



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Tameside College

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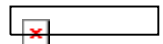
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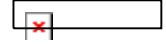
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Basic information about the college

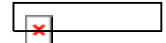


Name of college:	Tameside College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	John T Carroll
Address of college:	Tameside College Ashton Centre, Beaufort Road Ashton-under-Lyne Tameside, Greater Manchester, OL6 6NX
Telephone number:	0161 908 6600
Fax number:	0161 908 6611
Chair of governors:	Kath Rigby
Unique reference number:	130516
Name of reporting inspector:	Colin Evans
Dates of inspection:	27 September-1 October 2004

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Tameside College is a large general further education (FE) college, formed in 1999 as a result of a merger between Tameside College of Technology and Hyde Clarendon sixth form college. It is situated eight miles east of Manchester City Centre in the borough of Tameside. It is a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) designated Beacon College. There are 18 state secondary schools and 3 special schools in Tameside. There is also one independent school. Two schools have sixth forms. There is one other FE college in Tameside, Ashton under Lyne Sixth Form College. Within a 10 mile radius of the Tameside College there are seven other general FE colleges and several sixth form colleges. A small number of training providers operate in the borough.

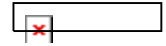
The borough of Tameside has a population of around 213,000 and consists of nine towns, Ashton-under-Lyne and Hyde being the largest. Unemployment in Tameside is lower than the national average. The percentage of residents from minority ethnic groups, 5%, is below the national average. Employment in the manufacturing sector is high in Tameside. Much of the employment in Tameside is low paid and in declining sectors such as metal manufacture, textiles and goods manufacture. Tameside residents have some of the lowest rates of pay in the Greater Manchester sub-region and almost a third of households do not have access to a car. The percentage of pupils aged 15 who achieved five A* to C grades at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in 2003 was 46% compared with a national average of 53%. The percentage of school leavers continuing in full-time post-16 education in Tameside was 68% in 2003 against a national average of 72%.

In 2003/04, Tameside College enrolled 12,500 Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded FE students, of whom, 2,109 were full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 801 were full-time adult students. The majority of part-time students are adults. Over 500 students were enrolled on higher education (HE) programmes and more than 600 students on work-based training programmes. In full-time equivalent terms, about 40% of the students were enrolled on level 3 courses and 25% each on courses at levels 1 and 2. Some 85% of the students live within five miles of the Ashton site. The college has provision in all learning areas although there are very small numbers in land-based provision and retailing, customer service and transportation.

The college has three main centres. The Ashton Centre, the college's largest campus, houses much of the vocational provision and also the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Hyde Clarendon sixth form centre houses much of the college's academic work. Much of the health and social care work, teacher education, and some business technology are located at the Hyde centre. The college has information technology (IT) centres in Denton and Droylsden and outreach centres across the borough. The college's centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in mechanical and electrical engineering is based at the Ashton Centre.

The college's mission is to be at the heart of its community. The college aims to provide access to high quality teaching, training and learning opportunities to individuals, and to work in partnership with local employers, agencies and other educational institutions to widen participation and to promote excellence in all that it does.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged teaching and learning and students' achievements to be outstanding in engineering and in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, good in nine curriculum areas and satisfactory in one curriculum area. Work-based learning is good in hairdressing and beauty therapy, and satisfactory in three areas. The college's key strengths and weaknesses and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- the large proportion of enrolled level 1 and 2 students who achieve their qualifications

- outstanding provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for engineering students

- much excellent accommodation

- the additional learning support provided for students

- productive partnerships with a wide range of external organisations

- financial management

- the accuracy and accessibility of management information

- attention to equality and diversity.

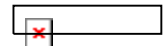
What should be improved

- the retention rates of students on level 3 courses

- the low numbers of students aged 16 to 18 achieving key skills qualifications
- the strategic management of key skills and Skills for Life across the college
- the use of information and learning technology (ILT) in some curriculum areas
- the rigour of the lesson observation system
- the proportion of apprentices who achieve the full apprenticeship framework.

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

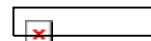


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	Good. Pass rates on most advanced courses are high. Retention rates are low on some courses. The teaching of science is consistently good. Some of the mathematics teaching is unimaginative. Students receive good individual academic and personal support from their teachers. Facilities for the use of ILT in lessons are insufficient.
Construction	Good. Work-based learning is satisfactory . Retention and pass rates on most courses are high. Most of the teaching is of high quality. Key skills teaching is effective. Students who have additional learning needs are well supported. Progression opportunities are underdeveloped. Some workshop practices are unsatisfactory. Shortages of some hand-tools slow students' progress.
Engineering	Outstanding. Pass and retention rates are high on many courses. Much of the teaching is of high quality. Students develop good practical skills. A few foundation students are not supervised sufficiently during workshop activity. Accommodation and resources

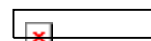
	are excellent. Students with additional learning needs are well supported. Partnerships with schools and employers are productive. Curriculum management is effective.
Business technology	Good. Pass and retention rates are high. Much of the teaching is of high quality. Office workshop provision is highly effective. The provision is inappropriate for some students. Key skills development is unsatisfactory.
Computing and business management	Good. Work-based learning is satisfactory . Pass rates are high on many courses. Retention rates on some courses are low. Much of the teaching is of high quality. Full-time students receive good personal support. Curriculum management is good. Few full-time students achieve key skills qualifications.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Pass rates are high on most courses. Retention rates are low on the national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 1 course in food and drink service. Much of the teaching is of high quality. In a few lessons teaching is insufficiently challenging. Students' practical work is of a high standard. Links with industry are productive. Students are well supported.
Hair and beauty	Good. Work-based learning is good . Pass rates are high on most courses. Some students make slow progress. Some practical work is at too low a level. ILT is used effectively in teaching. Specialist accommodation is good. Students' progress is monitored closely. Work-based learning is well managed. Framework achievement has improved significantly.
Health and social care	Good. Work-based learning is satisfactory . Pass rates on level 3 courses are high. Much of the teaching is of high quality. In some lessons to level 1 and 2 students the teaching is insufficiently challenging. ILT is used insufficiently. The rate of achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is low. Partnership arrangements are productive. Curriculum leadership and management are good.
Humanities	Good. Pass rates on the access courses are high. Teaching on these courses is stimulating and varied. The use of ILT is insufficiently integrated into the teaching. The recruitment of under-represented groups is successful. Support for students is effective. The pass rate for the key skill of communication is low.
Foundation programmes: literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Pass rates in GCSE English are high. The retention rate on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses is high, but pass rates are low. Workplace literacy and numeracy provision is strong. Most of the teaching is satisfactory. Some teaching fails to meet the individual needs of all the students. The management of the Skills for Life and key skills provision is unsatisfactory.
Foundation programmes: provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, entry to employment and the entry level framework programme	Good. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding . The entry to employment (E2E) and entry level provision is satisfactory . E2E students have few opportunities to gain qualifications. Teaching and curriculum management are excellent for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some teaching strategies are inappropriate for E2E and entry level provision. Resources are excellent. Diagnostic assessment and progress tracking are very good for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and E2E students.

How well is the college led and managed?



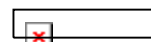
Leadership and management are good. Pass rates are generally high. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 are high. Few students achieve key skills qualifications. The overall quality of teaching is good. Student satisfaction is high. Excellent partnership working is helping to widen participation. Community partners speak highly of the college's initiatives. The college serves its community well. Governors are appropriately involved in determining the character, mission and strategy of the college. Governance is good. It focuses appropriately on quality and its improvement. However, governors and managers have been insufficiently responsive to the problems associated with key skills achievements. The college takes effective action to promote equality and diversity. Staff development activity links training and development to the strategic aims of the college. The staff appraisal scheme provides an appropriate emphasis on performance management. The management information system provides accurate and reliable information. Staff use data well to inform corporate and curriculum decision making. Quality assurance arrangements have helped raise achievements or maintain them at high levels. The college's assessment of the quality of its teaching is overgenerous. The self-assessment report fails to identify the weaknesses in key and basic skills provision. The management of the curriculum is good overall. There is strong leadership at course and curriculum area levels. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory. Financial management is very good. The college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



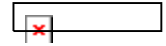
The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. The college offers a wide range of courses which are well matched to the communities served. The opportunities provided for students with low incoming levels of attainment are extensive. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. There is extensive community-based provision, often in areas of economic deprivation. Strategies to increase recruitment from areas of social and economic deprivation and to improve retention rates of minority ethnic groups have been successful. The college retains a large proportion of its students at levels 1 and 2 and has improved retention rates at level 3. Support for students is good. The college takes effective action to promote equality and diversity. It is fulfilling its commitments under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Most college sites are accessible to students with restricted mobility. The proportion of minority ethnic students is larger than that in the local population. There are some gaps in the range of courses, for example, in the ESOL provision.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The college provides good support for students. Support services are well managed and promoted effectively. Students value highly the support they receive. Pre-entry advice and guidance is good. Initial assessment identifies the support required by each full-time student. Additional learning support is provided for most students who require it in a timely fashion and often within a vocational context. It is effective in raising retention and pass rates for these students. Students' academic progress is monitored closely. Students identified as at risk of withdrawing from their courses early receive additional attention. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. The help provided to students applying to HE or to employment is well developed. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is effective in most curriculum areas. A translation service helps parents of minority ethnic background when they attend college meetings.

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

- the friendly atmosphere and supportive staff

- access to a wide range of equipment and other facilities

- the broad range of qualifications available

- practical workshop activities

- the good teaching

- the provision of additional learning support.

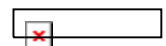
What they feel could be improved

- the price of food in the canteen

- car park security

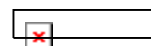
- access to enrichment and social activities.

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



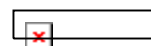
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	67	31	2
19+ and WBL*	70	21	9
Learning 16-18	64	35	1
19+ and WBL*	67	26	7

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. In the lessons observed, students work at, or above, the standard required for their course of study. In just over half the lessons, their level of attainment was good and, in very few, were they working at a level which was less than should be expected. This picture of attainment is the same at all course levels and for students of both age categories. Engineering students develop good practical skills. In welding, they develop high levels of competence. Students of care gain skills which are appropriate to the employment opportunities they are aiming for. In hospitality, their written work is good and they work to commercial standards in the kitchens, bakeries and restaurants. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve challenging individual learning targets.

2. The inspection was carried out shortly after most students had enrolled. It is expected that students' attendance is high at this time and it was in most areas of learning. For example, in engineering, hospitality and catering, and in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, E2E and the entry level framework programmes, it was close to or above 90% compared

with a national average for all inspections carried out in similar colleges of 77% in 2003/04. In 8 of the 11 curriculum areas inspected the rate was well above the national average for the curriculum area. In no area was the attendance rate below average.

3. In the following paragraphs on students' achievement, the college rates are compared with all general FE and tertiary colleges in England. At the time of the inspection the national rates for 2003/04 were not available.

16 to 18 year olds

4. The overall retention rate for courses at level 1 is high. In 2001 and 2002, it was well above the national average: 13% and 10% above respectively. In 2003, the rate fell, but was still 4% above the average. College data for 2004 show that the retention rate increased to 83%, 7% above the previous year's average. The retention rate at level 2 has improved steadily in the three years to 2004. It was well below the national average in 2002, close to the national average in 2003, and college data shows that the rate improved in 2004 to be well above the average for the previous year. The overall retention rate for courses at level 3 was low in each of the three years to 2003; well below the national average. College data for 2004 shows improved performance with the rate close to the 2003 average.

5. Overall pass rates at levels 1 and 2 are high. At both levels, and in each of the three years to 2003, they have been well above national averages. For courses at level 3, the pass rate was high in 2001 and 2002, but fell to a position close to the national average in 2003.

6. A large proportion of the students who start courses leading to NVQ levels 1 to 3, general national vocational qualifications (GNVQ) levels 1 to 3 and their precursors at level 3, and those who start general certificate of education (GCE) A2 and advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) qualifications are successful in achieving the qualification. For example, in 2003, students achieved high levels of success, well above national average, on courses leading to all these qualifications except the precursors at level 3 and AS level, where success was similar to national averages and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) qualifications where success was well below average. Preliminary results for 2004 show that, for the five qualifications, GNVQ levels 1 to 3, AS level and GCE A2, where nearly all achievement data is known, success on three, GNVQ level 1, AVCE and GCE A2, is high and is at the average for the other two. The college measures the performance of its 16 to 18 students at GCE A2 using a system which is based on an early version of a commercially available system. Its analysis shows that most students do at least as well as predicted by their incoming level of attainment at GCSE level.

7. A small proportion of full-time students is enrolled on the key skills qualifications of communication, IT and application of number, and few of these achieve a qualification. Out of the 1,400 full-time students who are deemed by the college to be at a level of attainment which is suitable to enable them to undertake key skills courses rather than Skills for Life courses, fewer than 140 achieve a key skill in any of the three key skills. The college policy is not to enrol students for key skills until they have made good progress in developing the relevant portfolio. Few do so and few of these achieve a key skill qualification.

