



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Basingstoke College of Technology

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The college as a whole](#)

[Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

[Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Computing and information and communications technology](#)

[Hospitality and catering](#)

[Sport, leisure and travel and public services](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Art, design and media](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

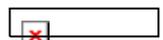
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

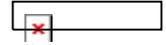


Name of college:	Basingstoke College of Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Judith Armstrong
Address of college:	Worting Road Basingstoke Hampshire RG21 8TN
Telephone number:	01256 354141
Fax number:	01256 306444
Chair of governors:	Charles Cardiff
Unique reference number:	130688
Name of reporting inspector:	Maria Barker
Dates of inspection:	21-25 February 2005

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

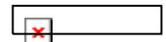


Basingstoke College of Technology is a general further education (FE) college in the North Hampshire Borough of Basingstoke and Deane. The borough is largely rural with the exception of Basingstoke; the borough population is approximately 155,000 which includes a town population of 110,000. North Hampshire is prosperous. Basingstoke is a significant commercial location with over 3,000 registered companies, which are predominantly high-value organisations needing a well-educated workforce. For the last 20 years, unemployment rates have been below the national average and are currently under 1% for the Basingstoke travel to work area. Secondary education is organised in 11 to 16 schools, 9 in the town and 3 others in the vicinity. Of the Basingstoke school leavers in 2003, 80% continued in full-time education after the age of 16. There is a large sixth form college in Basingstoke and colleges for post-16 students in nearby towns.

The college is based on a single campus either side of a main road close to the town centre. In addition, there are three information technology (IT) community learning centres which are situated in the town centre, Chineham and Tadley. At the end of 2002/03, the college negotiated a lease on an industrial unit to accommodate a major increase in the number of students requiring construction programmes. The unit is approximately half a mile away from the main campus and is the centre for brickwork and painting and decorating provision. The college was awarded interim Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for construction (interior skills) in March 2004. The end of year one assessment for this single entity CoVE is due to be completed by the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the near future. Basingstoke College of Technology is a key provider of work-based learning for young people in the area. The work-based learning is provided through a specialist department, Basingstoke College of Technology Employment and Training Services (BETS).

In 2003/04, the college had 1,950 full-time students, of whom 1,500 were aged 16 to 18, a 15% increase in full-time students over the previous year. There were also 9,525 part-time LSC-funded students; over 9,000 were aged 19 and over. The college offers courses in all 14 areas of learning at all levels from entry level to higher education (HE) programmes. However, entry level and level 1 courses are not yet available in all curriculum areas. Nine areas were inspected and three contributory grades were awarded for work-based learning. The college's mission, encapsulated in the words 'success through learning', is to meet the learning ambitions and skills needs of the community of North Hampshire by providing vocational education and training that enhances the economic and social life of the area.

How effective is the college?



Education and training are good in five curriculum areas: hospitality and catering; sport, leisure and travel and public services; hairdressing and beauty therapy; art, design and media; and literacy and numeracy. They are satisfactory in three areas: engineering, computing and information and communications technology (ICT) and health and social care. Education and training are unsatisfactory in construction. Work-based learning is good in hairdressing and satisfactory in construction and engineering. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- strong governance

- clear leadership from the principal and senior management team
- good financial management
- effective communication
- high pass rates
- good key skills integration and achievement at levels 1 and 2
- effective provision of courses to meet local community and business needs
- effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) in many areas
- good guidance and support for students
- comprehensive initial assessment and provision of additional learning support.

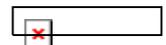
What should be improved

- retention rates, particularly at levels 2 and 3
- the range of curriculum provision in some areas
- the effective use of individual learning plans and target setting

- assessment and progress reviews in work-based learning
- the consistency of implementation of quality assurance arrangements
- the use of management information in curriculum areas
- arrangements for portable appliance testing
- the development of effective appraisal and performance management
- the promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum
- students' access to the college nursery.

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
Construction	Unsatisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . There are high pass rates at level 1 and for apprenticeship frameworks. Current retention and pass rates are low on the construction award at level 2 and the retention rate is low for trowel occupations at level 2. Inadequate staffing levels in both teaching and management have disrupted students' learning. Much theory teaching fails to engage students adequately, although key skills are taught well by specialist tutors.

Engineering	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Pass rates are 100% on progression awards at levels 1 and 2 in vehicle engineering and on engineering national certificate level 3 courses, however, there are consistently low retention rates in level 1 vehicle maintenance and repair. There are some good framework achievements, but low retention and pass rates on the engineering apprenticeship. Teaching is satisfactory. Individual support for students is good, although progress reviews of work-based learners are ineffective.
Computing and information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on most courses, but retention rates on some community courses are low. There is effective use of ILT in teaching and learning and resources are of a high standard. Some accommodation is inappropriate or inaccessible. There is insufficient work-related experience for students aged 16 to 18 and rooms lack industry focus.
Hospitality and catering	Good. There are high retention rates on most full-time courses and high retention and pass rates on short courses. Teaching and learning are good and effective learning support is provided. There is a good range of enrichment activities and there are strong links with industry. Retention and achievement rates are low in work-based learning, and slow progress is made in national vocational qualification (NVQ) unit achievement.
Sport, leisure and travel and public services	Good. Retention and pass rates are consistently high. Teaching is well planned, imaginative and enables students to reach their potential. There is good progression into FE and HE and employment. The curriculum area is well led, but lack of appraisal undermines performance management and effective staff development.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learning is good . There are high pass rates on most courses. The standard of practical teaching and learning is high, although opportunities for the development of commercial practice are limited in daytime lessons. There is an extensive range of courses and enrichment activities. Resources for learning are good and support for students is highly effective.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on some full-time and short courses, but there are low retention and pass rates on many courses. Teaching is satisfactory, individual learning needs are met and there is good integration of theory and practice in lessons. The needs of the community and employers are met well. Strategies to improve provision are not implemented fully.
Art, design and media	Good. There are very high retention rates and high pass rates on some level 3 courses, but low retention and pass rates on others. Much good teaching and learning develops high standards of work. There is good support for students, but assessment criteria are not clear in many assignment briefs. There is insufficient provision at entry level and level 1.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. There are high pass rates on most courses, but retention rates on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English and mathematics are low. Most teaching is good, but insufficiently assertive in some lessons. Key skills are a central part of the curriculum and individual learning needs are met effectively. Provision to meet employer's and community needs is responsive and successful.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors, principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and effective strategic direction for the college. In 2004, overall pass rates continued to improve at all levels and were at, or above, the national average. Retention rates are generally below national averages. Teaching and learning during the inspection were at the national average, although the proportion of good and better teaching varied considerably in the curriculum areas. A recent restructuring has yet to be implemented consistently across all curriculum areas. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive, but their implementation is inconsistent. The standard of curriculum management varies across the college. While self-assessment is thorough, teaching, training and learning sections often lack specific or detailed reference to teaching strengths and, particularly, weaknesses. Systematic formal appraisal of staff has fallen into abeyance until new performance and development management measures are agreed. Financial management in the college is good. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

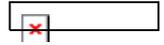
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. The college has developed effective strategies to widen participation. Good collaboration with local schools has increased the number of pupils who progress to FE. A range of programmes are provided to meet the needs of pupils aged 14 to 16, excluded school pupils, students with moderate learning difficulties and a small number of asylum seekers. The college has highly effective partnerships with local businesses and the local community, and provides training in basic skills for adults. Support for literacy and numeracy is good. The college has made a good response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), including staff training and an audit of premises. Progress has been made in making almost all of the college accessible to students with restricted mobility, though some college facilities and two of the community venues are not accessible. The response to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 has been slow. A policy and action plan is in place, but there is little analysis or use of data. Staff have yet to be trained in race equality.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Support for students is good. Students receive good support and guidance on to courses. Effective initial assessment of full-time and some part-time students identifies literacy, numeracy and other support needs. There are good arrangements for providing additional learning support. A well-structured programme of induction ensures that students are introduced effectively to college life. Individual tutorial support is good, but group tutorials are of variable quality. Students have access to a range of services including personal counselling and advice on welfare and health matters. Careers education is good and students receive good guidance on progression to employment and HE. Financial support is available to students facing hardship. The college has a designated member of staff who is responsible for child protection issues. An action plan is being prepared to ensure that training for staff and governors takes place. There are effective links with external agencies to ensure appropriate support for vulnerable young people.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- good personal support

- very supportive tutors

- good teachers who make learning enjoyable

- interesting and relevant trips and visiting speakers

- good computers and access to flexible learning centres

- learning new skills and good preparation for work

- being treated as adults.

