass rates are high on most advanced courses. The pass rates on AS-level communication studies and AS-level English literature have been above national averages for the last two years. AS-level language achieved 100% pass rates, but the retention rate for the course is low. The pass rate for GCE A2 English literature is above the national average. The one-year advanced courses are also successful. Pass rates on the GCSE English course are low; they have been below the national average for the last three years. Some of the students are repeating the

course for the second or third time and are struggling to achieve higher grades.

161. The standard of advanced students' written coursework is good. Formal assignments are well planned and students are skilled at redrafting their work. In English literature, for example, students are able to use a wide knowledge of texts to help their arguments. They develop good critical skills and are able to organise their arguments clearly. Listening skills are good, but the oral skills of some students are less well developed. Students at intermediate and advanced levels are developing wider key skills such as how to organise their work and working effectively with others. Attendance at lessons is generally good. Opportunity to participate in enrichment activities such as Millennium Volunteers has given some students increased confidence and work-related skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	197	176	197
		% retention	77	91	73
		% pass rate	34	39	33
GCE A-level communication (1 year)	3	No. of starts	38	23	28
		% retention	89	91	96
		% pass rate	56	95	100
AS-level communication	3	No. of starts	64	59	90
		% retention	76	85	89
		% pass rate	77	96	89
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	111	117	132
		% retention	84	74	90
		% pass rate	84	90	86
GCE A2 English literature	3	No. of starts	*	66	58
		% retention	*	95	97
		% pass rate	*	97	97

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

162. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared and teachers have devised useful resource packs to help learning. However, in a number of lessons, student response lacks enthusiasm. The same teaching methods are often used throughout long sessions. There is heavy reliance on question and answer sessions to check students' understanding, but this is not always used effectively. There is insufficient use of audio-visual aids in some lessons and an insufficient use of IT throughout the provision. Some staff are less skilled than others in using group work as a way of involving students. In a lesson which compared the two main characters in *Of Mice and Men*, students recorded their work on flipcharts and explained it to the rest of the class; each individual in the group was given a role and was fully involved in the task. In another lesson on the same topic, students worked together, but without sufficient guidance, and the teacher did most of the work for them.

163. Students' learning is well monitored. Their attendance is carefully checked and absences are followed-up. There is effective individual support to help them with coursework, both within and outside lessons. Staff make it clear to students the criteria they will be assessed against in their

coursework and encourage them to plan work carefully and to redraft their first efforts. Assignments are carefully chosen to engage students' interests and work is marked promptly. Students receive ample guidance on what they need to do to improve their grades. There is careful monitoring of where students are with their assignments. Advanced level literature students are able to choose from a wide range of texts for their assignments and they benefit from individual tutorials with staff, who have excellent knowledge and passion for their subject. In communications studies and on the access course, students are developing practical language skills, such as the production of leaflets that will appeal to a particular audience. Theatre trips and visits to the college by drama companies are used to enrich the learning.

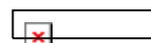
164. Staff are well qualified in their subject areas. Some have national experience as chief examiners or have written textbooks. Accommodation for this curriculum area is satisfactory, but noise from corridors sometimes disrupts lessons. There are no computers in English classes at the Rowley Regis site. There are stimulating wall displays in many classrooms. There are ample books and other resources to help learning within the curriculum area and in the library.

165. There is good personal support for students from subject teachers and from college student services. Help with additional learning support needs is available, but is not always in place sufficiently early in the course. Careers education is given in tutorials and students are given satisfactory help with applications to university. Staff have organised visits to a university to enable students to sample lectures.

Leadership and management

166. There is insufficient co-ordination of English provision across the college. Teachers report to different managers. Teams at each site meet together and there has been some work involving all the staff, but this is insufficient. There is not enough sharing of good practice. There are also inadequate links between the English staff and the basic skills team; this fails to resolve the needs of students who are at pre-GCSE level. Courses are monitored within staff teams and development plans are in place, but these have not been effective in resolving all weaknesses. The provision offers satisfactory value for money. There is good promotion of equal opportunities and diversity within the English provision. Students are encouraged to work on texts that encompass a wide range of cultures. A communications studies project focused on devising posters to resolve discrimination.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- stimulating teaching and learning which engages students

- good initial and diagnostic assessment

- good reinforcement of learning in lessons.