8. Achievement of full apprenticeship frameworks is low. Only about 10% of the apprentices or advanced apprentices who started in the four years to 2002 achieved the full framework. Key skills achievement is low, limiting the framework success rate. In this period, NVQ achievement as a percentage of apprenticeship starts has also been low: 27% on the advanced programmes and 33% on the foundation programmes. The rate is better when compared with those who complete their planned programme time: 65% for the advanced programmes and nearly 100% for the foundation programmes.

9. Pass and retention rates for short qualifications are close to the national average.

Adult learners

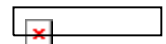
10. Retention rates for courses at levels 1 and 2 are high. At these levels, and for each of the three years to 2003, the rates have been well above national averages for similar colleges. For courses at level 3, the retention rate was well below the national average in both 2002 and 2003. College data for 2004 shows that retention rates at levels 1 and 2 have maintained their high levels and at level 3 the rate has improved significantly and is now similar to the average for 2003. In 2003, the retention rate of male students at level 3 was below the national average for this gender and well below the rate for female students, which was close to their national average.

11. A large proportion of students who complete their courses achieve the qualification. Pass rates are consistently high at levels 2 and 3. At level 2, for example, they have been at least 10% above the national average in the three years to 2003, and at level 3 at least 7% above. At level 1, the pass rate was well above average in 2001 and 2002, and slightly above in 2003.

12. Pass rates in 2002/03 were high on all 5 of the qualification groups where enrolments were above 100: NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3, GNVQ precursor qualifications at level 3 and AS level. Retention rates were low on three of the five qualification groups: NVQ level 3, GNVQ precursor qualifications at level 3 and AS level. They were high on NVQ level 1 courses and average on NVQ level 2 courses. As a result, the percentage of enrolled students who achieve the qualification is high on one: NVQ level 1, and similar to the national average on the other four.

13. Pass and retention rates for short qualifications are close to the national average.

Quality of education and training



14. Teaching and students' learning are generally good. Teaching was good or better in 68% of the lessons inspected and less than satisfactory in 4%. This profile is better than that observed in similar colleges in 2003/04: 62% were good or better and 7% were unsatisfactory. The percentage of very good or excellent lessons was also higher than the national average: 35% compared with 23%. The grade profile for learning presents a similarly favourable picture. A slightly higher proportion of lessons to adult students were unsatisfactory than is the case nationally.

15. In 8 of the 11 curriculum areas which were inspected the teaching profile was significantly more positive than the national average for each area. Only in one area, literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision, was the profile significantly less positive. In six areas, there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In none was the level of unsatisfactory teaching greater than that seen nationally.

16. Lessons are generally well planned and include an appropriate variety of activity. For example, in a lesson on lifespan development, an interesting video, worksheets and models were used followed by discussion and questioning of the students. Access students are involved in lively debate, discussion and presentations which are stimulated by informative and well-presented materials. In lessons in several curriculum areas, teachers were observed making good use of their own vocational experience or that of the students to illuminate the teaching. Use is made of an appropriate range of learning materials including models, gapped handouts, worksheets, overhead projector slides and videos. In some lessons, for example, in basic skills teaching, the range of materials used was too narrow. In a few, there was insufficient variety and students lost interest.

17. Teachers' efforts to cater for all the students in the group have mixed results. In catering, and science, for example, teaching is planned carefully to ensure all students, regardless of their ability or level of attainment, learn effectively. Teaching to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding in this respect. In a few lessons, for example, in some in humanities, business technology and E2E teaching, the teaching is not well matched to the needs of higher or lower attaining students.

18. The use of ILT in enhancing the students' learning is variable. In hairdressing, construction, and work-based literacy and numeracy provision, for example, it is used effectively. In science, business technology, and college-based literacy and numeracy it is used insufficiently.

19. Key skills teaching is managed by the individual curriculum areas. Each area has a group of key skills teachers who manage the production of portfolios and teach the taught elements of the course. Following initial assessment of their levels of attainment in key skills, students are placed at an appropriate level and undertake timetabled tuition in each of the key skills up to level 2. Advanced level students are expected to undertake work leading to communication at level 3. College policy is to register students with the awarding body when they are judged to have made good progress in the production of their portfolios. Curriculum management of portfolio production has been weak. Few students, and a reducing number each year, have completed their portfolios and been entered for the external tests. A small proportion of these actually achieve the key skills qualifications. In 2003/04, the management arrangements were strengthened and a full-time key skills coordinator appointed. It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of these changes.

20. The quality of the teaching of key skills is similar to that for the college's teaching as a whole. In the lessons observed, the key skills were placed in an appropriate vocational context. There was a suitable variety of activity and teaching met the needs of most students. At level 3, there is insufficient attention given to the development of communication. In some curriculum areas, there is insufficient attention to the development of key skills within the vocational teaching.

21. The college has improved much of its accommodation since the last inspection. The college's general accommodation is well maintained and welcoming, and has a professional appearance which has been enhanced by the many displays of students' work.

22. Curriculum areas have dedicated teaching and general accommodation which is, in most areas, at least of a very high standard. In some areas, for example, engineering, and the Dovestones accommodation for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the accommodation is outstanding. In hospitality and catering, the restaurants and kitchen areas are excellent and in hairdressing and beauty therapy, the salons are large and spacious and the reception area reflects high commercial standards. A few rooms are not up to this standard. For example, some science laboratories are cramped and restrict free movement, some computer accommodation is not cooled adequately. Access for students with restricted mobility is generally good. In a few locations, aspects of the accommodation, for example, double doors, make access for wheelchair users more difficult than it might be. Crèche facilities are available at the Ashton and Hyde centres.

23. Most curriculum areas have at least a satisfactory level of specialist resources and, in some areas, the resources are outstanding. In engineering, the resources are excellent with, for example, up-to-date machine tools and modern vehicle body equipment. Dovestones and hospitality and catering have a wide range of high quality equipment. A few areas have equipment which is unsatisfactory. For example, some science equipment is outdated.

24. The library is well equipped. It has a good range of books and specialist journals, CD-ROMs, DVDs and audio-visual equipment. It houses a sufficient number of quiet study areas. These stocks are augmented by the sets of text books and other materials maintained in the curriculum areas.

25. Investment in information and communications technology (ICT) has been significant. The college has developed a virtual learning environment, purchased over 1,500 computers, 10 interactive whiteboards and around 60 computer data projectors. The ratio of computers to students is good and most staff have good access to computers. The network is robust and reliable, and provides good access to the Internet and the college's intranet. The intranet holds a wide range of management and teaching documentation including college policies, strategies and procedures, minutes of meetings and teaching schemes. Most teaching rooms have access to the network. In addition to the college's general learning resource areas, where computers are available to all students, most areas of learning also have their own high quality computer resources. In a few areas, for example, in parts of construction, the computers are not fully reliable. Some science rooms and laboratories do not have sufficient up-to-date ILT equipment.

26. Teachers are well qualified vocationally and a large proportion of the full-time teachers have a teaching qualification. About half the part-time teachers hold a teacher qualification. The college has plans to improve the proportion of part-time teachers who hold a teaching qualification. Staff turnover is low.

27. The procedures to identify and respond to full-time students' additional learning needs are efficient and supportive. Most full-time students undertake an initial assessment prior to starting their course to determine their need for additional literacy and numeracy support. More specific assessments, for example, of practical aptitude or social skills, are also carried out in some curriculum areas. The initial assessments do not always identify some literacy issues, for example, basic spelling difficulties. Additional learning support needs are identified and, in most cases, appropriate support processes are quickly put in place. In a few curriculum areas, for example, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and literacy and numeracy, the results of initial assessment are not taken fully into account when planning teaching.

28. Students' progress is monitored closely. Students have individual learning plans. These are used to inform progress review meetings which are held with each student at least four times a year. The learning targets set at these meetings are effective in motivating students to work better. In literacy and numeracy basic skills provision, the individual learning plans are not used effectively to plan the teaching. The quality of individual tutorials with part-time students is mixed. Whilst generally effective, they are unsatisfactory in some areas, for example, in business management and computing, and in ESOL provision.

29. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are kept well informed of progress. They receive written reports and are invited to attend open evenings. The college provides good support for parents who are non-English speaking. For example, translators are provided at the open evenings to enable them to discuss the progress of their sons and daughters.

30. The assessment of students' practical and written work is generally planned well and carried out effectively. College policies and procedures are clear and set appropriate standards. On most courses, assessment is regular, rigorous and fair. Most students receive feedback on the quality of their work which indicates clearly what they need to do to improve. Overall, the assessment of work-based learners' performance and the monitoring of their progress are at least satisfactory. In construction, they are good.

31. Internal verification procedures are comprehensive and rigorous. The central framework of policies and procedures is clear and supported by a comprehensive range of documentation. The framework is adapted appropriately to suit the needs of each curriculum area. External moderators' reports are generally positive. Issues contained in them are quickly and appropriately responded to.

32. The college offers a wide range of courses. It offers courses in all areas of learning although student numbers in two areas, land-based provision, and in retailing, customer service and transportation, are small. Courses are available from entry level to level 4 in most areas. There are some gaps in the provision. For example, there is little vocational science, part-time computing provision is limited and, in business technology, provision at level 3 is underdeveloped and there are no full-time general secretarial courses. Student surveys conducted by the college indicate that a large proportion of students feel they are on the right course.

33. The college provides a good range of options for students with low levels of attainment at entry to the college. The entry level curriculum framework enables these students to try a selection of vocational areas, prepare for employment and develop their basic skills. It offers a wide range of vocational opportunities and recruits well. The E2E programme also provides valuable opportunities for students to develop their basic skills, develop personally and acquire vocational skills. The specialist centre, Dovestones, provides well for students with profound learning difficulties and offers good progression opportunities. Access provision, for mature students who don't possess the traditional entry requirements for HE has grown rapidly. It offers a wide range of pathways and recruits well.

34. The college has extensive and increasing community-based provision. It provides courses, mainly in ICT and basic skills, at 20 venues across Tameside. Many of these are in geographic areas of economic deprivation. Few ESOL courses take place in community venues. The recruitment of students from postcode areas with a high degree of deprivation has increased significantly in the three years to 2004. The full-time access to HE programme, which takes many such students, has increased recruitment from 15 to 167 in this period. It has also increased recruitment from minority ethnic groups. A large proportion of community students progress from non-vocational to vocational courses in subsequent years.

35. Collaboration with local schools is excellent. The college has played a leading role in developing provision for Key Stage 4 school pupils in the borough. In 2003/04, 22 schools were involved in the provision which facilitates day release or full-time provision at the college, work placement, and support, provided by college staff, for schools delivering applied GCSE courses. Some of the college's provision successfully provides an alternative curriculum for disaffected school pupils. Overall, 400 students aged 14 to 16 attend the college. They go through a formal selection procedure. Teachers receive appropriate staff development. The lessons are prepared carefully. Teachers usually include an appropriate variety of activity, succeed in maintaining a suitable pace and maintain the interest of all the pupils. In one lesson, the teacher's quiet, patient and never overtly critical approach succeeded in motivating a group of pupils, many of whom had been excluded from school. In spite of close teacher supervision and encouragement, some pupils, when working in the IT workshops, are distracted easily and learn little. Pupils generally make at least satisfactory progress and many achieve qualifications. A large proportion progress to mainstream college provision. The college also offers a well-attended summer college for 12 to 14 year olds. Six week taster courses for disaffected or excluded year 10 pupils are also provided.

36. Links with employers are very good. The college and its provision are very well regarded by employers. Courses are tailored to meet employers' needs and are provided both at the college and on employers premises and by modes of attendance and times to suit individual employers. An employer training pilot has successfully involved 18 companies. Through this pilot, over 200 employees have been provided with basic skills teaching, for which, the college gained a national award. A liaison group meets monthly to review developments. Most vocational areas have good links with employers. A well-designed database collates contact information. Surveys of employers' opinions, and breakfast and lunch meetings are used to identify need. The college has contracts with local and nationally-based employers to provide, for example, training in bakery and engineering. There are productive links with care providers and with engineering companies.

37. A CoVE in mechanical and electrical engineering is well established. The implementation of the development plan is well advanced. A new CoVE in care involving a partnership with two other local colleges has just been awarded. The college manages its own apprenticeship programmes in 5 vocational areas and has nearly 300 apprentices on programmes. It also delivers off-the-job training to apprentices of other apprenticeship providers.

38. The college provides a wide range of enrichment activities to the students at the sixth form centre. These are focused mainly on leisure activities and are attended well. Many curriculum areas provide good opportunities for subject enrichment such as visits and visiting speakers and some, for example, hair and beauty therapy, and hospitality and catering, enable students to participate in local and national competitions. A citizenship programme has been piloted and an annual youth parliament election takes place. At the other main sites, in order to limit disruption to teaching timetables, enrichment activity is provided in three-day blocks of activity each year. These include a broad range of vocational and leisure activities, and are also well attended.

39. Support for students is good. The support services are well managed and the services are promoted well to students. The student charter is featured clearly within the cross-college student handbook and most students are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Student satisfaction surveys show most students value highly the support they receive.