What they feel could be improved

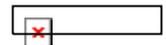
- the cost of canteen food

- car parking

- bus services from rural areas

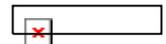
- more lockers and storage space
- better social space
- the cleanliness of the college and classrooms
- crowded classrooms in some areas.

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

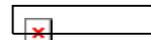


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	61	34	5
19+ and WBL*	67	30	3
Learning 16-18	63	32	5
19+ and WBL*	64	33	3

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. Inspectors used data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised learner returns to the LSC for the academic years 2001 to 2003. They also used college data on pass and retention rates for 2004. Although college data for 2004 are not validated, inspectors accepted the accuracy of the data in making judgements. In the following paragraphs, the college's retention and pass rates are compared with those of similar colleges nationally. At the time of the inspection, the national averages for 2003/04 were not available.

2. Summary data for the period 2001 to 2003 show that pass rates are generally well above the national average. However, the difference between college pass rates and national averages has reduced since 2001. Pass rates in 2004 remain high overall. Retention rates are consistently below national averages. The college has introduced a number of initiatives to improve retention rates. Retention rates in 2004 showed significant improvement at level 1 for 16 to 18 year olds, but reduced further for adults at that level.

3. There are significant variations in retention and pass rates throughout the college. For example, there are high retention rates on many courses in hospitality and catering, sport, leisure and travel and public services and art, design and media. Similarly, although there are many instances of high pass rates, there are low pass rates on the construction award at level 2, the national diploma in early years, AS-level art and the national diploma in design.

4. The overall attendance in the lessons observed was 75%, which is slightly lower than the national average for comparable colleges. In hospitality and catering, attendance is high, at 89%, 10% above the national average. In engineering and health and social care, attendance is below the national average.

5. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory or better. Many students develop good practical skills, for example, in hospitality and catering and hairdressing and beauty therapy. However, in daytime lessons in hairdressing and beauty therapy, the shortage of clients limits commercial skills development and slows the rate of progress made by students. Students in health and social care participate well in lessons that explore the links between theory and professional practice. In literacy and numeracy, and ICT, adult students make good progress and gain in confidence and skills. High standards of work are characteristic in art, design and media, particularly on the diploma in foundation studies. However, in construction, many students are making less than satisfactory progress. Students' written and practical work are of a satisfactory standard overall.

6. There are generally high progression rates to FE, HE and employment. This was noticeable particularly in sport, leisure and travel and public services, hairdressing and beauty therapy and art, design and media.

7. Achievements in key skills have been consistently above national averages at levels 1 and 2. All full-time students are expected to take key skills qualifications. Students' achievements in key skills are enhanced through the integration of key skills in most curriculum areas. Key skills at level 3 have been integrated less effectively and students' achievements are low.

16 to 18 year olds

8. In 2002/03, there were 2,558 enrolments on level 1 courses, representing 27% of the total enrolments for the college. In the three years 2001 to 2003, retention rates have been significantly below national averages and declined to 11% below the national average in 2003. In 2004, retention

rates on level 1 courses rose by 13%. Pass rates have been significantly above national averages and, in 2001 and 2003, were in the top 10% of colleges of a similar type.

9. There were 3,905 enrolments in 2002/03 on level 2 courses, representing 34% of the total enrolments for the college. Retention rates were significantly below the national average in 2001, were at the national average in 2002 and 2003 and fell to 67% in 2004. Pass rates have been consistently above national averages. For example, in 2001 and 2002, pass rates at level 2 were in the top 25% of colleges of a similar type.

10. In 2002/03, there were 1,303 enrolments on level 3 courses, representing 14% of the total enrolments for the college. Retention rates have been consistently below national averages and were 13% below the national average in 2003. The retention rate rose slightly in 2004. Pass rates are well above national averages on most vocational qualifications, but are significantly below national averages on general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) and advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) courses.

11. Key skills achievements are above national averages. For example, pass rates at level 1 in application of number rose to 79% in 2004 and were 51% at level 2. In communication, the comparable figures are 80% at level 1 and 53% at level 2. In ICT, the comparable figures were 52% at level 1 and 50% at level 2. However, key skills achievements at level 3 are low. In 2004, the pass rate in application of number was 14%, 20% in communication, and 24% in IT.

12. Completion rates on apprenticeship frameworks are high overall. For example, in construction, 51% of apprentices who started in 2002/03 achieved the full framework. Of the advanced apprentices who started in 2001/02, 59% achieved the framework. A large proportion of apprentices who started more recently are making good progress. In engineering completion rates are high for most frameworks, but retention and completion rates are low on the general engineering apprenticeship. In hairdressing, 50% of apprentices who started in 2002/03 achieved the full framework and the remaining students are on target to complete successfully. However, retention and pass rates on work-based learning in hospitality and catering are low. Since 2000/01, 20 learners started and 14 have left with no framework completion. There are six learners left on programme and, of these, two have almost completed.

Adult learners

13. In 2003, there were 4,888 adults enrolled on level 1 courses. Retention rates are significantly below national averages; they improved to 10% below the national average in 2003, but fell again in 2004. However, pass rates have been above national averages and were 81% in 2004.

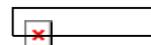
14. There were 5,487 adults enrolled on level 2 courses in 2003. Retention rates have been significantly below national averages and fell to 28% below the national average in 2003. They rose to 53% in 2004. Pass rates were in the top 10% of college results in 2001 and 2002, but declined to the top 25% in 2003. However, they are consistently above national averages.

15. In 2003, there were 2,373 adults enrolled on level 3 courses. Retention rates are improving, but are below national averages overall. They were only just below the national average in 2003 and rose slightly in 2004. Pass rates have been in the top 25% of college results over the period 2001 to 2003. The pass rate fell in 2004. Overall, pass rates at level 3 are above national averages, apart from falling below national averages for GCE A-level and AS-level courses in 2002. Pass rates are generally higher on vocational courses.

16. On short courses, retention rates are around the national average. Pass rates have been at the national average in 2002 and 2003 and rose to 84% in 2004.

17. Adults generally achieve high pass rates in key skills. Pass rates at levels 1 and 2 are over 50% in application of number, communication and IT. In 2004, pass rates at level 3 were 20% in application of number, 50% in communication and 36% in IT.

Quality of education and training



18. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded in 170 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 62% of graded lessons, satisfactory in 34% and less than satisfactory in 4%. The percentage of lessons judged to be better than satisfactory is at the national average. Overall, only 2% of lessons were judged to be excellent, and 16% were judged to be better than good, whereas the national average is 25%. For the college as a whole, the quality of teaching is better for adult students, whilst learning is similar for both age groups. The teaching of adults is significantly better than that of students aged 16 to 18 in computing and ICT and literacy and numeracy.

19. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching between curriculum areas. The best teaching is in hospitality and catering, sport, leisure and travel and public services and art, design and media. In these areas, the amount of teaching which is better than satisfactory exceeds national averages for similar colleges. In contrast, less than half of the teaching observed in construction and engineering was found to be good or better. Teaching and learning were particularly poor in construction. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in hospitality and catering, sport, leisure and travel and public services, health and social care or literacy and numeracy.