Weaknesses

- insufficient reviewing and monitoring of individual students' progress

- unsatisfactory attendance

- insufficient co-ordination of ESOL across the college.

Scope of provision

167. The college offers part-time ESOL courses at two college centres and at a large number of community venues including schools, community centres, temples, mosques, workplaces and shop premises. The workplace training is provided in two food processing factories. Most of the provision is at entry level. There are 1,134 students studying ESOL.

Achievement and standards

168. Students are offered the opportunity to take a variety of external qualifications as well as achieve an internal college certificate. There is good development of students' language skills. Students at all levels demonstrated a good standard of written and spoken language. The more able students participate well and use what they have learnt in lessons effectively. They complete the set tasks and extended tasks to develop further their language skills. Less able students work at a steady pace and are encouraged to practise and revise their acquired language skills. These students complete set tasks successfully and improve their spoken English.

169. The standard of students' work is good. In effective lessons, students make significant progress in improving their language skills. Students make good progress, building on prior learning and experiences. As most of the students are at entry level, they also benefit from building their confidence and developing their personal and communication skills.

170. Students' attendance is unsatisfactory. At the time of the inspection, the average attendance was 59%. The college is aware of this and procedures are in place to monitor attendance. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report. It is too soon to impact the effectiveness of the attendance monitoring procedures.

Quality of education and training

171. Teaching and learning are stimulating. At all levels, lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Teachers use a range of teaching activities and methods effectively to maintain students' interest. In these lessons, students are actively involved and enjoy the lively interaction and participation. In a level 1 lesson, students worked in small groups and learnt to scan a piece of text for information. The teacher encouraged the students to think independently and made the task a lively and enjoyable one by placing the text on the wall and asking students to work in small groups. They learnt to scan the text on national democracy in their groups, worked well together, and discussed the options until they had extracted the answer from the text. They worked at their own pace and then explained their answers. Students enjoyed the lesson and found learning about national democracy not only interesting, but also fun. In an entry level lesson, students learnt the days of the week and used this new information to construct simple sentences. The teacher used a range of reinforcement methods to effectively develop students' vocabulary until all students were

able to use new words related to daily routines. A range of teaching and learning materials are used to cater for different ability and skill levels. In a well-managed lesson, the teacher effectively integrated ILT into the lesson to aid learning of language. Students used both electronic pictures and animation to prepare a presentation to the group. The lesson engaged students well and developed their language skills.

172. Initial and diagnostic assessment are good; they are thorough and mapped to the new standards. All students intending to study at the college and in the community receive a thorough initial assessment. The assessments are thorough and lead to good placement and grouping of students. All skills are assessed and recorded and students are fully involved in setting their targets and goals.

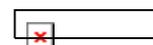
173. In the best lessons, the teacher records progress made with the students. Students say and record what they have learnt during the lesson to set targets for future studies. This is done particularly well with students at entry level. This good practice in monitoring is done by a minority of teachers, but more generally there is insufficient reviewing and monitoring of individual students' learning and progress. Individual learning plans are not always completed and are rarely used to help the planning of learning and teaching. There is often an insufficient learning challenge for more able students. Targets for these students frequently do not build on prior learning or indicate aspirations for progression. Where students' learning is reviewed, the progress towards achievement of individual targets is often not monitored. Homework is set, carefully checked and marked.

174. ESOL staff are well supported. There are good training opportunities and most staff are adequately qualified. Accommodation is satisfactory across college and community centres. There is insufficient access to IT in community venues and this limits students' learning opportunities and teachers' ability to widen the range of teaching activities used. At Wolverhampton Street, ESOL students are offered special IT sessions and attempts have also been made to integrate it within the curriculum. All community venues advertise college welfare services and the college mission.