40. Students receive comprehensive information on welfare, financial support and childcare. Pre-entry advice and guidance enables students to make an informed choice of course. Services at the main Ashton site are easily accessible and are open until 7pm on four days of the week. Advice and

guidance are also available at the Hyde Clarendon sixth form centre, at Droylsden and Denton community centres and at the Hyde job centre. Induction programmes are structured appropriately. Equality of opportunity is promoted well.

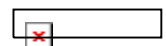
41. Most of the students who have been identified by the initial assessments as requiring additional support take up the help that is offered. In a few areas, for example, in business technology, some students identified are not receiving support. Additional learning support staff work well with teachers. Many of them have vocational qualifications or have taken vocational subject training to ensure that they can provide the support required through an appropriate vocational context. In many curriculum areas, for example, in construction, engineering and hair and beauty therapy, the support provided is outstanding, is provided in an appropriately sensitive way and impacts positively on students' confidence and motivation, and on pass rates. In some lessons to foundation level students, good use is not always made of all the staff present in the classroom. Support for students with hearing impairments is good. Retention and pass rates for students receiving support are at least as high as those for the student body as a whole.

42. Counselling services are readily available. Links with external services have been created to help work with vulnerable students such as those with mental health issues. Guidance materials are available on the college's intranet to help teachers when they are working with these students. The college gained national accreditation for both its advice and guidance services, and its counselling service in 2003. The college has a clear policy for child protection and has identified a person to lead this area of work. Information regarding child protection is available on the intranet. Training has been provided to staff in the support services areas, but the college has been slow to provide training to guide some other staff in the implementation of the policy. Many teachers are not aware of who the responsible person is. Awareness raising training is planned for this academic year, but attendance is not compulsory.

43. Support for students applying to HE or to gain employment is well developed. It includes help with making applications, writing personal statements, compiling curriculum vitae and advice on managing successful interviews. An Aim Higher mentor provides support for more able students, for example, using specific support funds to arrange trips to universities or organise external speakers to provide practical information on HE. The college hold its own careers convention and provides support for parents to help understand the implications of a son or daughter applying to university.

44. The college has developed successful strategies to improve retention rates or maintain them at high levels. These strategies include the identification of students deemed to be at risk of withdrawing from their course early and providing them with extra support. A pilot project has provided enhanced support for students from some minority ethnic groups. This has been received positively and is being expanded to all minority ethnic groups this year. In most curriculum areas, the monitoring of attendance and punctuality is thorough. It is less effective in business technology and humanities.

Leadership and management



45. Leadership and management are good. Pass rates are generally high in comparison with similar colleges. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 are high. College data shows that level 3 retention rates, which were low in 2002 and 2003, improved to the national average in 2004. The overall quality of teaching is good. Some teaching fails to meet the needs of the lower attaining students or stretch sufficiently the more able. Few full-time students aged 16 to 18 are entered for key skills awards and a small proportion of these achieve the qualifications. Action to improve the achievement of work-based learners is showing success. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was good. Student satisfaction, as measured through external surveys, is high. The college has addressed substantially the weaknesses identified in the last inspection.

46. The college serves its community well. A large proportion of the local population enrol at the college. Partnership working is central to the college's mission to widen participation and is excellent. Employer responsiveness and engagement are very good. The college is regarded as the first choice provider by a wide range of employers. Good industry standards are evident on many courses. These factors were influential in the college being awarded two CoVEs, for engineering in 2001, and in social care in 2004. A good range of partnerships has been established. They provide good support for the college in its mission to widen participation for both students aged 14 to 19 and adult students. The college provides teaching in many community centres situated in areas of economic deprivation. The college's large programme for school pupils is successful in achieving good progression to the college's post-16 courses. The college is regarded highly by partner schools for its key role in a wide range of initiatives, including its support for schools delivering applied GCSEs.

47. Governance is good. Governors are strongly representative of the college's community and have a good range of relevant experience. They are appropriately involved in determining the character, mission and strategy of the college. There is a clear and shared strategic direction. The college fulfils its mission very effectively. An annual review of strategy, involving governors, managers and stakeholders, together with reports and briefings at meetings, ensures governors are prepared well to discharge their supervisory role. Governors, informed by good financial and quality data, are appropriately challenging in questioning managers. The chair's appraisal and performance review of the principal is particularly rigorous.

48. Sound systems maintain an effective framework of governance in which the governors, justifiably, have great confidence. The board is appropriately focused on student performance. It is helped in this by the strong operation of the governors' standards committee, which receives good management information to support its monitoring role. However, governors, although alerted to problems with the management of the delivery of key skills, have been slow to implement strategies to address the issues.

49. The college promotes equality and diversity effectively. For example, there is a helpful diversity guide, a parents' handbook and a range of leaflets in minority languages. In 2003/04, the proportion of minority ethnic students enrolled was twice that in the local population. The percentage of adult enrolments from socially deprived areas has increased from 10% to 36% over the last four years. Historically, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students have achieved low success rates at the college. A current project targeted at these cohorts has improved the retention rate of Bangladeshi students significantly. The college is involved in a successful partnership project with two other colleges to recruit more staff from ethnic minority communities. It has increased the percentage in the college from 5% to 9%. Each curriculum or service area sets improvement targets for equality and diversity. These are having little impact in some curriculum areas. The college's response to its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the SENDA is good. Substantial staff training has taken place on these issues.

50. Staff development practice is good. Development activity is linked appropriately to the strategic aims of the college. Both academic and support staff have good opportunities for professional development. Resources for staff development are very good. Whole college staff development days are particularly valued for sharing good practice. The staff appraisal scheme has been remodelled and now provides an appropriate emphasis on performance management. Management succession is well supported by an extensive in-house management development programme.

51. The college's management information system provides accurate and reliable information. Staff use data well to inform corporate and curriculum decision making. There is good online access to policies, procedures and other college-wide information. There is a high degree of ownership and use of data by curriculum and course leaders, and teaching staff to inform their work. Budget holders are provided with appropriate data to support a rigorous performance monitoring system.

52. Quality assurance arrangements have been effective in raising overall retention and pass rates or maintaining them at high levels, and in improving apprentice framework completions by work-based learners. Procedures are comprehensive and clearly set out in the quality manual. Systems for setting and monitoring targets are robust. Compliance is monitored through a rigorous quality

review process. Some of the grades in the self-assessment report are more positive than those given by inspectors. In curriculum areas, a key contributor to this variance is the significant difference in lesson observation grades between those awarded by inspectors and the college internal observations system. The self-assessment report fails to acknowledge sufficiently the ineffective management of key skills provision. The college's arrangements for dealing with complaints are clear and effective.

53. The management of the curriculum is good overall. There is strong leadership at course and curriculum area levels. The college has a well-established management structure and clear lines of accountability. Performance against targets is monitored closely through a detailed, comprehensive and rigorous review process. Management of work-based learning is satisfactory. Tracking and review of trainee progress is particularly good in some areas. Communication throughout the college is good, including an accessible principal, regular meetings and newsletters, and extensive use of e-mail linked to shared folders on the intranet.

54. Financial management is very effective. Managers and governors monitor the college's financial position closely. A strength is the well-embedded budget setting and monitoring system. The college achieves budget surpluses regularly, which are used to support community initiatives, new building projects, maintenance, and investment in equipment. Risk management systems are good. On the basis of student pass rates, class sizes, the range of provision for the local community and the quality of teaching and learning, the college provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Science and mathematics

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most advanced courses

- good teaching in sciences

- good academic and personal support for individuals.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some courses

- some unimaginative teaching in mathematics
- insufficient facilities for the use of ILT in lessons.

Scope of provision

55. Four AS-level and GCE A2 science subjects, biology, chemistry, physics and human biology, and AS-level and GCE A2 mathematics and further mathematics are offered. Also available are a one year course, foundation for advanced mathematics, and two GCSE subjects, mathematics and science (human physiology and health). There is little vocational science provision. At the time of the inspection, 70 full-time students, most of whom were aged 16, and 142 part-time students, most of whom were adult students were enrolled.

Achievement and standards

56. Pass rates are high on most level 3 courses. For the three years to 2004, for example, GCE A2 pass rates in mathematics and physics were 100% and at AS level, pass rates in chemistry and mathematics were well above national averages. In both AS-level and GCE A2 physics the higher grade, A and B, pass rates are consistently well above national averages. In most subjects, students' performance overall is better than that predicted by their previous attainment at GCSE. In biology and human biology, performance is not as good.

57. Retention rates are low on some courses. For example, in AS-level human biology the rate has declined from being close to the national average in 2001 to be well below average in both 2003 and 2004. In 2004, the retention rate in GCSE mathematics, 57%, was low. In most GCE A2 subjects, students' performance is in line with their previous attainment. In chemistry and physics, students perform well by this measure and in biology and human biology less well.

58. Science students are highly motivated, attentive in lessons and make good progress. They are encouraged to work collaboratively and often give correct and confident answers when questioned, showing high levels of understanding and recall. They carry out practical work competently and are able to relate experimental results to the relevant theory. In a practical lesson on micro-measurement, they handled vernier scales confidently. In GCE advanced-level (A-level) mathematics, students are diligent. In one lesson, they manipulated partial fractions competently and displayed a high level of skill in solving algebraic equations. In GCSE mathematics lessons, some students lack confidence with basic concepts such as dealing with multiplication of decimals and take time to recall what they have previously learned.

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	125	147	88
		% retention	82	71	73
		% pass rate	23	30	50
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	58	67	85
		% retention	72	70	62
		% pass rate	79	57	58

AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	17	31	24
		% retention	94	87	75
		% pass rate	81	85	72
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	19	22	*
		% retention	74	91	*
		% pass rate	100	80	*
GCE A-level biology/human biology	3	No. of starts	*	18	22
		% retention	*	94	91
		% pass rate	*	94	70
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	26	*	15
		% retention	58	*	100
		% pass rate	93	*	93

Source: ILR

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

59. Science teaching is consistently good. Teachers are confident, enthusiastic and encourage their students well. Schemes of work are detailed and include plans to provide for students of differing ability and preferred learning styles. Lessons include a suitable variety of activities and succeed in maintaining high levels of student engagement and motivation. In a physics lesson, for example, advanced level students, when investigating precise measurement, used travelling microscopes to measure the size of perforations in stamps. They quickly became absorbed in the activity and followed up their practical work promptly with calculations and discussions which developed their experimental and analytical skills. Groups of students studying human biology worked together on a quiz-word puzzle about inheritance which was followed by a card-matching exercise to check their understanding of genetic diagrams. In a chemistry lesson, students learned about the structure of glucose molecules by building their own three-dimensional models from atom kits.

60. There are weaknesses in some of the mathematics lessons. They sometimes contain too many repetitive cycles of teacher explanation followed by students working on related examples. Some handouts are uninspiring and in some lessons, teachers spend too long talking.

61. Teachers and technicians are well qualified for their roles. They attend appropriate professional development courses frequently. The laboratories are laid out traditionally and some are cramped. They make the organisation of group work difficult. Staff make good efforts to keep the rooms attractive and stimulating by displaying posters and other materials. Much of the equipment is old. Many of the classrooms and laboratories contain insufficient up-to-date ILT and access to this equipment is often too time consuming, limiting its use. Students have access to computers in the resource bases. There is a good range of self-study materials on the college network. A computer room is available to the mathematics teachers. The library has an extensive range of textbooks which are mostly up-to-date and relevant to current course specifications.

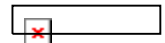
62. Students' progress is monitored carefully and regularly against target grades which are based on each student's level of attainment at GCSE and their more recent academic performance. Extra tutorials are provided for those students who are underperforming. Homework is set regularly. It is corrected by the teachers and returned to students promptly. The written feedback does not always give sufficiently clear guidance of what students need to do to improve. Parents are provided with written progress reports and are invited to attend review evenings where they can meet the teachers.

63. Students are supported well by the staff. All students are given an initial assessment of their incoming levels of attainment to identify any particular learning needs. This is done promptly and sensitively. Students also take an assessment to identify preferred learning styles and teachers adapt their teaching appropriately. Those encountering academic difficulties are given extensive individual support by teachers. Students find this support very valuable. Links with local schools and universities are good. Students in all subjects make external visits which are relevant to their GCE A-level courses such as a visit to an Aim Higher conference at Oxford University and seminars on careers in medicine at the University of Manchester. Science teachers visit local high schools regularly and run Easter revision courses for high school pupils.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum area is well managed and organised. The self-assessment report is appropriately self-critical and identified weaknesses are addressed appropriately. There are good arrangements for staff development. There is good leadership in the development of pedagogic skills and good practice in teaching is disseminated effectively, partly through a well-established peer observation system. Staff who are new to teaching are mentored appropriately. Teachers of the different science disciplines work well together. In mathematics, team working is efficient. Course leaders and managers are active in their approach to equal opportunities issues. Females are encouraged to study physics and mathematics. Teachers are aware of the low retention rate of female students of Asian heritage. They work closely with the college's community liaison coordinator to positively encourage and support these students. The management of key skills is underdeveloped. There is insufficient attention given to the need for students to obtain these qualifications.

Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses

- good teaching

- effective delivery of key skills

- good support for students with additional learning needs.

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for progression

- some workshop practice.