20. The more effective lessons are well prepared and draw on good subject knowledge. Teachers think carefully about their schemes of work, overall assessment objectives and students' individual needs. They devise tasks that stimulate and engage all students. There are good working relationships between all staff, including support staff and technicians. Students value the time and effort that staff give them, and their learning benefits from good individual support from staff. Students are well motivated in most lessons. Several curriculum areas make good use of ILT to increase the range of teaching methods used in lessons. For example, in engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy, ILT is used effectively in theory lessons. Enthusiastic teachers in hospitality and catering, and sport, leisure and travel and public services use a broad range of appropriate teaching methods to stimulate, engage and challenge students learning. In art, design and media, imaginative teaching, for example, the construction of an installation to challenge students' spatial perception, develops students' creative exploration of concepts. In engineering, the use of small group work to build a kit car was well planned and extremely effective.

21. The more effective practical lessons are well organised and make good links between theory and practice. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, practical teaching and learning was identified as particularly effective. For example, an inspirational demonstration in abstract nail art led to the development of highly creative skills. Courses are generally taught within an appropriate work-related context and there are productive links with employers. Work experience opportunities, visiting speakers, trips and national competitions are used well in many areas to vitalise and extend students' experience. This is particularly the case in hospitality and catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy and art, design and media. However, in computing and ICT there are no work experience arrangements made for students aged 16 to 18 and few links with industry.

22. In poorer theory lessons, for example, in construction and engineering, there is dull and uninspiring teaching with few attempts to involve students actively in their learning. All students are taught in the same way at the same pace and teachers fail to make frequent checks on what students know or can do. Where students are not given clear aims and objectives, or are given too few opportunities to contribute to the lesson, they become bored and restless.

23. Key skills provision across the college is well co-ordinated. Clear policies and procedures have been instrumental in integrating key skills effectively in many curriculum areas. All students are expected to gain communications, application of number and IT key skills at level 1 or level 2. Key skills achievements are good at these levels. Key skills achievements at level 3 are low. Key skills provision at level 3 is being rationalised to address this. Most key skills lessons have two staff timetabled, one with curriculum expertise and one with a background in key skills.

24. Staffing levels are generally appropriate, but currently there are vacancies in some key posts. Two out of the four head of department posts and one curriculum manager post are vacant. Staffing levels in construction are not adequate and have disrupted students' learning. Most staff are well qualified and suitably experienced. Students benefit from the up-to-date professional experience of many part-time staff. There is a shortage of qualified assessors in hairdressing and beauty therapy, and of qualified assessors and internal verifiers in hospitality. Staff development is generally satisfactory and has been particularly focused on improving teaching and learning and on developing the use of ILT in lessons. Staff have received appropriate training in the requirements of disability legislation, but not in race equality.

25. Accommodation and equipment throughout the college range from satisfactory to very good. Facilities for multi media, three-dimensional workshops, fashion and textiles, hairdressing and automotive technologies are particularly good. There is at least one computer in every teaching room and interactive whiteboards are available in all curriculum areas. Many computers are new and computer resources are good. Facilities for plumbing do not meet assessment requirements. Resources for electronic engineering are old and unreliable. Lessons are disrupted in semi-open-plan ICT workshops. Productive links with external organisations, such as rugby and football clubs, have enabled students to use excellent sporting facilities located away from the college. The college intranet is at a rudimentary stage of development and of limited benefit to many students. The college nursery is not well used by students. Conditions of use and costs prohibit many students from taking advantage of the facility. Some 92% of the college premises are accessible to people with restricted mobility. The sound studio and two of the community centres are not accessible to students with restricted mobility. In other cases, arrangements can be made to ensure that courses are accessible to all students.

26. Assessment of students' work is well planned, regular and rigorous in most areas. However, too many assessments take place in college for work-based learners in hairdressing. Progress reviews in work-based learning are weak or do not involve employers sufficiently in construction and engineering. Students' progress is reviewed frequently, but targets set during progress reviews are not generally precise or challenging. There is good involvement by adult students in drawing up their individual learning plans in literacy and numeracy. The progress of adults in community and workplace provision in ICT is reviewed regularly and effectively.

27. Assignments are of an appropriate standard and relevance. Feedback provided for students is generally timely and effective at helping students to improve their performance. However, the quality of feedback is variable, particularly in construction and sport, leisure and travel and public services. Students are fully aware of assessment requirements in most areas. However, there is insufficient attention to assessment criteria and key skills in project briefs in art, design and media.

28. External verifiers' reports are scrutinised systematically by senior managers. Action plans to address weaknesses are set deadlines, but there is no systematic process to ensure that actions have been completed. Weaknesses identified during external verification are identified occasionally as still in existence in subsequent reports, for example, in health and social care.

29. The college offers provision in all areas of learning. There are clear progression opportunities from entry level through to advanced levels in some areas, for example, in health and social care. However, in a number of areas, including construction, engineering, hospitality and catering, visual arts, design and media, there is a lack of provision at level 1. A new curriculum strategy, which takes account of national priorities and local needs, aims to address these gaps in provision.

30. There are good working relationships with local schools. Vocational GCSEs are taught in schools with the support of college staff. GCSE engineering is offered at the college for school pupils. There is an extensive range of work-related programmes for students aged 14 to 16 with high progression rates to FE courses and apprenticeships. There is very good collaboration with the local community and employers. The college provides a wide range of workplace training, including ICT, literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) for the National Health Service (NHS) and other local businesses. NVQ training in the workplace is offered in hospitality and catering and health and social care. There is very good employer involvement in curriculum planning through advisory committees attached to most curriculum areas. Actions taken to widen participation

are good. The work-related programme has been extended to include opportunities for students aged 14 to 16 with challenging behaviour, and students with moderate learning difficulties. An entry to employment (E2E) programme has been introduced recently.

31. The majority of full-time students are offered a good range of extra-curricular visits and activities. For example, in hospitality and catering, celebrity chefs inspire students to achieve high standards in their studies. In sport, leisure and travel and public services, students have the opportunity to achieve additional qualifications and to participate in a wide range of sporting teams. A range of cross-college enrichment opportunities is offered. There are active student councils attached to curriculum areas, which provide a strong voice for student-related issues.

32. Guidance and support for the vast majority of students are good. A school liaison team provides potential students with course information through effective links with schools, taster days, information evenings, and individual interviews. At enrolment, helpful advice and guidance from curriculum staff helps direct most students to an appropriate course. An effective and well-structured programme of induction introduces students to their courses and to college life in general.

33. Students have a wide range of support services available to them, including welfare advice and a counselling service. Students experiencing hardship are offered financial help and clear criteria ensure that funds are allocated fairly. Careers advice and guidance are good. Students have easy access to wide range of information to ensure that they are well informed, whether applying to HE or to employment. All of the services offered to students are well publicised and used extensively.

34. Initial assessment includes screening for students' literacy and numeracy needs and preferred learning styles. In many areas, initial assessment is extended to identify students' vocational skills. Students' portfolios of work are analysed during initial assessment in art and design. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students are assessed on practical skills. In many areas that teach school pupils aged 14 to 16, individual aptitude and ability are identified before progression on to post-16 courses.

35. Pastoral and academic support are good in all curriculum areas. Subject teachers are very supportive of their students and give freely of their time. Students appreciate this support. Additional learning support and support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are wide ranging and effective. The tutorial programme is generally good. Tutorials are arranged on a group and individual basis. The quality of group tutorials is variable. Full-time and some part-time students have at least one individual tutorial each term to monitor and review progress against targets. However, individual learning plans are not updated and used consistently. In many cases, the targets set are not specific or time bound. Recent initiatives have been introduced to improve the quality and consistency of group tutorials. The college maintains good, regular contact with parents and guardians for students aged 16 to 18.

36. There is a designated member of staff for child protection issues and an action plan is being prepared to ensure that training and development for staff and governors take place. Effective links with external agencies ensure appropriate support for vulnerable young people.

Leadership and management



37. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors, principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and effective strategic direction for the college. In September 2004, a year after the appointment of the principal, the governors and senior managers introduced a new three-year strategic plan. This focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning, college facilities, and sustained development of appropriate courses. The plan aims to respond to the needs of employers and the local community. The involvement of governors in strategic planning has been

governors' quality sub-committee monitors the performance of the college thoroughly.