Leadership and management

175. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Quality assurance arrangements covering internal verification, classroom observations, and self-assessment are managed effectively, but the overall impact of target setting and action planning is reduced by insufficiently reliable data on pass and retention rates. College procedures are followed rigorously for franchised provision and a member of staff has responsibility for monitoring the quality of this provision on a regular basis. The co-ordination of ESOL across college is unsatisfactory. The work is managed through different divisions and currently there is no coherent overview of the ESOL provision in the community, provision in the college and the language support provided to overseas and other students on main college programmes. The effective co-ordination of the ESOL provision is also inhibited by the insufficiently reliable data across the full range of provision. Although ESOL is responsive to local needs, there are insufficient progression opportunities for students to progress easily to other part-time or full-time courses at the college. The college is aware of these issues and the three-year development plan includes the monitoring of retention and pass rates for all 'skill for life' provision including ESOL and the setting of targets for the future.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good range of provision to widen participation

- good promotion of literacy and numeracy in the community
- effective support for students returning to education.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory key skills teaching
- poor planning of individual students' learning programmes
- inadequate provision of literacy and numeracy support cross-college
- ineffective co-ordination of foundation programmes.

Scope of provision

176. The range of literacy and numeracy provision is good and effectively widens participation. There are appropriate courses from pre-entry level to level 1 at all the college sites and in many community venues including schools. Key skills lessons are provided for students attending the main college sites. Attendance on most courses is part time for three to six hours a week, but a minority of students attend full time. Attendance arrangements for parents are flexible and courses can last up to 24 weeks. Specialist courses are provided during the year and include the development of literacy skills using IT. Over 600 students have attended literacy and numeracy support since September 2003 in addition to those receiving key skills support for application of number and communications at levels 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

177. Progress in most literacy and numeracy classes is satisfactory and students develop their skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and everyday numeracy. In one literacy class, students were writing about famous people. They used the Internet well for research as part of the task and also developed skills in the use of the Internet for research, understanding complex texts and writing reports by using their research findings selectively. Pass rates on literacy and numeracy national tests have been low. In May and June 2003, 185 students sat national tests and only 57 passed. Students have been entered for tests before they had the necessary skills to succeed.

178. The pass rates of key skills in some areas of learning and some learning centres have been low. However, there have been some improvements in pass rates between 2002 and 2003. For example, in sports, leisure and tourism the pass rates of application of number at level 2 has increased from 7% to 44% and communications level 1 from no achievements to 67%. In some areas, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, students develop good levels of key skills.

Quality of education and training

179. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of teaching methods to meet the needs of individual students. In a numeracy lesson, the teacher used ILT to demonstrate the use of graphs and charts and students were provided with comprehensive explanations on their use. The types of graphs and charts dealt with topics that students might experience in every day life and students were developing good interpretive skills. In another lesson, the parents of young children were actively involved in developing resources to help their children's numeracy development. They gained a good understanding of the concepts of teaching children number recognition.

180. The teaching of key skills is unsatisfactory. Many key skills lessons do not consider the individual needs of students and the range of abilities in the classes and for some students the work is either too complex or too easy. Often, classes are too large to manage effectively. In some lessons, teachers cover key skills at different levels and in different subjects and it is not always possible for them to provide students with sufficient timely support. There are areas of good practice in the teaching of key skills in health, social care and public services and hair and beauty.

181. Individual students' learning programmes are poorly planned. Learning plans have general targets such as improve spelling, attendance and modify behaviour. There are insufficiently detailed short-term targets to measure students' progress over an appropriate period of time such as a lesson or a week. Some students' plans confirm that they will be entering for the national test in literacy and numeracy, but there was insufficient detail to ensure they had developed the necessary competences and many fail.

182. Resources are satisfactory. There is a sufficient range of textbooks, dictionaries and workbooks, but there are insufficient IT resources at some centres. Students have a satisfactory understanding of key induction topics including health and safety, equality of opportunity and course content. The process of initial assessment is satisfactory, but a significant minority of students across college are not assessed. The assessment of qualifications is satisfactory, although internal verification has not always identified the slow progress of some students.