Scope of provision

65. The construction curriculum area offers a range of brickwork, wood occupations, electrical installation and plumbing courses for full-time, part-time day and evening students. Apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in construction and work-based NVQs are available through the college. Technical certificates provide the background knowledge for each trade area. Full-time courses are provided at entry level in brickwork, wood occupations and electrical installation. These courses enable successful students to progress to level 2 and apply for work-based learning. A range of gas and electrical installation short courses is provided to meet the needs of industry. New and refurbished accommodation has been developed to meet the recent significant growth in the demand for construction training.

66. At the time of the inspection, there were 218 full-time students and 490 who studied part time. Additionally, 67 apprentices were managed by Tameside College Training. School pupils attend the college to study construction craft subjects. Full-time students take part in enrichment programmes, which include army assault courses, hikes and five-a-side football. They also undertake community-based projects which help them develop their construction skills.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses. Two year electrical installation courses at level 1, for example, have had pass rates which have been at least 16% above national averages in each of the three years to 2004 and retention rates which have been at least 10% higher in each of the same three years. These high rates mean that a much larger proportion of enrolled students achieve their qualifications than is the case nationally. For example, on the City and Guilds 6988 level 1 plumbing course out of the 236 students enrolled in the three years to 2004 a total of 155 achieved the qualification, a third more than would have been the case if the course had been operating at national pass and retention rates.

68. Levels of attainment in most lessons are satisfactory. First year students display appropriate hand skills for this early stage in the academic year. The rate of achievement of full apprenticeship frameworks has improved considerably in the last 12 months and is currently satisfactory. Work-based learners produce satisfactory standards of work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Plumbing City and Guilds 6988 - certificate in plumbing	1	No. of starts	*	52	83
		% retention	*	79	84
		% pass rate	*	88	74
Electrical installation 2360-05 part 1 (2 year)	1	No. of starts	*	21	50
		% retention	*	100	66
		% pass rate	*	95	91
Electrical installation 2360-05 (1 year)	1	No. of starts	*	41	48
		% retention	*	83	83
		% pass rate	*	65	88

NVQ carpentry and joinery (open college network (OCN) in 2003)	1	No. of starts	17	*	28
		% retention	71	*	75
		% pass rate	92	*	100
Electrical 2360 07 part 2 theory	2	No. of starts	*	33	16
		% retention	*	94	94
		% pass rate	*	68	67
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	42	43	33
		% retention	64	56	87
		% pass rate	88	87	92

Source: ILR

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

69. Teaching in construction is good. A much larger proportion of lessons is good or better than is the case nationally in construction in similar colleges. Lessons often link practical activity and the development of theory, and involve an appropriate variety of activity. For example, in one lesson on workshop safety, students, working in groups, studied health and safety learning materials, toured a workshop where hazards had been specifically set and made presentations on their findings. Students participated enthusiastically and learned from each other. The exercise successfully developed students' understanding. In theory lessons, the teachers use good learning materials which help to maintain students' interest. A few theory lessons are too long. In these lessons, students' interest is not maintained consistently. A few workshop practices are unsatisfactory. For example, incorrect use of tools by a few students was not always challenged and corrected and, although personal protective equipment is generally used appropriately, in one lesson students were not wearing hard hats when they should have been.

70. IT is used frequently. For example, it is used to help teach the key skills of communication and application of number skills. Key skills are taught in an appropriate vocational context, enabling the students to see clearly the links to their trade and the importance of them.

71. Resources in construction are satisfactory. Accommodation for practical work is good. New teachers and support staff have been appointed recently and staffing levels are also good. Some of the computers are unreliable. In one lesson, some students had to hand write their work as they were unable to log on to the college network. New teachers and support staff have been appointed recently and staffing levels are good. Workplace assessors have appropriate occupational and assessor qualifications. In some workshops, there are shortages of small hand tools and measuring equipment, which delay students' progress.

72. The assessment and the monitoring of the progress of work-based learners are satisfactory. The employers of work-based learners are able to offer the full range of experiences needed to achieve the relevant NVQ. Links with schools are good. Several construction courses include school pupils who are provided with appropriate vocational training. The provision meets these pupils' needs well. The more able pupils work towards craft awards at foundation level and others work towards single units of an entry level qualification. There are insufficient opportunities for progression. Few courses are available at level 3 and no technician courses are available. The college is advertising this provision in its prospectus for a 2005 start. Insufficient information is given to students nearing the end of their qualifications on where they can continue their studies. The breadth of provision is narrow. Employers and students express interest in other programmes.

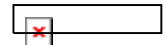
73. The support provided for students is good. Potential students are invited to the college in the spring where they are given a presentation and the opportunity to view the resources. They are asked to write a letter of application, and undertake initial assessment of their basic skills of literacy

and numeracy and, in many cases, tests which measure practical skills and aptitudes relevant to construction. First year students are well suited to their chosen programme, attend well and make good progress. The initial assessment process is effective in helping the college provide appropriate support for students who have additional learning needs. Teachers are informed well about their students' ability in literacy and numeracy. Support workers are present in most theory lessons to assist students. Support is provided sensitively and these staff act as a valuable resource for the whole group whilst remaining focused on those that have been identified for specific help.

Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management in construction are good. Staff teams meet with appropriate regularity. Following a period when many staff had left the college, new staff have been recruited quickly. These staff have been supported well and have rapidly become effective. Their development needs have been assessed and most have been enrolled on teacher training courses and are working towards assessor qualifications. Teachers' occupational competence is good with new staff providing valuable recent site experience. Opportunities for the more established teachers to engage in industrial updating are insufficient. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. When the college's internal teaching observation programme identified some poor teaching practice, prompt and successful actions were taken to address these. Few females and students from minority ethnic groups undertake the construction courses.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates

- good development of students' vocational skills

- good teaching

- excellent accommodation and resources

- good support for students with additional needs

- productive partnerships with schools and employers

- very good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- aspects of workshop supervision.

Scope of provision

75. The engineering curriculum area includes mechanical, electronic and motor vehicle provision. The engineering CoVE offers a wide range of courses which focus on mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering, welding, computer-aided design, robotics and fibre optics work. Craft and technician progression routes are offered from level 1 to level 4. Full-time and part-time courses include the first and national diplomas in engineering. Full-time and part-time motor vehicle courses include vehicle repair and servicing, body repair and vehicle refinishing at levels 1 to 3. There are 222 full-time and 247 part-time students. Over three quarters of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18, four fifths of the part-time students are adults.

Achievement and standards

76. Pass and retention rates are high on many courses. For example, pass and retention rates on the computer-aided design course at level 2 and on the first diploma course have been above 90% in both 2003 and 2004. Pass rates on the national certificate course in engineering have been close to 90% in three of the four years to 2004. The welding course at level 1 has had pass rates above 90% in each of the three years to 2003. Pass rates on the vehicle, mechanical and electronic systems level 2 course have improved steadily and were high in both 2002 and 2003. The pass rate has remained above the national average, but the retention rate in 2002 dropped just below average. On a few courses, pass and retention rates are not as high. For example, on the diploma in motor vehicle studies, and its precursors, the retention rate has fallen from the high levels achieved in 2001 and 2002, and in 2003 was below the national average. On this course, the pass rate fluctuates, it was below average in 2003 and above in 2002 and in 2004.

77. Most students' work is of a high quality. Students demonstrate good technical knowledge and skills in computer-aided design. They develop good practical skills and learn quickly to work on complex tasks with little supervision. For example, students using computer-aided design software soon develop the knowledge and skills to create and manipulate complex drawings. Mature students in a lesson on welding achieved high levels of competence in welding techniques in a relatively short time. They displayed high levels of knowledge and critical analysis when assessing the quality of their welded joints and suggesting ways of improving the work. Students are highly motivated; they enjoy their work and speak enthusiastically about their courses. Vehicle body refinishing students produce work which meets industrial standards. A few foundation students are uncertain of the correct tools to use when marking out their work and handle tools such as files incorrectly.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Diploma in motor vehicle studies **	1	No. of starts	35	77	66
		% retention	100	91	59
		% pass rate	63	90	56
Introductory welding	1	No. of starts	*	17	15

skills (gas shielded)		% retention	*	82	87
		% pass rate	*	93	100
Computer-aided design using AutoCAD	2	No. of starts	15	47	19
		% retention	93	96	95
		% pass rate	100	91	100
Vehicle mechanical and electronic systems **	2	No. of starts	29	16	61
		% retention	90	100	72
		% pass rate	58	88	93
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	41	34	22
		% retention	59	56	64
		% pass rate	92	74	93

Source: ILR

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

** these qualifications have gone through several changes of name during the period 2001 to 2003

Quality of education and training

78. Much of the teaching is good or outstanding and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Schemes of work are detailed appropriately and lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods and changes in activities which succeed in motivating the students and keeping them involved in the learning. Activities include discussions, individual work, assignments and practical activities. At the start of each lesson, the lesson objectives are explained clearly and the students are reminded of relevant previous work. Teachers check frequently whether the students are learning, often using questions which are directed at individual students.

79. Teachers make good use of visual aids. For example, in one lesson, vehicle paint-spray equipment was used effectively to promote discussion about different methods of spraying and the overhead projector was used to project images of spray gun components, helping to clarify teaching points. Teachers are enthusiastic and this enthusiasm stimulates the students to learn. Teachers often relate their own vocational experience to the teaching, illustrating points effectively in order to help students understand. In a few lessons, a minority of students were inattentive. In engineering workshop lessons, the energetic use of hand tools by a few foundation students was not moderated sufficiently.

80. ILT is used effectively. For example, computer-aided three-dimensional design software was used successfully in one lesson to explain engineering processes. In another lesson, the use of animated computer presentations helped to explain the controls of a milling machine and the tool and workpiece movements. Additional learning support staff are occupationally competent and are used well to enhance students' learning. In one lesson, for example, the support teacher helped the students understand the engineering theory being developed by drawing on his own experiences.

81. Accommodation and resources in engineering are excellent and have benefited significantly from the extra funding provided by the CoVE. Workshops are light, spacious, well organised and provide a safe environment. Classroom accommodation is well maintained, clean and tidy, and provides a good learning environment. Many classrooms are used solely for the teaching of particular subjects and have the necessary learning materials and equipment readily available. Examples of students' work are displayed in classrooms and workshops, providing valuable guides to new students of the standards expected. Most classrooms are equipped with modern computer facilities and a wide range of engineering applications software. Students have easy access to the college computer network which holds teaching notes and presentations. Students can gain access to these materials from their homes, facilitating homework. Mechanical workshops contain modern machine tools which meet industrial standards. The welding workshop has a wide range of equipment and spacious work

bays. The vehicle body repair workshops have good facilities for chassis alignment and spray painting. The motor vehicle workshop has up-to-date computerised wheel alignment and engine diagnostic equipment. Teachers and technical support staff are well qualified and possess extensive industrial experience. Teachers have a comprehensive knowledge of their subjects. Staff development opportunities are appropriate.

82. The initial assessment of students' levels of attainment is thorough. An appropriate range of methods are used to identify which students need additional support. Students are interviewed, their levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy assessed, and they undertake mechanical aptitude assessments. These processes are completed early in the academic year and inform initial learning plans which are established for each student. Students' progress is monitored closely and detailed records are kept. Some teachers display wall charts in their workshops for students to monitor their own progress and compare it with others in the group. Records are kept of each student's punctuality, attendance, and work completed. Students are assessed regularly throughout the course using appropriate assignments. These are marked and returned promptly. Marked work contains useful teacher comment which is supportive and constructive, and helps students improve. Internal verification is satisfactory.

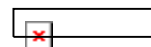
83. The engineering area has established productive links with local employers and national engineering companies. Regular meetings are held with employers to discuss skills shortages and identify areas for development. These arrangements have a positive impact on the range of qualifications offered to students. For example, the college developed and provided a daily maintenance course for an employer's machine operators. Teachers visit employers to learn about their operational processes and then develop suitable training programmes to meet their needs. These programmes are often delivered on the employer's premises using both college and employer's equipment. Employers provide staff development for teachers when required. Employers speak highly about the engineering provision. They are impressed with the quality of teaching, the responsiveness of the training to their needs and the empathy the college staff have for the students. There are strong links with local schools. School pupils attend the college, some on day release programmes and some on more substantial programmes which are followed as alternatives to the usual school curriculum. For example, some students attend a full-time vehicle body-refinishing course. The wide range of engineering qualifications available provides students with a wide choice. Excellent links with the local special schools help to encourage students with profound and severe physical disabilities into engineering.

84. There is good support for students with additional needs. Students requiring support receive particularly effective help from teachers and learning support staff. They are responsive to students needs and give advice and guidance in a sensitive and constructive manner. The team of support staff hold specialist and occupational qualifications, have relevant industrial experience and often work alongside the vocational teachers in workshop situations. This mix of qualifications and experience helps them provide basic and key skills support which is set in a relevant vocational context. Support staff meet regularly with teachers to discuss individual student progress and set the students short-term learning targets. Drop-in tutorial sessions are provided for students requiring additional support with their coursework.