38. The college has detailed policies and procedures for health and safety, however, it does not hold an assets register of its portable appliances and has inaccurate records of portable appliance testing. Portable appliance testing is out of date in many parts of the college. Although the college does not currently have a property strategy, significant accommodation improvements have recently addressed urgent issues, particularly in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Consultants have recently been engaged to devise a property strategy. The college has identified the need for a more planned approach to maintenance and furniture purchase. The college intends to introduce a comprehensive five-year programme of planned maintenance alongside the new property strategy.

39. Senior managers work well as a team and the principal provides clear leadership. Managers operate in an open and consultative manner. Communication across the college is effective and staff morale is good. A recent restructuring has yet to be implemented fully. Many department and curriculum managers are recently in post, or have extended or changed responsibilities. Management vacancies in crucial areas are impeding progress. This is particularly the case in construction where there are vacancies at both head of department and curriculum manager level. The inspection identified that many teams already work well. Communication within most curriculum areas is good with regular, well-minuted meetings. Curriculum management is not uniformly effective across the college. In sport, leisure and travel and public services, a new curriculum leader has provided clear direction, course teams have a strong sense of identity and effective collaboration is underway. Some progress is being made in addressing weaknesses in the area. In health and social care, initiatives to improve teaching and learning have not had significant impact to date, but course organisation is improving. In construction, leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

40. Retention rates are below national averages on many courses. A management initiative to improve students' retention rates is being implemented and has met with some in-year success. However, the impact of this initiative is variable. Improved attendance is a key element, but attendance in many lessons observed during the inspection was low. The college's quality assurance arrangements are well established, but are not applied consistently across the college. Many course reviews are thorough in their analysis of pass and retention rates, and appropriate action plans are developed with realistic timescales. Internal verification is generally thorough. Self-assessment is detailed and systematically follows the format of the common inspection framework. While most areas are dealt with thoroughly, teaching, training and learning sections often lack specific or detailed reference to teaching strengths and weaknesses. The teaching observation programme lacked rigour in grading until the college started to use external observers in 2003/04. At inspection, there were considerable differences in the proportion of good and better teaching in the curriculum areas.

41. Staff development during the last two years has focused on the improvement of teaching and learning. However, it is not aimed at meeting individual development needs identified through teaching observation. Formal staff appraisal has been in abeyance while a new procedure, with teaching observation and performance review at its centre, is developed. Many teachers are working to out-of-date personal development targets or none at all. Teacher mentors support new teachers successfully in developing their teaching skills. Staff development to improve curriculum management has been beneficial.

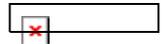
42. The equality and diversity committee oversees the formulation of policy relating to equal opportunities, and monitors its impact. The committee is chaired by the principal and has governor, student, staff and community members. It has developed recently a new equal opportunities policy which encompasses special educational needs and the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. An action plan has distinct elements relating directly to the requirements of the Act. However, staff training in the requirements of the Act is not scheduled until the summer of 2005. This is very late. Progress has been made in the implementation of the requirements of the SENDA and staff have received appropriate training. Procedures for eliminating discriminatory practice in admissions, enrolments and teaching are in place and applied effectively. Governors monitor the progress of the action plan systematically.

43. Management information is accurate and readily available to curriculum managers. However,

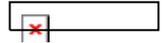
data on retention and pass rates and attendance are not used consistently to address weaknesses in curriculum areas. The college is in the process of introducing an electronic registration system. Financial management in the college is good. The college has maintained appropriate surpluses alongside extensive recent refurbishment and updating of equipment. A course costing process was introduced in 2004. Teachers are generally deployed efficiently and effectively. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

44. The college has a variety of links with employers. Active advisory committees in most vocational areas provide a focus for the college's response to local employment needs. Links with local schools are good. The college plays a major role in the Basingstoke consortium of schools and colleges which is active in promoting collaborative links and developments. Around 400 pupils aged 14 to 16 attend courses in the college.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on level 1 courses in 2004
- high key skills pass rates in lessons led by specialist tutors
- good framework achievement in work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on the construction award at level 2
- low retention rates in trowel occupations at level 2
- failure of theory teaching to engage students

- disruption of students' learning by staffing difficulties

- ineffective management of provision.

Scope of provision

45. There is a range of foundation and intermediate level programmes for craft and services students. These include trowel occupations, wood occupations, painting and decorating, plumbing and electrical installation. Technician courses include national certificates and national diplomas. There are 654 students, of whom 457 are part time and 197 full time. Of these, 347 students are aged 16 to 18 and 307 are adults. There are 109 apprentices. Some 64 pupils aged 14 to 16 attend construction courses. The college was awarded CoVE status in construction and interior skills in April 2004.

Achievement and standards

46. There were high pass rates on level 1 courses in 2004. Pass rates in plumbing at level 1 are significantly above the national average. Pass rates on the basic introductory brickwork and wood occupations programmes at level 1 are 100%. However, the national average is also 100% and these courses are not recognised universally by industry. Key skills achievements in 2004 were high at 70% in application of number and 68% in communication. Retention and pass rates are low on the construction award at level 2. In 2004, of 75 starters on the level 2 construction award, 51% were retained and 47% achieved their award. This is significantly below national averages. Retention rates are satisfactory or better on most courses, but they are low in trowel occupations at level 2. Retention rates have declined in plumbing at level 1 from 88% in 2002 to 71% in 2004, 10% below the national average.

47. The development of practical skills has been disrupted by changes in teaching staff. For example, plumbing students aged 16 to 18 forming joints in plastic waste were unable to state where they would be used and other plumbing students were unable to give potential uses for copper and low carbon steel pipe. In wood occupations, students did not know where they would use the timber grounds and few could identify the range of hand tools they were using.

48. Retention and achievement rates of work-based learners are significantly above the national average. Of the apprentices who started in 2002/03, 51% have achieved their full framework. Similarly, 56% of advanced apprentices who started in 2001/02 have also completed their frameworks. This compares well with national averages. High numbers of learners who started more recently remain in learning and are making good progress.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 6988 certificate in plumbing	1	No. of starts	32	26	17
		% retention	88	77	71
		% pass rate	79	90	83
Northern Council for	1	No. of starts	24	16	28

(NCFE) foundation construction award in brickwork		% pass rate	100	100	100
NCFE foundation construction award in wood occupations	1	No. of starts	32	35	51
		% retention	81	83	90
		% pass rate	96	97	100
City and Guilds multi-craft skills in construction	1	No. of starts	18	33	28
		% retention	83	61	75
		% pass rate	100	85	76
NVQ trowel occupations	2	No. of starts	17	*	29
		% retention	53	*	21
		% pass rate	100	*	83
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	62	15	43
		% retention	68	47	67
		% pass rate	100	100	72

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

49. The proportion of good and better teaching observed during the inspection was well below national averages for construction. Many theory lessons are dull; teachers talk too much and fail to vary their teaching methods. Students are not engaged sufficiently in their learning. There is an over-reliance on whole-class teaching and teachers make little attempt to use methods or set tasks which take account of the differing needs and abilities of students. In some lessons, good IT resources are used merely to project text on to the board for students to copy. Students spend too long copying from textbooks. In practical lessons, tutors generally give clear demonstrations. They give appropriate support and monitor students' progress effectively. In a painting and decorating practical lesson, challenging individual learning objectives were set for each student. A supervisor in the electrical workshop provides materials and monitors health and safety. However, students' learning has been disrupted significantly by staffing difficulties. This is most marked in plumbing and electrical installation where attainment is hampered, even in practical lessons.

50. Practical workshops in wood occupations are well resourced and managed. Workshops in electrical installation and plumbing are new and still underdeveloped. The brick workshop cannot accommodate the current number of students adequately. At peak times, there is not enough space and some students' work has been damaged when left overnight. At the time of inspection, there was no hot water available in the construction workshops on the main site. Therefore, washing facilities for students using chemicals, grease, or undertaking lead burning were inadequate. This has been the cause of continuous student complaint. The enforcement of health and safety is satisfactory. Students routinely wear appropriate personal protective equipment in workshops and at work.