183. The promotion of literacy and numeracy in the community is good. The provision of basic skills is effectively marketed. Training has been provided to library staff to create an awareness of the issues facing people with literacy problems so that visits to the library can be a positive experience. There are good links with local organisations and agencies to promote the uptake of literacy and numeracy qualifications.

184. Provision of literacy and numeracy support across the college is inadequate. It has not been possible to determine the number of students who have had an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy. However, the numbers of students receiving specific literacy and numeracy support in relation to their assessed needs is low. Students are able to attend the study support centre at the college's main site for support, but attendance is often low. Students receive additional learning support in relation to their qualifications, but their development of specific and wider literacy and numeracy skills is not adequately resolved.

185. Support for students returning to education is effective. Staff work closely with, and provide effective teaching to, students returning to education. Parents are encouraged to join classes that are conveniently located in local schools. Students develop a good understanding on the use of appropriate teaching methods and resources to support their children's learning. There is good attendance at adult literacy and numeracy classes. Staff are very supportive of students, effectively helping them to overcome the embarrassment that some feel when they cannot read or write. Overall support for students is satisfactory and teachers help students with any problems as they arise.

Leadership and management

186. The co-ordination of literacy, numeracy and language courses and support is ineffective. The

provision is managed through three faculties and responsibilities are not all clearly defined. There is insufficient understanding by some managers and teachers on the differences between additional learning support and the provision of literacy and numeracy. The faculty with management responsible for literacy and numeracy courses is not responsible for cross-college literacy and numeracy. There is some sharing of good practice through meetings and through local informal arrangements between staff, but this is not widely spread. Resources at centres are not adequately distributed. For example, one centre has computers in many classrooms, but at another centre while the staff have good access to computers students often have to leave the class to access the centrally located IT. Good practice in some curriculum areas in key skills has not been shared and adopted. All staff have contributed to the self-assessment report but many aspects identified as strengths are no more than normal practice.

Part D: College data

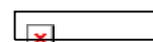
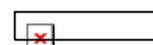


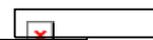
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	29	51
2	33	23
3	36	11
4/5	0	1
Other	2	14
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	638	651	3
Land-based provision	12	31	0
Construction	330	1,035	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	358	3,843	9
Business administration, management and professional	699	3,219	8
Information and communication	1,346	8,725	21

technology			
Retailing, customer service and transportation	41	577	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	625	2,626	7
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	204	603	2
Health, social care and public services	1,305	6,878	17
Visual and performing arts and media	597	2,666	7
Humanities	694	779	3
English, languages and communication	637	944	3
Foundation programmes	1,952	6,491	16
Total	9,438	39,068	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
		1	Starters excluding transfers	1,438	1,277	1,207	5,172
	Retention rate %	79	77	77	80	83	83
	National average %	74	75	75	70	73	74
	Pass rate %	74	80	84	74	78	79
	National average %	64	64	66	65	62	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,035	1,806	1,369	4,913	5,572	4,362
	Retention rate %	74	74	72	67	69	54
	National average %	69	70	70	70	70	69
	Pass rate %	67	68	70	54	58	73
	National average %	66	67	68	65	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,240	3,685	3,146	3,932	4,096	3,484
	Retention rate %	66	71	79	62	68	57
	National average %	62	67	75	67	67	70
	Pass rate %	71	68	78	58	50	71

	National average %	69	70	73	63	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	22	*	*	813	596	445
	Retention rate %	73	*	*	56	62	58
	National average %	61	**	**	66	65	70
	Pass rate %	63	*	*	51	55	62
	National average %	**	**	**	50	49	49

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

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

* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation

** data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	62	33	5	111
Level 2 (intermediate)	60	35	5	74
Level 1 (foundation)	38	38	25	40
Other sessions	50	42	8	38
Totals	56	36	8	263