Leadership and management

85. Curriculum management is very good. Communications are excellent and are promoted by regular curriculum and quality team meetings. Easy access to the college intranet enables staff to be informed fully and encourages sharing of good practice. Teachers understand their roles and responsibilities. There is a good team spirit and pride among staff of the department. Quality assurance arrangements are effective. They include frequent observations of teaching. Students' views are collected routinely and analysed to identify opportunities for improvement. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment process makes good use of staff contributions. The self-assessment report is generally accurate. There are good staff development opportunities to update or maintain occupational skills. The leadership and management of the CoVE are very good. Managers are focused appropriately on maintaining and improving the quality of the CoVE provision, partly through the very strong partnerships they have built with employers.

Business technology



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for the single subject qualifications

- good teaching and learning

- highly effective office skills workshop provision.

Weaknesses

- inappropriate provision for some students

- unsatisfactory development of key skills.

Scope of provision

86. The college offers courses leading to qualifications in legal and medical secretarial and IT skills, mainly at levels 1 and 2. Courses are also available in call centre skills and for those wishing to become school secretaries. Lessons are held at four college sites and many community venues over a wide geographical area. Students select from a broad range of individual qualifications in word and text processing, spreadsheets, databases, e-mail, audio transcription and book keeping. Full-time students also work towards qualifications in employment skills. NVQs in administration are available at levels 2 and 3. These are undertaken by students in employment. At the time of the inspection, 77 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 133 full-time adult students attended the college. Some 40 students aged 16 to 18 students and 1,235 adults were attending part time. The curriculum area provides courses for school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

87. Retention and pass rates on most single subject qualifications are outstanding. They are consistently above 95% for qualifications below level 3. For example, the retention rate on the legal secretaries level 2 course was 97% in both 2002 and 2003, 17% above the national average. The rate was also significantly above the national average in 2003/04. Pass rates on this course have been consistently high. A large proportion of students achieve passes with merit or distinction. Key skills pass rates are low. Success rates for students recruited from underrepresented groups are low compared to other students.

88. Students' work is of a high standard and students display high levels of attainment in the use of IT. Most students demonstrate high levels of motivation and commitment, and achieve the learning targets they have agreed with their teachers. However, some of these targets are insufficiently challenging. Some students, for example, who have already achieved level 2 qualifications, take too long in progressing to level 3 qualifications. Insufficient account is taken of students' entry requirements when determining individual learning goals.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Database beginners 1 year	Entry	No. of starts	766	962	801
		% retention	95	99	98
		% pass rate	96	98	97
Audio transcription stage 1	1	No. of starts	34	59	104
		% retention	94	95	98
		% pass rate	84	82	83
Word processing part 2 (1 year)	1	No. of starts	169	192	187
		% retention	96	96	98
		% pass rate	90	90	92
Medical word processing part 2	2	No. of starts	33	32	59
		% retention	94	94	98
		% pass rate	81	90	90
Legal secretarial studies	2	No. of starts	33	35	37
		% retention	91	97	97
		% pass rate	97	94	94
Text processing part 1	3	No. of starts	27	46	44
		% retention	93	93	93
		% pass rate	88	74	76

Source: ILR

Quality of education and training

89. Most of the teaching is good. Lessons are generally well planned and include an appropriate level of student activity. Teachers make good use of their own experience in business, illustrating concepts with appropriate examples from commercial practice. In one lesson, the teacher made effective use of anecdotes to help students learn specialist terminology. Most teachers provide high quality gapped handouts which enable students to produce notes which are structured clearly. In a few theory lessons the teaching fails to engage sufficiently all the students; resulting in, for example, more able students not being sufficiently challenged and younger students not participating enough. In one lesson, an interactive whiteboard was used well to help students improve their spelling. Generally, however, the use of ILT is underdeveloped.

90. The business technology workshops are well equipped and used effectively, enabling students to develop appropriate levels of office skills and gain qualifications. The standardised resources, which are used across all the college centres, are of high quality. Learning materials are comprehensive and easy to use. They are available for a wide range of applications, qualifications and levels, and are regarded highly by the students. Workshop staff encourage the students well and the students gain quickly in confidence. Most students develop office skills quickly and are motivated by early

success. Adult students who are returning to learning value the opportunity to progress at their own pace. Teachers generally ensure that students are engaged appropriately in learning. A few students have to wait for too long before a teacher is available to help. Insufficient guidance is given to some students on how to use the workshops effectively, for example, to change activity periodically and to set short-term goals. Instances of poor practice, for example, poor posture by a few students, are not always corrected.

91. All students undertake initial assessments of their basic literacy skills, but only full-time students for their levels of attainment in numeracy. Both full-time and part-time students agree learning plans with their teachers. These learning plans are reviewed in the light of progress made and updated, termly for full-time students, and on completion of their qualifications for part-time students. Students' progress in workshop sessions and their achievement of qualifications is recorded clearly. Insufficient use is made of this information when planning subsequent sessions. Students are assessed regularly during their workshop sessions and given useful feedback promptly. In a few instances, the feedback is too general, particularly for the more able students. Students are prepared well for external assessment. Practice papers, for example, are used to give a clear indication of each student's preparedness. Comprehensive past papers and mark schemes are available for students' use. The internal verification of assessment is robust and examining bodies' requirements are met.

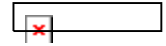
92. The workshop provision offers a broad range of single subject awards. This provision is present in many community venues, for example, the Indian community centre and in Age Concern premises, and is easily accessible to the community. The work-based NVQ provision in administration, available at levels 2 to 4, provides good opportunities for progression for employed students. There are gaps in the provision. For example, there is no full-time general secretarial or administration provision which would meet the needs of some school leavers and adult returners, and no provision for school leavers who are qualified at level 1. Progression opportunities beyond level 2 are limited; no full-time level 3 qualifications are available. Too few students progress to higher level courses. Too many re-enrol on courses at the same level as they have already completed and some are enrolled on courses which are too low for their levels of attainment. The key skill of numeracy receives too little attention. There is only limited support for portfolio development or test preparation. The full-time level 2 programmes attract no male students aged 16 to 18.

93. Most students receive an appropriate induction to their course and the college. Standardised induction teaching materials are common to all sites and an informative multimedia package is available at the main college centres. Students receive good support. Initial diagnostic assessment is followed quickly with information on what support is available, including extra sessions to meet individual needs. Systems, for the referral of students who need specialist support, are effective. Specialist equipment is readily available for students with disabilities, for example, large print workbooks and adapted keyboards for students with visual impairment. A few students, sometimes because they use English as a second language, experience difficulties in understanding the written instructions in the workbooks and are not receiving the extra help they require in order to make satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

94. Leadership and management are good. Strategies are implemented effectively to ensure that, whatever centre they use and whether they study full time or part time, they receive a consistently high quality of teaching. Teachers take appropriate responsibility for the outreach centres in which they teach and are involved fully in quality improvement. Staff development is linked closely to the needs identified through teaching observation and staff appraisal, and there is a strong management focus on action to improve teaching and learning. Communication between staff in the school is good. Student feedback is encouraged and students are kept informed on progress on issues that concern them. Whilst the self-assessment report identifies many of the strengths of the provision, it fails to identify some key weaknesses. Insufficient action has been taken to address the under representation of males in the curriculum area.

Computing and business management



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- much good teaching
- good support for full-time students
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some courses
- low achievement of key skills qualifications
- ineffective tutorial support for some adult part-time students.

Scope of provision

95. Courses are available on two college sites. They are available by both full-time and part-time modes of attendance and from below level 1 to level 4. They include AS level and GCE A level, and vocational courses such as the GNVQ at foundation and intermediate levels and AVCE courses in business, computing and IT. The national diploma in computing is also available. Most of the students on these programmes are 16 to 18 year olds. An NVQ accounting programme is provided at level 2 for both full-time and part-time students, and at levels 3 and 4 for students who attend college on one day or two evenings each week. Part-time courses leading to professional qualifications include personnel practice and management, and there are evening computing courses. Courses for school pupils in Key Stage 4 are provided, for example, on a one day-a-week attendance basis leading to a GNVQ foundation in IT. At the time of the inspection, 871 students were enrolled, nearly half of whom were full-time students aged 16 to 18. Around 70 adult students studied full time. About 90% of the 388 part-time students were adults, studying by part-time day or evening attendance. In

addition, 30 work-based learners followed apprenticeship frameworks in accounting or administration.

Achievement and standards

96. Pass rates are high on many courses. For example, they have been well above the national average in each of the three years to 2004 in AS-level business and in the GNVQ foundation course in IT. In both 2002 and 2003, the pass rate on the GCE A2 in business was 100%. The NVQ accounting course at level 2 has been well above average in each of the three years to 2003. In 2004, all the students who completed the AVCE in business achieved the qualification. The key skills are developed well through the vocational courses, but only a small number of students are entered for the qualification and, for these students, the pass rates are also low. For example, only 38% of full-time computing students who were entered for communication key skills achieved the qualification at level 2.

97. The retention rate is low on some courses. For example, in 2004, the retention rate was well below the national average on the GNVQ foundation in business, GNVQ intermediate in IT course and on the AS level in computing course. On a few courses the retention rate has been consistently high in the four years to 2004. For example, on the management certificate at level 3 course and the GNVQ foundation in IT course, retention rates have been well above average in this period.

98. The rates of achievement of full apprenticeship frameworks are mixed. In the three years to 2003, no apprentice studying administration has achieved the full framework. Most of these learners, 70%, do achieve the NVQ level 2 in administration. Full framework achievement is much better on the apprenticeship in accounting course; since 2002, 42% of learners who have left this programme have achieved the full framework. Progression from the accounting framework to higher level work is high.

99. The standard of students' work is generally good. Students are motivated well and keen to learn. They develop good skills of research and analysis. Students' portfolios are often of a high standard. Students work well in teams. For example, in an AVCE business lesson, where students were assigned to groups, they elected their leader and allocated tasks to group members appropriately. All students worked effectively to achieve the group task. They demonstrated a good mastery of computer graphics in preparing a slideshow and presented their work well. In a database design lesson, students shared their knowledge of access form design and their knowledge of visual basic programming to produce a custom-made interface demonstrating high levels of skill in the process.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	26	38	33
		% retention	77	79	88
		% pass rate	55	83	86
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	88	88	83
		% retention	88	78	75
		% pass rate	86	81	87
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	37	46	56
		% retention	81	76	79
		% pass rate	97	83	86
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	95	69	47
		% retention	89	86	66
		% pass rate	47	59	61

GCE A2 business	3	No. of starts	**	17	22
		% retention	**	94	95
		% pass rate	**	100	100
AS-level IT	3	No. of starts	56	84	93
		% retention	79	64	73
		% pass rate	80	61	50
AVCE (double award) in ICT and precursor	3	No. of starts	121*	84	72
		% retention	60	50	44
		% pass rate	72	71	84

Source: ILR

* precursor - GNVQ advanced

** course not running

Quality of education and training

100. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are structured well to take account of the needs of all students, use high-quality learning materials and make effective use of lesson time. Students' progress is monitored carefully in lessons and additional tasks are set for the more able students. Teachers give strong initial direction and set achievable tasks, ensuring that students understand the nature of the task before commencing. Short tasks are set with time constraints that encourage students to work productively. In a lesson on web design, for example, the teacher used these teaching techniques successfully to build students' confidence and ability in developing web pages, and engaged all the students in a large class group.

101. In the best lessons, teachers use appropriate techniques to engage the students and involve them in learning. For example, in a computerised accounts lesson where students were working independently, the teacher introduced a brief quiz to bring the group together and summarise effectively the terminology and concepts which had been learned. The technique was effective and made the learning fun. In a lesson on redundancy rights and responsibilities, excellent use was made of students' experiences at work. The employed students made valuable contributions based on their own experience of dealing with company redundancies. Vocational enrichment activities include study visits and visiting speakers, and add relevance and interest to the curriculum.

102. The development of key skills in many lessons is good with opportunities for skill building identified on the schemes of work and lesson plans. However, opportunities to draw attention to the development of key skills are missed in some lessons. In a few lessons, teaching is uninspiring, is not planned well and students do not participate actively in learning.

103. Off-the-job training for work-based learners is good. A weekly workshop for administration trainees helps them to develop their knowledge in preparation for the technical certificate, develop key skills and also provides opportunities to work on portfolio building and discuss issues with their tutor.

104. Resources in the curriculum area are good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their specialist areas and they take appropriate advantage of the many staff development opportunities available to update their skills and knowledge. Computing equipment is of a high standard and is easily accessible by students on both sites. A wide range of useful learning materials are available on the college's website and intranet. These are used in lessons to promote learning and are also available to students for independent study. All students have e-mail accounts and can contact tutors through this medium. Part-time students of management find this facility particularly useful when seeking guidance whilst studying privately. Students have access to and regularly use online fora to discuss issues and post concerns or information they feel would be useful to other students. Assessment procedures are rigorous and are used to guide students' learning as well as to inform

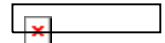
the future development of courses.

105. Support for full-time students is good. An effective admissions system employs careful initial assessment and ensures that students are on the right course. Individual students' needs are addressed through effective in-class support where needed or by attendance at additional support sessions. The tracking of additional support and its effectiveness is good. Regular tutorials are effective in monitoring students' progress and agreeing actions for improvement with students. Tutorial support for some part-time students is ineffective. Records are often superficial and students are unclear about the process. Good links are made with parents of full-time students. There are regular parents' evenings and prompt contact is made when there is cause for concern.