51. The accommodation for the CoVE is still being developed. The space allocated for the CoVE is appropriate and plans indicate that training resources will be of a high standard. National and local companies have booked the facility for management and technical updating events. The CoVE partnership includes a local prison where facilities are intended to replicate those in the college. This will provide useful training for prisoners and help to meet the local demand for skilled workers in construction. Plans to extend the range of provision are underway. An interior systems assessor has been nominated by the college. The intended assessor is qualified in carpentry and joinery and has

undergone specific training to meet the awarding body assessment criteria for the NVQ in interior systems, although assessor approval has not yet been granted.

52. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Worksheets are provided with assignment and assessment criteria outlined for every project. Students are aware of assessment requirements. Assignments are of an appropriate standard and are vocationally relevant. Practical assessments at level 1 are not linked clearly to qualification requirements and many students are not sufficiently clear on their progress. Written feedback on assignments is satisfactory for technician students, but is minimal for building craft students. Internal verification is satisfactory. On work-based learning programmes, assessment visits to the workplace take place in electrical installation and have just commenced in plumbing. Apprentices provide good supporting evidence through photographs and witness statements, and generally make good progress towards portfolio completion.

53. The range of provision is satisfactory. There is a broad range of nationally accredited programmes at level 1. Progression to level 2 or employment in construction is satisfactory, at 60%. Too few students progress to level 3 courses, which is one of the stated requirements of becoming and maintaining a CoVE. Provision at level 3 exists for work-based learners and for external managing agents, but the total number still remains below the 50 required. Target dates set for the use of practical facilities have not been met, delaying enrolment. Links with employers are satisfactory. Training officers work effectively to inform on learners' progress and promote the college to industry.

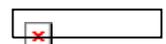
54. Support for students is satisfactory. All students have an initial assessment to identify additional literacy or numeracy support needs. Since 2001, 77% of students who have received support have achieved their intended qualification. There are 15 students are currently receiving support. A full-time support tutor in construction, funded by the CoVE, teaches lessons to students on subjects ranging from sexual health to drugs awareness. Pastoral support for work-based learners is satisfactory. Staff are readily available to support students, including being accessible by mobile phone out of normal working hours.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The lack of managers in construction has had a negative effect on the direction and leadership of the curriculum area over the last year. Currently, there are vacancies for a head of department for technology, a head of curriculum and a programme manager for electrical installation. The lack of a manager in electrical installation has hindered the development of the new NVQ programme, assessment opportunities and internal verification. This has adversely affected curriculum planning, organisation and development at a time when the CoVE has been in its infancy and major changes have taken place in the accommodation strategy. However, the management of work-based learning is satisfactory.

56. Course teams meet regularly, but meetings do not address students' concerns effectively. Quality procedures are applied inconsistently across the department and monitoring by management is poor. Course reviews are satisfactory in wood occupations, but targets for retention and pass rates are not set routinely in other areas. Where targets have not been met, there are inadequate arrangements for review and improvement. The self-assessment report underestimates the impact of staffing difficulties in the area on the quality of provision. 'Women into construction' courses have been well received and some staff have been trained in diversity issues.

Engineering



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

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

Strengths

- 100% pass rate on progression award levels 1 and 2 and the national certificate in engineering

- good achievement of most apprenticeship frameworks

- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- consistently low retention rates in level 1 vehicle maintenance and repair

- ineffective arrangements for progress reviews for work-based learners

- inadequate and out-of-date resources in electronic engineering

- lack of level 1 provision in engineering

- low retention and achievement rates on the engineering apprenticeship.

Scope of provision

57. Of the 254 students aged 16 to 18, 177 are full time and 77 are part time. There are 148 adult students, of whom 15 are full time and 133 are part time. The engineering provision includes courses in mechanical and electronic engineering and computer-aided engineering. Courses range from work-related learning for 14 to 16 year olds, performing engineering operations, and first and national diplomas with progression on to national and higher national certificates in mechanical and electronic engineering. The vehicle engineering provision covers progression awards in automotive vehicle servicing and repair at levels 1 to 3, a first diploma and a national diploma specialising in the motor sports industry.

Achievement and standards

58. In 2004, there were 100% pass rates on level 1 and level 2 progression awards in vehicle maintenance and repair and the national certificate in engineering. In work-based learning, there are

high completion rates of vehicle engineering frameworks and on the general engineering advanced apprenticeship framework. However, retention and achievement rates on the general engineering apprenticeship are low. Key skills pass rates in application of number, communication and IT have improved in the last 12 months. This has also contributed to the improved completion rates on apprenticeship frameworks. Retention rates on the level 1 vehicle maintenance and repair course have been below national averages consistently over the last three years. On other programmes, the pass and retention rates are satisfactory, but variable. The standard of students' work across all programmes is satisfactory. Although NVQ portfolios are satisfactory, there is little use of diverse evidence collected from workplace activities. Apprentices' portfolios are over-reliant on evidence from job cards to prove their competence.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Progression award vehicle maintenance and repair	1	No. of starts	33	38	35
		% retention	61	55	63
		% pass rate	45	90	100
General national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate/first diploma manufacture	2	No. of starts	26	39	17
		% retention	96	90	82
		% pass rate	64	40	79
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	31	38	27
		% retention	90	71	74
		% pass rate	29	19	70
City and Guilds 6956 progression award vehicle service and repair	2	No. of starts	*	24	22
		% retention	*	83	77
		% pass rate	*	65	100
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	35	40	15
		% retention	66	58	67
		% pass rate	91	74	100

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Schemes of work and lesson plans are appropriate. Individual learning needs are identified clearly and lesson plans include appropriate differentiation. A range of teaching and learning strategies are used for progressive skill development in practical lessons. In the best lessons, students are engaged actively in the learning process and are able to apply the skills they have developed. For example, in one vehicle engineering lesson, students worked in small teams to build a kit car. This required students to strip down the component parts, make group decisions about the manufacture or purchase of components, identify, price and order replacement items, and subsequently refit the car. In another lesson, small groups presented a topic to the other students using electronic media. The presentation was then evaluated by the group and recommendations made for improvement. This process developed students' understanding of the specialist topic and helped to develop their transferable skills. Good use is made generally of question and answer techniques to establish students' prior knowledge and confirm learning. Many theory lessons use ILT to support and enhance learning. However, some lessons are dull and uninspiring and some students are not engaged fully. The quality of handouts is poor.

60. Accommodation and equipment in engineering are generally satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in industry. The vehicle engineering facilities include a new diagnostic centre, a general workshop and vehicles which are fit for purpose. However, some classrooms are too small for the size of classes. There is no access to the upper floor in the engineering block to students or staff with restricted mobility. The general engineering and fabrication and welding workshops are fit for purpose, with a range of modern industrial-standard computer machine tools. IT equipment is generally satisfactory. However, some computers installed with computer-aided design packages are unable to support the latest software. The resources in electronic engineering are inadequate, out of date and often break down. This is acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

61. Assessment is satisfactory and feedback on assignments is supportive, providing appropriate advice on improvements. There is some assessment on demand in the workplace. Arrangements for progress reviews in the workplace are ineffective. Reviews sometimes take place at college where employers can not be involved. Employers do not attend reviews. Copies of the documentation are not given to learners or employers. Review forms contain retrospective comments on past progress, but do not set clear targets. Reviews do not check or reinforce learners' understanding of equal opportunities issues.

62. Students take a range of additional qualifications including health and safety, risk assessment, manual handling, performing engineering operations, welding and bench fitting units. Recent enrichment activities include a cultural and industrial exchange with students from a vocational college in Le Mans in France. College students worked alongside their French counterparts and benefited from experiencing different working practices. Other enrichment activities include visits to local vehicle manufacturing companies.

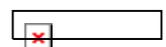
63. Co-operation with a local company has resulted in the introduction of an access to engineering course. The company recruits directly from the course, with some progression on to apprenticeships. There is a lack of level 1 provision in engineering. Some students have been recruited inappropriately on to level 2 courses. The range of provision in vehicle engineering is adequate, but is limited to light vehicle courses.

64. There is good individual support for students from curriculum staff. Additional needs are supported by specialist staff effectively. Key skills are integrated with the vocational work and supported by vocational and specialist key skills tutors. There is a good ratio of staff to students, enabling one-to-one support as necessary. Tutorial support is good on full-time programmes.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory for both college and work-based programmes. Communication is satisfactory and data are used effectively to monitor improvement. Teaching observations are linked directly to staff appraisal and staff development. Internal verification and external verifier reports are satisfactory. A more focused approach to attendance and absence monitoring has led to current in-year retention rates being 18% better than last year. There are good links with the engineering industry. The engineering advisory committee includes a member of the corporation. Course reviews are used in the self-assessment process. Inspectors agree with most of the judgements in the self-assessment reports and appropriate development plans are being implemented.

Computing and information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- high-quality industrial-standard computer resources

- good use of ILT for teaching.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most community programmes

- inappropriate accommodation in some areas

- inadequate work experience for students aged 16 to 18.

Scope of provision

66. There is a good range of full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 3. Full-time courses include an introductory diploma in IT, first and national diplomas for IT practitioners and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in ICT. There are 115 students on full-time programmes. The part-time provision includes the European computer driving licence (ECDL), computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and CLAIT Plus. There are over 2,000 students studying in community venues on part-time programmes. ECDL programmes are taught in the workplace to staff in local NHS hospitals and to a national retailer.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass rates on computing courses have been high over the past three years. Pass rates on the AVCE, first diploma and ECDL courses have been above the national average in two of the three years. Key skills pass rates in IT at level 2 were 15% above the national average in 2003/04. Retention rates on short courses in the community have been below national averages over the same period. For example, in 2004, the retention rate on the one-year ECDL certificate for IT users at level 1 was 21%. The introduction of individual learning action plans and tutorials in community venues appears to be having a positive effect. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory.

A sample of retention and pass rates in computing and information and communications technology, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
ECDL certificate for IT users (1 year)	1	No. of starts	*	117	277
		% retention	*	59	21

		% pass rate	*	87	98
ECDL (Short)	1	No. of starts	154	114	414
		% retention	79	99	64
		% pass rate	93	98	98
ECDL (2 year)	2	No. of starts	64	522	505
		% retention	47	6	40
		% pass rate	70	97	75
Certificate for IT users (1 year)	2	No. of starts	20	159**	36
		% retention	95	55	78
		% pass rate	63	77	86
AVCE (double award) IT	3	No. of starts	49	39	25
		% retention	65	64	84
		% pass rate	72	96	100

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

* course did not run

** replaced by new CLAIT in 2003

Quality of education and training

68. The majority of teaching for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults is good or better, although no outstanding teaching was observed. Teachers demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the subject and are able to simplify complex content. They use interesting exercises and ILT to motivate and stimulate learning. In one lesson, animated images were used to show the different input and output devices of a computer system. In another, an interactive refresher quiz was used to good effect. Most teachers use directed question and answer techniques within lessons to widen involvement and to check understanding. Schemes of work are clear and relate closely to course specifications. All lesson plans contain a variety of teaching and learning activities to sustain students' interest. Key skills are a central part of the curriculum for full-time courses. Teachers in community centres are sensitive to the needs of adult students and provide support and encouragement. Adult students consider that this contributes significantly to their learning.

69. The community centres are welcoming and well equipped with modern industrial-standard computers. These are complemented by a range of learning resources to support the needs of students. Two of the centres provide good access for people who have disabilities with lifts and ramps. However, in the other two centres, all provision is on the first floor and there are no lifts. The computer rooms at the college are equipped similarly with a wide range of software and computer facilities. Most computer rooms have ceiling-mounted projectors and some have interactive whiteboards. Noise from adjacent lessons and people using the corridor is a distraction in three semi-open workshops. Rooms used for vocational courses have few relevant wall displays. The rooms are generally well organised, tidy and adhere to the best practices of health and safety. The learning resource centre is easily accessible and provides a good range of books on computing, IT and related subjects, with multiple copies, a study area and a large open-access computer resource section. All academic staff have a teaching qualification or are working towards one. Several staff have industrial experience. Staff development opportunities are available for all staff. There is little evaluation of the effectiveness of training.

70. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. However, the tasks set do not provide sufficient challenge to generate outstanding work from more able students. Students receive timely written feedback on assessed work and their progress is reviewed regularly in individual tutorials. Within the

community, there is effective use of individual learning action plans and tutorials. The ECDL provision for the NHS has an online system used to monitor students' progress, which effectively identifies and follows up learning needs. Internal verification is good with regular sampling of students' work. Assignments are checked rigorously to ensure that they meet awarding body criteria. Recent external verifier reports have been favourable.

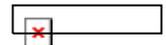
71. Full-time students' progression from level 2 to level 3 is good, at 70%. Many students enter employment following the completion of a level 3 programme. However, as there are no work placement opportunities in any of the full-time courses, students may leave the college without first-hand experience of the computing industry to prepare them for employment. The adult provision in the community provides a range of popular IT courses at a range of venues, with bespoke training courses for the NHS and a major retailer taught in the workplace.

72. Learning support is effective and timely. Learning support for students aged 16 to 18 is provided in the classroom. There is effective one-to-one literacy, numeracy and language learning support in the community provision.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good evidence of team working and sharing of good practice across the curriculum. Communication is good, with regular, minuted team meetings and briefings. Staff acknowledge that communication has improved as a consequence of senior management initiatives. The self-assessment report is self-critical and is based on detailed course assessment reports and student evaluation. Students appreciate the responsiveness of the course review and evaluation questionnaire, which leads to action and improvement. The proportion of females aged 16 to 18 in IT lessons is very small. There is no evidence of action being taken to address this issue. An established employer advisory committee meets termly. It reviews and influences the course offer and content.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on short courses

- high retention rates on most full-time courses

- much good teaching and learning

- good enrichment activities

- o good curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- o low retention rates and framework achievements in work-based learning
- o slow progress towards unit accreditation for some NVQ students
- o insufficient provision at foundation level and level 1.

Scope of provision

74. Courses in hospitality and catering are provided for full-time students and work-based learners. They include craft programmes leading to on NVQ at levels 1, 2 and 3 in food preparation and cooking, level 2 in food service, and a national diploma in hospitality and catering. The college also offers a range of short courses at college and in the workplace as well as one adult education course. There are 91 students on full-time courses and 6 apprentices. Most students are aged 16 to 18. Pupils aged 14 to 16 on a schools work- related programme have the opportunity to complete a foundation qualification in food preparation and cooking.

Achievement and standards

75. Retention and pass rates on short courses are high. Most full-time students achieve a basic food hygiene certificate within the first few weeks of joining their course. Of the 98 students who were entered for the national certificate for licensees in 2003, all were retained and 84% passed, which is significantly above the national average for this course. The college has had good results on the welcome host course in past years although this is no longer offered. Retention rates on the full-time national diploma and NVQ level 1 and level 2 food preparation and cooking programmes are high. Pass rates on NVQ courses are satisfactory, although in most cases these have declined over the last three years. Because of low numbers on many courses and recent changes in qualifications taken, the data table covers few qualifications. Key skills pass rates are high although key skills are not well integrated with the curriculum.