Leadership and management

106. Curriculum management is good. Clear direction is given to staff, quality issues are addressed thoroughly, and staff teams work effectively across the two sites. There are regular structured meetings and their outcomes are recorded appropriately. When issues arise, suitable strategies are put in place to achieve improvement. All staff are involved fully in the quality assurance processes and work coherently to improve performance. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory. Good links are in place between the college teachers and the college's training coordinators. There is insufficient liaison with the employers. Employers report little knowledge of the programmes being followed by their employees.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- much good teaching

- productive links with industry

- high standards of students' practical work

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- o low retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 1 in food and drink course
- o insufficiently challenging teaching in a small number of lessons.

Scope of provision

107. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time provision in catering and bakery, including NVQs in food preparation and cooking, food and drink service, patisserie and baking at levels 1 to 3. The college recently introduced an entry level course in food preparation, cooking and serving food in response to local needs. Other courses include the national diploma in hospitality supervision and short courses for the national licensees certificate. Cake decorating and food hygiene at basic, intermediate and advanced levels are offered to adult students and as additional qualifications for full-time students. Enrolments on NVQ level 3 full-time courses declined significantly over recent years with some courses failing to recruit in 2004. The college delivers a range of off-site provision to large food manufacturers providing training and assessment for NVQ level 2 food and drink manufacturing.

108. At the time of the inspection, 102 students were enrolled on full-time courses and 229 on part-time courses. Nearly 90% of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and a similar percentage of the part-time students are adult. School link programmes are well established enabling transition from school to college. Some 13 school pupils attend college for one day each week on a link programme. The college works in partnership with Hyde Technology School to deliver an NVQ level 1 to Key Stage 4 pupils.

Achievement and standards

109. Pass rates are high on most courses. The pass rate on the NVQ level 1 in bakery course, for example, was 100% in 2003. The pass rate for the NVQ level 1 in food preparation and cooking has been at least 34% above the national figure for the last two years. In 2003, the pass rate for the NVQ level 2 in food preparation and cooking was 29% above the national average. In the same year, the pass rates for the NVQ level 2 delivered on employers premises was 95%.

110. Retention rates are mixed. On the NVQ level 1 in food and drink manufacture course, for example, the rate has been high in each of the four years to 2004; at least 95% in each year. On the NVQ level 1 in food preparation course the rate has fluctuated; it was low in 2002 and 2003 and high in 2001 and 2004. On the NVQ level 1 in food and drink service course, both pass and retention rates have been low in the three years to 2003.

111. Most students progress to relevant employment in industry or to higher level study. Students' written work is of a high quality. Students make good use of colour photography and ICT in their portfolios and assignments. Students display very good practical skills in kitchens and bakeries. They demonstrate high standards of professionalism and well-organised methodical working methods. Safe and hygienic practices are held in high regard and conformed with.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ food preparation and cooking	1	No. of starts	74	72	52
		% retention	73	49	40
		% pass rate	61	94	90

NVQ food and drink service	1	No. of starts	95	64	40
		% retention	59	72	55
		% pass rate	70	63	64
NVQ food and drink manufacturing operations	2	No. of starts	86	92	105
		% retention	98	97	96
		% pass rate	49	89	93
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	17	*	42
		% retention	71	*	71
		% pass rate	67	*	90
NVQ craft baking	2	No. of starts	50	120	40
		% retention	96	75	75
		% pass rate	98	99	97
National licensees certificate	3	No. of starts	195	154	199
		% retention	99	99	100
		% pass rate	93	92	86

Source: ILR

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

112. Much of the teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of their students. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate their practical work and strive continually to improve. Practical lessons are planned carefully to take account of the learning needs of individual students. Well-produced learning materials, detailing recipes and methods of production, are available to support students' learning. Dish descriptions are often enhanced with photographs and students are encouraged to work independently. In the bakery, which provides a busy and realistic working environment, NVQ level 1 and 2 students produce an extensive range of large breads, rolls, muffins and pizzas for sale in the college bakery shop. The finished products are all of a very high standard. The teachers demonstrate authority and expertise, and effectively reinforce aspects of theory during the practical work, ensuring students learn to work at the speed required by industry. In a confectionary lesson, NVQ level 1 students demonstrated high levels of skill in piping cream, choux pastry and in finishing gateaux for sale in the college bistro. Their attainment was above average for the short time they had been at the college and for the level of their course.

113. Menus in the training kitchen and restaurants provide a good mix of traditional and contemporary styles of cooking, presentation and service, preparing students well for industry. Students in the training restaurant take a pride in their appearance, demonstrate good technical and social skills, and are dressed neatly in college uniforms. During a food production session, students demonstrated a range of skills in cooking, preparing meat and shellfish dishes and refined sauces produced from meat stock reductions. Their learning was, however, inhibited by the low number of customers dining in the training restaurant.

114. In a minority of theory lessons, students are not challenged sufficiently. In one lesson, for example, the teacher spoke for too long, the visual aids were difficult to read and the students became inattentive. In another lesson, the teacher failed to ensure that the students were learning and taking appropriate notes. Some of these students wrote little and failed to complete the set exercise.

115. Accommodation, equipment and facilities for practical work in kitchens, bakeries and restaurants are good. Students have access to a good range of materials and food and drink

commodities to support their course. A few theory lessons are held in the training restaurant which, due to the layout of the room, sometimes inhibits learning. Students have good access to computers. The library contains a comprehensive range of appropriate books, magazines and periodicals. Teachers are well qualified and have good industrial experience. Part-time teachers use their current industrial experience well to make their teaching relevant to the industry. Well presented interactive learning materials are available on the college intranet.

116. The assessment of students' practical work is good. Assessment plans are updated regularly. Internal verification is rigorous. Most students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve their qualifications. Students' progress is recorded carefully. Individual tutorials are held termly, attendance is monitored carefully and effective action is taken when students underperform. Teachers generally mark work promptly and provide helpful comments on how students can improve.

117. Students' learning experiences are enhanced by well-established industrial links. Industrialists participate in competitions arranged by the college and sponsor students. Guest speakers from industry give lectures regularly at the college. Students' work at prestigious events such as Wimbledon and many gain work experience at leading hotels and premier restaurants. Participation in local and national competitions is encouraged, in several cases, with successful competition outcomes.

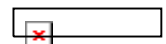
118. Students undertake a diagnostic test at enrolment and learning support needs are identified. The support provided is effective, enabling students to progress well and achieve their qualifications.

Leadership and management

119. Leadership and management are good. Roles and responsibilities are defined clearly. There is good teamwork and working relationships between full-time and part-time staff are excellent. Team meetings are held regularly and good practice shared effectively. Part-time teachers are utilised as a key source of up-to-date knowledge of the industry. All staff receive good professional development opportunities.

120. Course reviews are thorough and involve all staff. The self-assessment report is generally accurate, but descriptive in parts, with some contradictory statements on strengths and weaknesses. In the college's scheme of lesson observations, much higher grades were awarded for teaching and learning than that found by inspectors. All staff received training on their rights and responsibility in relation to existing equality and diversity legislation. There is a range of innovative strategies to increase participation from minority ethnic groups. A partnership is established for delivering hospitality training for a North West Asian group delivering a Pan Asian cookery qualification.

Hair and beauty



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- effective use of ILT materials in the teaching

- good specialist accommodation

- close monitoring of students' progress

- the beneficial support and guidance provided for students

- work-based learning is managed well.

Weaknesses

- slow progress on some courses

- some unsuitable practical activities for some students

- insufficient opportunity for assessment in the workplace.

Scope of provision

121. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy and other related therapies. At the time of the inspection, there were 292 students aged 16 to 18 and 379 adult students. Courses include NVQs at levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing, at levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy and a national diploma in beauty therapy sciences. The college also offers a diploma in holistic therapies and a certificate in nail treatments. Short courses include reflexology, Indian head massage and body massage. Some 26 students follow apprenticeship programmes and 12 follow advanced apprenticeships.

Achievement and standards

122. Pass rates are high on most courses. For example, the pass rates on the hairdressing NVQ courses at levels 1 to 3 have been well above the national average in both 2002 and 2003. The pass rate on the diploma in holistic therapies has been 100% in each of the three years to 2003. Retention rates are at least at the national average and, in many cases, above. For example, the retention rates on the NVQ level 2 and level 3 courses in hairdressing have been well above the average in each of the three years to 2003. On the NVQ level 2 course in beauty therapy and the diploma in holistic therapies, the rate has fallen in these three years and is now at the average. On the national diploma in beauty therapies course, the rate has been close to the average in this period. Key skills achievement rates are low. The achievement rate of full apprenticeship frameworks has improved from 23% to 43%. The rate of achievement of NVQs by apprentices is

high at 85%.

123. NVQ level 1 students sometimes take too long to achieve the qualification, and during this time, miss opportunities to achieve units of the level 2 qualification. Similarly, there are insufficient opportunities for assessment of work-based learners and achievement is also slow for some learners.

124. Students' written work is often of a high quality and makes effective use of IT. For example, on the national diploma in beauty therapy science and the diploma in holistic therapies, students' work makes effective use of scanned images to illustrate the text. Level 3 students' assignment work is detailed and presented well. Some of the portfolios produced by NVQ level 2 beauty therapy students lack sufficient detail and their presentation is poor. Full-time hairdressing and beauty students demonstrate satisfactory practical skills. The key skills assignments produced by work-based learners are of a high quality and their portfolios are well organised.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	49	83	99
		% retention	92	78	81
		% pass rate	96	94	98
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	58	43	51
		% retention	97	91	80
		% pass rate	84	88	93
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	56	88	48
		% retention	93	88	85
		% pass rate	81	87	83
National diploma in beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	17	24	24
		% retention	71	71	75
		% pass rate	92	100	78
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	25	34	32
		% retention	96	82	81
		% pass rate	100	57	96
NVQ hairdressing	3	No. of starts	*	35	29
		% retention	*	86	90
		% pass rate	*	100	96
Diploma in holistic therapies	3	No. of starts	15	19	*
		% retention	93	89	*
		% pass rate	100	100	*
Diploma in body massage	3	No. of starts	59	76	59
		% retention	92	87	83
		% pass rate	94	97	98

Source: ILR

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

125. Much of the teaching is good. Teachers use different teaching methods well. These include the questioning of students, discussion, practical demonstration and individual advice and guidance. They possess high levels of theoretical knowledge and use it to good effect in their teaching. Some of the teaching makes excellent use of ILT. In one hairdressing lesson, for example, its use helped to add interest to the theory teaching. Behaviour management in the lessons is effective. The teaching to a group of disaffected Key Stage 4 school pupils was highly effective. Through careful questioning and a thoughtful selection of activities the pupils learnt new skills and were kept interested. When working in the commercial salons, students generally work at an appropriate rate. In some of these lessons, due to a lack of clients who need treatment which is of an advanced nature, some students are required to work at a level which is lower than that demanded of the course or spend too much time waiting. In a few lessons, sometimes because questioning does not include them sufficiently, or because they have to wait too long for attention, a minority of the students are not kept fully engaged in the learning. Insufficient attention is given in lessons to the development of key skills.

126. Specialist accommodation is good. Learning materials make good use of ILT and are used regularly. Teaching rooms are equipped well with interactive whiteboards and computers. Salons are spacious and provide ample working areas for students. The reception area is impressive. It is attractive, and well equipped with computerised systems. The client base is sufficient for level 1 and 2 treatments, but there are not enough to fulfil the requirements for level 3 courses. In a few lessons, shortages of equipment or technical support slow the learning. Teaching staff are qualified well. Many have current experience of commercial work. Their good technical knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject have a positive impact on the students.

127. Students' progress is monitored closely. Lessons are planned effectively to reflect the needs of each student. Individual learning plans reflect the outcomes of progress monitoring and clearly record short-term learning aims which are relevant to each student. Constructive feedback is provided to students following assessment.

128. The progress of work-based learners is monitored effectively. Records of their progress are comprehensive and are used constructively to plan future work and assessment opportunities.

129. Progress reviews are carried out regularly. They involve both the employer and learner appropriately in reviewing progress and setting targets for future work. Not enough practical assessment is carried out in the workplace. Learners are supported carefully at the start of their course. They have a trial period at the workplace to ensure that they are with the right employer and on the right course. They are also allowed to transfer between full-time and work-based provision if the need arises.

130. There is a wide range of courses, from level 1 to 3, which meet the needs of most students. However, there is no level 1 course in beauty therapy. The provision for disaffected school pupils meets their needs well. There is a broad enhancement programme of, for example, visits to shows, exhibitions and social events.

131. Students undertake an early assessment of their levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy, and any additional needs they may require. Additional support for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is provided effectively in most lessons by the teachers who have been trained for this work. Additional support staff work effectively with the teachers. The support is provided in a sensitive manner. Work-based learners receive excellent support from their employers, training coordinators and college teachers. Their additional support needs are identified by timely screening and support is allocated promptly.

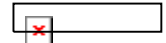
Leadership and management

132. Leadership and management are good. Full-time and part-time staff are involved appropriately in the planning and monitoring of the provision. Staff and managers work well together and share

good practice effectively. College systems and procedures, including those relating to equality and health and safety, are operated suitably. Team meetings are held regularly and have an appropriate agenda which include, for example, curriculum development and reviews of students' progress. The appraisal process identifies areas for development. New staff are supported well. For example, they benefit from the support of a mentor through their first term. Teachers are involved appropriately in the quality review progress and the writing of the self-assessment report and action plan. The self-assessment report is suitably rigorous, but fails to identify some of the weaknesses in the provision. Its assessment of the quality of the teaching is too positive.

133. Communication and collaboration between teachers, employers and Tameside College Training staff are good. Employers, for example, are given the schemes of work which their apprentices follow at college and are involved appropriately in the reviews of their progress. Tameside College Training support the employers well by, for example, helping them implement policies on equal opportunities, health and safety, and employment. The strategy to improve full framework completion is being implemented successfully; the achievement rate has improved by 23% in 2004.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on level 3 courses

- much good teaching

- rigorous assessment

- productive partnerships

- good curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge in some level 1 and 2 lessons

- insufficient use of ILT in the teaching and to aid research

- low achievement of frameworks in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

134. The college provides courses in health, social care and public services in many venues in the borough. They are offered from foundation to advanced level and by full-time, part-time and flexible modes of attendance. Work-based learning is provided in conjunction with Tameside College Training. At the time of the inspection, 233 students aged 16 to 18 and 29 adult students were studying full time; 50 students aged 16 to 18 and 473 adults were studying part time. A further 52 students were following apprenticeship programmes in care, early years and oral health.

Achievement and standards

135. Pass rates on courses at levels 2 and 3 are high. For example, on the national diploma in early years, the rate has been at, or above, 94% in each of the three years to 2003. In 2004, the pass rates on the AVCE in health and social care course and on the first diploma in public services course were 100%. At level 1, the pass rates are satisfactory. On the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) caring for young children course, for example, they have been close to the national average of 86% in each of the four years to 2004. The number of students who achieve key skills qualifications is low.

136. Retention rates are generally satisfactory. In 2003, they were mostly at, or close to, the national levels. Data produced by the college for 2004 show that retention rates have improved on some courses. For example, the rate on the CACHE caring for young people course at level 1 and the AVCE course have improved to well above the national average.

137. The achievement of work-based learners in achieving full frameworks is low. Following departmental reorganisation, the apprentices currently in learning are making good progress and are now completing their NVQ units at an appropriate rate.

138. In lessons and in work-based training, students demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills at an appropriate level for their course of study. They have good understanding of the professional value base. They are able to link their knowledge of theory to practice in the workplace well. In a Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) course in care, students were able to identify issues of client confidentiality and give appropriate advice on relevant action.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
CACHE caring for young children	1	No. of starts	26	29	17
		% retention	65	86	76
		% pass rate	88	84	85
Introductory certificate in health and social care	1	No. of starts	18	15	20
		% retention	50	93	75
		% pass rate	89	64	80
Counselling skills	2	No. of starts	49	44	30

intermediate		% retention	96	86	80
		% pass rate	100	97	100
First diploma in public services	2	No. of starts	*	18	32
		% retention	*	72	75
		% pass rate	*	92	83
National diploma (childhood studies in 2001, early years in 2002 and 2003)	3	No. of starts	19	26	26
		% retention	74	65	50
		% pass rate	100	94	100

Source: ILR

* course not running

Quality of education and training

139. Most teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of students. They plan and manage an appropriately wide range of learning activities to challenge and motivate students. The planned linking of theory to professional practice helps students place their learning in context. Teachers draw effectively upon their own professional experience as well as that gained by students on work placement. Students gain a wide range of skills and knowledge to meet their occupational needs and career aspirations. In many lessons, teachers implement a well structured teaching plan, share the objectives with the students, monitor their progress throughout the lesson and provide effective feedback. In a lesson on lifespan development, the teacher used an interesting and relevant video, work sheets and anatomical models to show the key stages in intrauterine growth. This led to a well-managed discussion which included regular questioning of the group by the teacher and positive feedback to students. The students responded well.

140. During the inspection, level 3 students were learning to analyse and evaluate information from a wide range of sources relating to their professional sector. Insufficient use is made of ICT as a tool to help students undertake this work. The students have insufficient opportunities to acquire and apply the skills needed, for example, for Internet research. Teaching makes insufficient use of ILT to extend and enrich learning. In a few lessons, insufficient attention is given to students to develop their ability to think analytically and critically. The pace is slow and there is a lack of stimulation. Learning activities in some entry level, level 1 and level 2 lessons are not sufficiently demanding. They add little to the students' knowledge and understanding.

141. Staff are occupationally well qualified and most have, or are working towards, an initial teacher training qualification. NVQ assessors have appropriate qualifications and also have, or are working towards, verifier qualifications. The library and resource centres have a wide stock of appropriate texts, journals, videos, DVDs and CD ROMS.

142. Assessment is rigorous and is well planned. Verification procedures are thorough. Students have a clear understanding of the standard of their practical work and receive good feedback on their written work and on their work in lessons. This helps to motivate them and helps them to improve. Assessment of students' levels of attainment in basic skills is concluded early in the course and additional support, where required, is put in place quickly. Tracking and monitoring systems are implemented appropriately. Students are well informed of their overall progress.

143. The college is proactive in identifying the needs of the local community. It meets these needs well through its comprehensive range of courses which are provided in many venues across the borough. Relationships with a wide range of outside agencies and employers are positive and purposeful. These provide an authentic context for learning and help students to develop their professional skills and progress through their chosen profession. The close link with the National Health Service (NHS), for example, provides an effective nursing cadet scheme for students of care. Provision for Key Stage 4 school pupils has been introduced successfully. It is regarded highly by

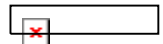
the partner schools.

144. Support and guidance for students are very good. They receive helpful individual guidance on choosing their courses and on which level to start at. Induction is effective in introducing students to the college and preparing them for their courses. Students speak highly of the support and guidance they receive from teachers and tutors.

Leadership and management

145. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear management focus on improvement. Planning is based on sound evidence derived from a wide range of sources including course reviews, management data, and feedback from employers. Course and curriculum development is planned well. Self-assessment is rigorous and leads to effective action to address areas of weakness. There are regular team meetings. These give appropriate attention to the quality of teaching. Good practice in teaching is identified and shared appropriately. There is a good awareness of equal opportunity issues. In all aspects of work, staff have a good understanding of diversity, equal opportunities, and anti-discriminatory and behaviour issues.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on the access courses

- stimulating and varied teaching on access courses

- successful recruitment and achievement of under-represented groups of students

- effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- low key skills achievement for GCE A-level students

- insufficient integration of ILT into the teaching.

Scope of provision

146. At the Hyde Clarendon sixth form centre, GCE A-level and AS-level psychology, sociology, history, law, geography and AS-level government and politics, religious studies, critical thinking and citizenship are part of the range of GCE courses available to students aged 16 to 18 and are taken by 121 students. All GCE A-level students work towards the key skill of communication at level 3. At the Beaufort Road and Stockport Road sites, a wide range of pathways is offered as part of an access to HE provision. Some 229 adult students study this provision full time and 75 study part time, either during the day or evening and occasionally on Saturdays. Pathways in access to nursing and midwifery, medically related professions, social and community related professions, law, social science and history have attracted a rapidly increasing number of students including a very large number of students from postcodes which are designated as economically disadvantaged.

Achievement and standards

147. Pass rates on access programmes have remained at, or better, than national averages during a period of major growth in student numbers. On AS-level subjects, pass rates are generally at the national benchmark. Pass rates on GCE A-level subjects are generally high. Both geography and sociology have achieved a 100% pass rate for each of the three years to 2004. Other GCE A-level pass rates are also high. Students on most GCE A-level courses achieve advanced level grades which are at least as good as those predicted by their levels of attainment at GCSE. Sociology, history and law have performed well by this measure in 2003 and 2004. Opportunities are provided within the GCE teaching for students to work towards the key skill of communication. Few students complete key skills portfolios or are entered for the external tests.

148. Retention rates are generally close to the national averages. The standard of students' written work generally shows a high level of English and the ability to structure a relevant answer. Conceptual understanding and grasp of technical terminology varies. Students are articulate and confident in discussions and presentations. Students are competent users of IT. Progression rates to HE are good. Three quarters of the access students and 80% of GCE A-level students progressed to HE courses in 2004.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	45	25	26
		% retention	53	56	62
		% pass rate**	25	43	44
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	91	125	198
		% retention	73	81	69
		% pass rate	91	95	85
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	**	23	28
		% retention	**	83	71
		% pass rate	**	89	80
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	37	49	39
		% retention	70	65	79
		% pass rate	50	78	74
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	80	52	58
		% retention	65	73	72

		% pass rate	79	68	86
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	33	33	44
		% retention	61	76	82
		% pass rate	90	88	64
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	15	15	25
		% retention	73	80	88
		% pass rate	100	92	100
GCE A2 psychology	3	No. of starts	*	23	23
		% retention	*	96	87
		% pass rate	*	100	95

Source: ILR

* course not running

** high grade pass rate

***fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

149. Teaching on the access courses is stimulating and varied appropriately. Students make good progress in the lessons. They are involved in lively debate, discussion and presentations which are stimulated by informative and well-presented materials. The atmosphere is conducive to learning and involves mutual trust and support. In a lesson on poverty, students used their personal experiences confidently to give excellent presentations which led to a lively debate. The teacher deftly synthesised the ideas that had arisen and indicated how this synthesis could be linked to a more theoretical analysis of the topic. Lessons in psychology, sociology and health studies are well organised, involve an appropriately wide range of learning activities, and all students participate. A strong focus on group work provides opportunities for students to help each other and, for those who have recently returned to learning, to develop skills, understanding and confidence. In a law lesson, there was frequent reference to the success of former students to inspire and build confidence.

150. In the best GCE lessons, there is a similar lively, varied and rapidly moving range of activities which involve all students and which present intellectual challenge. For example, in an AS-level law lesson, students wrote test questions which were used in a game providing a fun way to check students' understanding of terms and concepts used in criminal law. Students commented that they valued the mix of activities because they learnt better when they were relaxed and enjoying the lesson. In a politics lesson, students used high order thinking skills and their skills in the use of IT to extract information from a political party's website in order to create a graphical representation of its structure. In a citizenship lesson, students were motivated by the opportunity to develop a campaign on a matter of personal significance. However, in GCE lessons, some of the teaching is dull, too dominated by teacher exposition and students are, for too long, passive recipients of information. This results in good coverage of the examination requirements, but does not require the students to engage with and internalise sufficiently the ideas and facts being presented. Few opportunities are provided to stretch the more able students.

151. A good range of subject specific enrichment opportunities are provided on both GCE A-level and access courses such as fieldwork, conferences, court visits, voluntary work and museum visits.

152. GCE A-level students can take extension subjects such as critical thinking and AS-level citizenship.

153. Teaching takes place in classrooms which are dedicated to the teaching of humanities subjects. Informative and attractive wall displays include subject specific websites and students' posters

provide a stimulating environment. General access to ILT is limited within the classrooms. Teachers need to make special arrangements to use it in their teaching, limiting its use. The library contains a large, relevant and up-to-date stock which is transferable across all sites. Lecturers are well qualified. They benefit from extensive staff development opportunities.

154. Regular and well-organised assessment features in all courses. Teachers' marking is detailed and feedback on how to improve is constructive. Students' progress is monitored regularly. GCE A-level students are set target grades which are based on their levels of attainment at GCSE and on their ongoing performance, and their progress is monitored against this target.

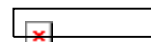
155. The recruitment of underrepresented groups of students is successful on both access and GCE A-level courses. On access courses, for example, the number of students from postcode areas with a high level of deprivation has risen from 16 % of the total in 2001 to 70% in 2004, at a time of rapid overall growth. Students mix well whatever their gender or ethnicity and show respect for each other.

156. Support for students is effective. Students value the approachable and friendly staff who help them with both academic and pastoral problems, both in lessons and informally, in their own time. Early assessment of students' levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy leads to appropriate additional support where necessary.

Leadership and management

157. The curriculum area is led and managed well. Teachers are involved appropriately in business performance measurement and in quality assurance arrangements. The self-assessment report is largely accurate, although the quality of the teaching is overstated. All the students, from a diverse range of backgrounds and ethnicity, are treated with sensitivity and respect. The management of key skills is unsatisfactory.

Foundation programmes: literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in GCSE English

- high retention rates on ESOL courses

- strong literacy and numeracy provision in the workplace.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on ESOL courses

- failure to meet the individual needs of some students

- unsatisfactory management of Skills for Life and key skills.

Scope of provision

158. Skills for Life provision at the college includes discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, additional learning support, and key skills up to, and including, level 2. GCSE English was also inspected. At the time of the inspection, 1,143 students had been enrolled on discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes, and 76 students on work-based programmes. The college provides Skills for Life courses of varying lengths and from entry level to level 2. Most courses take place during the day at the main college site and at several community venues. All courses provide the opportunity for students to gain nationally accredited certificates in Skills for Life. Key skills and additional learning support are delivered within the vocational departments.