76. Retention and achievement rates on work-based learning programmes are low. Since 2000/01, 20 apprentices started the programme and 14 have left with no framework completion. There are six learners left on programme. There has been no significant improvement in retention rates over the past two years. Of 11 apprentices who started in 2003/04, 5 have left without completing their apprenticeship. Of the six apprentices still in learning, two have now almost completed.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in food hygiene (short course)	2	No. of starts	*	230	176
		% retention	*	100	97
		% pass rate	*	92	93

NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cooking (1 year)	2	No. of starts	**	17	**
		% retention	**	88	**
		% pass rate	**	87	**
NVQ hospitality service (1 year)	2	No. of starts	16	**	**
		% retention	100	**	**
		% pass rate	75	**	**

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

*course did not run

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

77. There is much good teaching and learning. Lessons are generally well planned, although in some practical cookery lessons there is insufficient differentiation made between the work undertaken by level 1 and level 2 students. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Many have worked in, or owned, high-class restaurants and this helps to inspire students with enthusiasm for the industry. The quality of craft skills developed by students is high. Students demonstrate good knife skills, including fish filleting and meat preparation. Level 3 students work to a particularly high professional standard. Most students have a clear understanding of the importance of health, safety and hygiene, although in one level 2 lesson, students were taught to make mayonnaise using raw egg yolk which is poor practice. Attendance at lessons is good and most students arrive on time. In practical restaurant lessons, students are dressed smartly and demonstrate good customer service skills. In practical kitchen areas, students wear their chef whites with pride. Good use is made in theory lessons of ILT, including computers and interactive whiteboards. Students make good use of computers for project work and assignments. Group tutorials are well planned and taught and support students usefully through their course. Pupils from local schools who attend the college each week for practical cookery lessons are keen and well motivated, and many progress on to full-time courses at the college.

78. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Kitchens are clean, tidy and generally well equipped. There is a good range of modern cooking equipment such as halogen hobs, combi-ovens and ice-cream machines. The college's restaurant is in good decorative order and is furnished suitably. However, student's changing facilities are often untidy with inadequate washing facilities. Cooked food products sold in the catering shop are not labelled clearly, date stamped or suitably packaged for sale. The learning resource centre has an adequate stock of culinary textbooks, although some are dated.

79. Progress towards unit accreditation for some NVQ students is slow. There are insufficient numbers of qualified assessors and internal verifiers to ensure that students' work is assessed regularly. Assessors' expectations are sometimes too high for the level of the award.

80. Students benefit from good enrichment activities which include study trips abroad as well as to London, local hotels, restaurants and breweries. Staff have established very good links with employers and students are inspired by visits from well-known television celebrity chefs as well as visits to their restaurants. Level 3 craft students have well-planned and productive work placements in high-quality establishments, in this country and abroad. These further develop students' craft skills and improve their employability. The college holds regular annual gourmet dinners where students work alongside local celebrity chefs. Students and staff are successful in culinary competitions which test and challenge their skills.

81. There is insufficient provision for students at foundation level and level 1, although attempts have been made to improve the provision during the last year. There is inadequate provision for adult

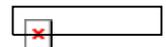
education with only one evening course in cookery for beginners. Foundation level students are integrated ineffectively with the full-time craft programmes where they often struggle to keep up. There is no part-time provision for craft students at the college. Craft skills gained by students on the national diploma are not accredited.

82. Students with learning difficulties are supported well. A support tutor with good catering experience provides appropriate support in theory and practical lessons. Students undertaking short courses in the workplace are also supported well. Individual learning plans are satisfactory and are updated regularly although target setting is poorly developed. Students' progress reviews are not always held regularly and short-term targets are perfunctory. Induction is planned well and provides students with a good introduction to their course.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum manager provides good leadership and a clear direction for both staff and students. Self-assessment is thorough and incorporates the views of staff and students. The self-assessment report has identified clearly many of the key strengths and issues highlighted during inspection and a clear action planning process is in place. Regular team meetings are held and good discussions take place about the quality of provision. Minutes are recorded routinely although these are not always clear. Regular audits and health and safety checks are made of equipment and accommodation, and any issues are usually rectified promptly. External verifier reports and lesson observation outcomes are not shared routinely with work-based learning staff.

Sport, leisure and travel and public services



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses

- imaginative, well-prepared and effective teaching and learning

- good support for students

- good leadership of the curriculum.

Weaknesses

- insufficiently evaluative feedback on some students' work

- o unsatisfactory development planning and appraisal.

Scope of provision

84. There are 252 students taking a range of courses at levels 2 and 3 in sport, sports science, leisure and tourism, travel and public services. Pupils aged 14 to 16 take a vocational GCSE in sport and leisure. A range of additional qualifications which are vocationally relevant and increase students' employability is also available. Students are encouraged to achieve high levels of performance by taking part in sports teams and attending coaching clinics. There is no provision at level 1.

Achievement and standards

85. Pass and retention rates are high. Students on national diplomas in both travel and tourism and public services have achieved retention and pass rates above national averages for the last three years. Students on the national diploma in sport and exercise achieved pass rates above national averages over the same period. Students on the new first diploma in sport achieved pass and retention rates above national averages in 2003 and 2004. Results on short course additional qualifications are variable. The standards achieved by students are high. Students are motivated to do well and demonstrate good academic and practical skills in lessons. Most students progress on to HE, FE or related employment. One student has represented England in the Deaf Rugby Union team.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sport, leisure and travel and public services, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
First diploma in sport	2	No. of starts	*	28	24
		% retention	*	75	75
		% pass rate	*	95	100
GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	47	28	*
		% retention	79	79	*
		% pass rate	89	95	*
AVCE (double award) travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	34	25	27
		% retention	76	64	74
		% pass rate	81	94	90
National diploma in sport and exercise sciences	3	No. of starts	37	30	16
		% retention	81	57	63
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	26	23	21
		% retention	69	65	71
		% pass rate	94	100	100

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

86. Teaching and learning are good and students enjoy their lessons. Teachers communicate well and have good presentation skills. Lessons are well prepared. A range of learning activities is used to challenge, stimulate and reinforce students' learning, leading to high levels of attainment. In the best lessons, teachers engage students in probing debate and encourage them to apply newly learned concepts and ideas to practical situations. For example, in a lesson on sports injuries, students worked in pairs with one student taking the part of the injured person and the other the coach who had to diagnose the problem and recommend appropriate action. The new learning had been reinforced well by the end of the exercise. Good use is often made of teaching aids and ILT for learning. On one course, students are provided with a college-devised CD containing all the course materials, assessment requirements and interactive tests. Some teachers are particularly skilled in responding to individual needs of students during lessons. Other teachers work effectively with learning support teachers to provide appropriate learning support. However, in one lesson, there was insufficient learning support available. In a minority of lessons observed during the inspection, students did not engage fully in group tasks and opportunities to promote equality were missed.

87. The accommodation available at the college is satisfactory. Nearly all classrooms are spacious, well lit and well furnished. One classroom is too small for the groups using it and group work is restricted. There is a small fitness centre on the college site which is barely fit for purpose. However, most practical lessons, including swimming, take place in the Basingstoke sports centre. It has outstanding facilities which include a sports hall, dance halls, fitness centres and childcare facilities. Outdoor playing fields are hired locally. Travel between sites causes problems for some students. Staff qualifications are satisfactory and most have relevant industrial experience. The majority of teachers are teacher trained and all others are undertaking training. Learning resources are satisfactory. The library has an adequate supply of relevant books and access to computers is good.

88. Student assessment is well planned and organised. Assessment results are used effectively to review students' progress. Assessment plans are precise and include assessment criteria which are notified to students in advance. Internal verification is controlled tightly and is effective. External verifiers confirm that assessment practices have improved and are now of high quality. Students comment that work is marked punctually. However, teachers' comments on assignment marking sheets vary in quality. Some are detailed and provide guidance about ways to improve performance, others merely make encouraging comments and do not provide evaluative comment and advice on how to improve.

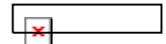
89. Courses provide appropriate progression opportunities at levels 2 and 3 in sport, sports science, leisure and tourism, travel and public services. Additional vocational qualifications increase students' employability. Coaching clinics develop students' practical skills. Progression to employment and education in 2003/04 was good. Of the 71% of students whose destinations are known, 19% progressed to university, 43% continued to FE programmes and 29% progressed directly to employment. Sports students on national diploma courses undertake an assessed two-week period of work experience. However, work experience is not available for other vocational students. Competitive and recreational sports opportunities are available. For a small annual fee, all students can join the Basingstoke sports centre. There is a football development scheme with Basingstoke Town Football Club, and the college is a coaching centre for 'Sportscoach UK.' Sports scholarships are made available to some students. Students' success is celebrated formally each year. Lack of provision at level 1 has resulted in some students being recruited inappropriately on level 2 courses.