Achievement and standards

159. Retention rates are mixed, but satisfactory overall. On ESOL courses, they are high. For example, on the ESOL one year course, they have been at least 10% above average in each of the three years to 2003. In 2003, retention rates on the courses leading to certificates in adult literacy and numeracy were close to the national averages. GCSE retention rates have been low in 2002 and 2003.

160. Pass rates on the ESOL courses are low. On the 1 year course, they have been well below national averages in each of the three years to 2003 and, on the short course, were well below average in 2003. On the GCSE English course, the higher grade (A to C) pass rate was well above average in both 2002 and 2003.

161. Few students are entered for key skills qualifications. Many students aged 16 to 18 lack awareness of the key skills programmes they are supposed to be following. Retention and pass rates for the few students who are enrolled are low in communication and close to the average in application of number.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	107	726	219
		% retention	94	28	30
		% pass rate	76	42	20
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	143	754	159
		% retention	79	31	42
		% pass rate	47	57	55
ESOL short	2 and below	No. of starts	183	135	117
		% retention	96	100	99
		% pass rate	77	75	63
ESOL 1 year	2 and	No. of starts	212	223	237

	below	% retention	92	95	84
		% pass rate	75	76	64
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	93	150	153
		% retention	71	53	63
		% pass rate	50	82	73

Source: ILR

Quality of education and training

162. Most of the teaching is satisfactory or better, although a smaller proportion is good than is the average in similar colleges. In the best lessons, effective teaching strategies are used. Teachers use imaginative materials to stimulate and challenge students in their work-based literacy and numeracy teaching and in GCSE English lessons. They give good individual support in lessons and students clearly value the help they receive. An interesting GCSE English course booklet gives an outline structure of each unit of the course and enables students to catch up if a lesson is missed. In some lessons, the range of learning resources used is too narrow. Paper-based resources such as worksheets and photocopies of pages from text books are overused and there is insufficient use of, for example, ILT. Most of the teaching is appropriate for the majority of the students in a group. Too little of the teaching is planned to address the needs of students whose level of attainment is not that of the majority. In some lessons, teachers make insufficient attempts to check that all the students understand the topic. Opportunities for ESOL students to develop their speaking skills are underdeveloped.

163. Verbal and written feedback to students are effective in helping them to progress. Teachers praise students' work and effort, and make constructive suggestions on how they can improve. Tutorial provision for ESOL students is unsatisfactory. Tutorials are on course timetables, but are not used for their intended purpose.

164. The college's programme of literacy and numeracy teaching in the workplace meets effectively the needs of employers and learners. The college has strong links with local employers. In 2003/04, literacy and/or numeracy was taught to over 200 learners in the workplace. All these learners are assessed to determine their literacy and numeracy needs. These learners have good access to learning technology and use computers in many lessons. The range of learning activities is wide and includes, for example, group work and individualised online learning.

165. Classroom accommodation and resources are good on the main site. Rooms are spacious and comfortable, and provide a good learning environment. In some, the room layout prevents teachers from moving around the room easily to provide individual help to students. Resources for work-based learning are also good. Some of the ESOL teaching rooms have insufficient audio-visual equipment. Staff teaching literacy and numeracy are well qualified. A small proportion of the ESOL teachers are qualified to a high enough level, for example, few have ESOL teaching qualifications at level 4. Teachers have good access to training opportunities including core curriculum training.

166. Insufficient literacy and numeracy teaching is embedded in the college's mainstream vocational provision. The range of ESOL courses is too narrow. Too few courses are community based. The majority of provision is at entry level, little is at level 1 and none is at level 2.

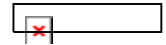
167. Additional support for literacy, numeracy and language for students on vocational and academic courses is effective. Initial assessment is good and provides a detailed analysis of need very early in the academic year. The support provided is successful in enabling students to achieve their main learning goal. The achievements of students receiving additional support are comparable to those of the student body as a whole.

Leadership and management

168. The strategic management of key skills and Skills for Life provision is unsatisfactory. Recruitment targets are not based securely on identified community need. It is unclear how targets for work-based provision and additional learning support are agreed. No targets are set for progression from one level to another or on to mainstream courses. The monitoring of the quality of the Skills for Life courses is weak. There are too few observations of the quality of lessons and the learning materials used in lessons are not monitored sufficiently. The college has an inflated view of the quality of the teaching. Too few students are entered for key skills qualifications. The management of the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the workplace is good.

169. The college participates fully in the borough's ESOL strategy. It has led on its development which has led to a slight increase in community-based provision. The links with local community organisations are enabling the college to become increasingly responsive to the diverse needs of the local community. Rigorous course evaluation procedures have led, for example, to improvements in course design.

Foundation programmes: provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, entry to employment and the entry level framework programme



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

Contributory grade for provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is **outstanding (grade 1)**

Contributory grade for provision for E2E and entry level students is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- outstanding teaching and support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- excellent equipment and accommodation

- rigorous diagnostic assessment and progress tracking on the E2E programme and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- effective curriculum management for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate teaching strategies in E2E and entry level programmes

- few qualifications achieved by E2E students.

Scope of provision

170. At the time of the inspection, 178 students were studying full time and 15 part time on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the E2E programme and the entry level programme. Over 100 of these students were studying on the entry level programme. This programme leads to a certificate in Skills for Working Life. The programme offers personal development and a choice of 7 vocational options. E2E students develop their personal, literacy and numeracy skills, and explore vocational options. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities follow an Essential Skills award with accreditation through an external awarding body. The Essential Skills award provides a framework for the development of oral communication, literacy and numeracy, and personal development.

Achievement and standards

171. Students on the E2E programme have the opportunity to take the national tests in literacy and numeracy. Very few of them do so. Last year, only 9 students out of 69 starters took the tests; they all passed. The Skills for Working Life certificate is new this year. A satisfactory proportion, nearly half, of the students on the E2E course progressed into mainstream FE or employment last year. Nearly three quarters of the students completing the entry level programme progressed to FE at a higher level last year. Few moved directly into employment. Opportunities for the development of personal skills are good on both programmes, but there are few opportunities for the accreditation of vocational skills on the E2E programme.

172. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve challenging targets which are appropriate to the individual student and are established following the thorough initial assessment process. These targets are used extensively to inform the teaching and provide the basis for the assessment of each student's progress. The work undertaken by students is good and some students make exceptional progress.

Quality of education and training

173. The teaching to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Learning is planned effectively to meet the individual needs of each student. It develops students' personal and practical skills well. The teaching methods used are matched carefully to the needs of each student, some of whom have complex needs. In one lesson, students were involved in a story in which the teacher asked them to pick from various bags containing items that might be scary. Students expressed a range of appropriate emotions in picking from these bags. Teachers and support assistants question students in a supportive way. They make good use of praise to reinforce achievement and build motivation. Signing is an integral part of much of the work. Students receive close behavioural support. Clear and useful plans are established which identify appropriate ways of working with each student. The students are treated with respect by staff. In a small number of lessons teachers do not make full use of all the staff present in the classroom in order to meet the needs of students effectively.

174. In the best lessons in the E2E and entry level programmes, teachers are sensitive to their students' needs. These lessons are planned carefully to ensure that all students can take part whilst, at the same time, ensuring that the higher attaining students are challenged suitably. Some lessons are enhanced by the use of modern vocational equipment and well-designed learning resources. In one cookery lesson, the students, at a very early stage in the course, all arrived correctly dressed and, without prompting, went through hygiene and preparation routines. They gathered around the teacher and listened intently to his instructions, making their own observations and constructive comments. Those who completed their allotted tasks first were given additional work to do.

175. About half the lessons observed in the E2E and entry level programmes are not of this standard. These lessons do not fully meet the students' needs. For example, some teachers use language and handouts that the students cannot understand. Some poor behaviour is challenged

insufficiently. Monosyllabic answers to questions are accepted too readily. In some group work, the teachers are too quick to intervene, stifling discussion. In some lessons, the aims of the lesson lack clarity. The needs of students with learning difficulties infilling into the E2E and entry level groups, are not met fully. These students are sometimes marginalised or not included fully in the activities. Many lessons have more than one member of staff present. The opportunity for flexibility that this affords is not used well.

176. Most of the staff teaching on the E2E programme are not trained teachers. Some of the teachers on the entry level programme are entry level specialists and others are vocational specialists drawn from the relevant vocational areas. The latter often lack the skills to cope with the needs of students with behaviour problems or learning difficulties. Teachers and other staff in Dovestones are well qualified. Additional learning support is deployed generously across all areas.

177. The physical resources are outstanding. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, located on the main site, benefit from many high-quality specialist facilities and personal care. Sensory rooms enable students to benefit from a range of experiences. The E2E programme is housed in a building on the high street. The accommodation is large, bright and well decorated, and has an appropriate range of training rooms and offices equipped with computers. The entry level students use the same facilities as mainstream college students. This gives them good access to industry-standard equipment and vocationally experienced staff.

178. In Dovestones, assessment is effective and builds from extensive initial and diagnostic assessments. The assessment of needs leads to clear individual learning plans which include challenging targets. Students' learning is monitored lesson by lesson and a termly report identifies areas of progress. On the E2E programme, diagnostic assessment is used well to plan the students' programmes of study. Reviews are regular and mentor support is good. The tracking of students' progress on the entry level programme varies in quality; some vocational routes have robust systems, others do not.

179. The E2E and entry level programmes provide valuable learning opportunities for the area's young people. They are introduced to work opportunities, their core and employability skills, confidence and social skills are developed, and there are valuable links to FE. The E2E students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to gain vocationally specific qualifications. Good curriculum planning ensures that the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met effectively. They are enabled to make appropriate choices and develop their skills. The college has excellent links with partner establishments and with the local community.

180. Support arrangements are excellent in Dovestones. The teachers work effectively with other services and parents, involving them in reviewing progress and in meeting students' needs. Contact between the college and the main feeder school is good, promoting effective transition and the suitable induction of students. The E2E and entry level students receive good academic and personal support. Their progress is reviewed regularly.

Leadership and management

181. The provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for E2E and entry level students is central to the college's mission to widen participation and be at the heart of the community.

182. The management of the Dovestones provision is excellent and has successfully led to the development of outstanding provision. The quality of the provision is monitored carefully. Links with the community are good. Communication between managers and staff is regular and effective. Communication with parents is systematic, frequent and useful. Managers, teachers and support staff have a shared vision and are focused suitably on the quality of students' experiences. There is a positive team ethos. The staff appraisal system is effective. It leads to specific development opportunities and to improved provision for the students.

183. The management of the E2E and entry level provision is satisfactory. Staff meet regularly. For

example, E2E staff meet twice weekly to discuss students' progress, operational and developmental issues. Changes, for example, new timetabling approaches in E2E and the use of a new accreditation framework in entry level provision have improved the quality of students' experiences. The entry level staff team liaise appropriately with the different vocational areas in order to help promote consistency in the quality of the teaching. Quality assurance procedures are followed consistently. The self-assessment report does not identify the weaknesses in the teaching.

Part D: College data

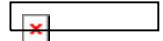
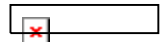


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2003/04



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	29	27
2	21	17
3	25	11
4/5	0	2
Other	25	43
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	550	929	4
Land-based provision	1	25	0
Construction	201	528	2
Engineering, technology and manufacture	326	743	3
Business administration, management and professional	1,113	7,626	26
Information and communication technology	1,239	5,611	21
Retailing, customer service and transportation	44	123	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	716	1,173	5

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	356	711	3
Health, social care and public services	692	2,826	10
Visual and performing arts and media	749	785	4
Humanities	397	623	3
English, languages and communication	408	713	3
Foundation programmes	1,223	2,499	11
Unknown curriculum area	837	675	5
Total	8,852	25,590	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
1	Starters excluding transfers	1,636	2,121	1,523	3,247	3,234	2,677
	Retention rate %	88	86	80	87	87	82
	National average %	75	76	76	70	71	71
	Pass rate %	79	83	81	77	86	81
	National average %	67	69	73	68	70	77
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,589	1,747	1,360	3,673	3,028	2,464
	Retention rate %	73	66	74	73	76	78
	National average %	70	71	71	68	68	67
	Pass rate %	75	70	79	78	81	83
	National average %	68	70	73	67	71	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,261	1,953	1,934	1,736	1,834	1,853
	Retention rate %	65	69	70	71	65	64
	National average %	70	77	77	68	70	69
	Pass rate %	82	82	80	78	80	81

	National average %	75	77	80	68	71	74
4	Starters excluding transfers	*	33	*	129	182	190
	Retention rate %	*	36	*	88	84	56
	National average %	73	71	74	67	68	69
	Pass rate %	*	50	*	59	78	82
	National average %	54	57	68	54	54	58

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.

2. College rates for 2001 to 2003: College ILR.

** numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

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)	66	32	2	68
Level 2 (intermediate)	68	27	5	41
Level 1 (foundation)	69	27	4	71
Other sessions	69	22	9	23
Totals	68	28	4	203

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