90. Support for students is good. Impartial advice and guidance aids student recruitment. Students enjoy the induction programme which is used to establish high expectations and good work practices at an early stage. Students are screened to assess their academic potential. Extra support is provided by tutors and learning support specialists. Weekly tutorials, a systematic review process and regular reports to parents ensure that students' performance is monitored. Realistic targets are set which promote ambition and maintain standards. Personal matters are dealt with sensitively. Formal and informal contacts between parents and the college are good. Key skills are integrated into the curriculum.

Leadership and management

91. Leadership of the curriculum area is good. Recent changes have provided staff and students with much clearer direction. Progress has been made towards achieving operational objectives. For example, improved recruitment practices, a stronger focus on tutoring, and tighter attendance monitoring have led to improved in-year retention rates. Strong teamwork encourages collaboration, curriculum development and the sharing of students' issues. Regular meetings are used effectively for curriculum development and to share good practice. Course teams have a clear identity and work well with each other. All staff contribute to the self-assessment process and students', parents' and employers' views are also included. However, the self-assessment report does not recognise all the weaknesses identified at inspection. Teaching observations carried out internally over-graded the quality of teaching and learning. There is currently no staff appraisal or identification of professional development needs. Staff development does not address weaknesses in performance accurately.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- high standard of practical teaching and learning

- good resources for learning

- extensive range of courses and enrichment activities

- highly effective support for students

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of commercial practice on many daytime courses

- weak aspects of assessment practice.

Scope of provision

92. There is a range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies. Hairdressing and beauty therapy qualifications are offered at levels 1, 2 and 3 and holistic therapy is offered at level 3. There are 506 full-time students, of whom 255 study hairdressing, 233 study beauty therapy and 18 study holistic therapy. Of the full-time students, 401 are aged 16 to 18. Of the 155 part-time students, 11 study hairdressing, 96 study beauty therapy and 48 study holistic therapy. There are also 114 hairdressing apprentices. Some 66 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend level 1 courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Achievement and standards

93. Pass rates for the two-year NVQ level 2 programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy are high and exceed the national average. In 2004, 90% of students passed the NVQ in hairdressing against a national average of 79%. In the same year, 93% of students passed the NVQ level 2 in beauty therapy against a national average of 82%. Pass rates on most other programmes are at, or just above, the national average. Some programmes demonstrate a decrease in retention rates for 2003/04, but most are at the national average. Retention rates on the diploma in holistic therapy programme are very high at 93% in 2004. In 2002/03, the framework achievement rate for apprenticeships was 50%, against a national average of 36%. Current learners are on target to improve the achievement rate to over 80%.

94. The standard of students' practical work is high and their skills reflect industrial practice. Students demonstrate well-developed and up-to-date technical skills, for example, in advanced colour techniques, and creative cutting. In many theory lessons, students demonstrate a good understanding of background knowledge. Students successfully achieve key skills qualifications. They progress well into FE, HE or employment. Some 76% of school pupils taking hairdressing and beauty therapy courses progressed on to full-time courses at college in 2004. There are high levels of attendance and students are usually punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	1	No. of starts	78	86	113
		% retention	76	80	72
		% pass rate	92	94	96
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	72	61	81
		% retention	61	66	52
		% pass rate	98	98	90
NVQ beauty therapy (2 year)	2	No. of starts	60	63	79
		% retention	57	56	71
		% pass rate	88	89	93
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	24	25	37
		% retention	79	72	89
		% pass rate	79	89	91
Diploma in holistic	3	No. of starts	*	16	15

therapies (1 year)		% retention	*	94	93
		% pass rate	*	100	79
Diploma in reflexology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	35	**	17
		% retention	80	**	76
		% pass rate	93	**	100

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

* course did not run

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

95. There is a high standard of practical teaching and learning. Most lessons are well planned and structured. Students are clear about the lesson content and what they should achieve. Practical workshops are managed well. In one particularly inspirational lesson, the teacher gave an expert demonstration in abstract nail art. Students developed their creative skills using vibrant colours and abstract designs. In a very good practical hairdressing lesson, the teacher used excellent questioning techniques. Students were able to identify and confidently demonstrate suitable advanced cutting skills to produce high-quality fashion designs. ILT is used effectively and enhances the teaching of theory. Key skills are taught well and are integrated successfully with vocational qualifications. Teachers draw appropriately on their current industrial backgrounds to enliven lessons and ensure that students have a good understanding of the industry. Staff are well qualified and up to date. Many work in commercial salons. Good health and safety practices are reinforced in all practical lessons. However, some students in hairdressing do not adhere to a professional dress code.

96. There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop good commercial practices in many daytime lessons as there are too few clients to meet the needs of students. Whilst students have good practical skills, the development of commercial awareness and customer service skills are less well developed. The shortage of clients for key assessment requirements, such as permanent waving, slows the rate of progress made by many students.

97. The main commercial salon has been refurbished recently and reflects a high- quality professional salon. The attractive salon motivates students to work at a professional standard. Up-to-date computing software is used at the reception area for monitoring client services. The college salons, and the salons used by work-based learners, are well equipped and use a good range of products. Students and apprentices have demonstrations from specialist companies that extend their product knowledge.

98. Feedback to students on assignments is constructive, supportive and helps students to improve their work. However, there are weaknesses in aspects of assessment practice. Assessments for first year hairdressing students on full-time and work-based learning programmes start too late into the course. Six months into the course, a number of students have not yet completed full units in, for example, shampooing, reception, health and safety. There are only five workplace assessors that carry out assessment in their salons and the vast majority of apprentices are not assessed in the workplace. There are too few assessment opportunities for these students.

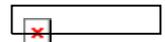
99. The range of courses and enrichment activities is extensive. Students benefit from enrichment activities that include exhibitions, competitions, fashion shows, and visits abroad, for example, to New York and Paris. Students also gain a variety of additional qualifications. Courses meet the needs of students and employers. All but two salons in Basingstoke participate in the apprenticeship programme.

100. Support for students is good. Teachers have good working relationships with students. Students value this support. Work-based learners are supported well through progress reviews which take place every eight weeks in the workplace and involve employers. However, these reviews are largely pastoral and are not used to best effect to monitor progress and identify challenging targets. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported appropriately and make good progress. An additional support tutor is available to support students with additional needs in theory lessons. Learning materials are designed appropriately to meet the needs of students, for example, dyslexic students. Staff adapt teaching methods carefully to meet the needs of a student with a hearing impairment and another who is a wheelchair user.

Leadership and management

101. Leadership and management are good. Managers are highly motivated and lead staff well. There is good communication between the main curriculum staff, work-based learning staff and employers. The induction of new staff is effective and all are supported by a mentor. New teachers are encouraged to shadow experienced staff and are regularly observed teaching in the college and in the workplace. Staff feel valued by the college and their managers. Attendance at staff development events is encouraged. Quality assurance procedures, including internal verification, are adequate. Procedures introduced recently are having a positive impact on retention rates, attendance and the quality of teaching. Inspectors agree with the judgements in the self-assessment report and a realistic development plan is being implemented. There are good links with employers through the advisory board and regular staff visits. The college is aware that the number of male students is low and has developed a marketing strategy to encourage more male students into the industry.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in the certificate in childcare and education, and national diploma in care

- effective integration of teaching theory and professional practice

- effective support for students

- productive response to community training needs.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on NVQ level 3 early years and education and the certificate in

childcare and education in 2004

- low pass rates on the national diploma in early years course
- limited impact of improvement strategies.

Scope of provision

102. There is a range of full-time early years courses from level 1 to level 3, full-time health and care courses at level 3, NVQ courses in early years and care at levels 2, 3 and 4 and a range of care courses of short duration. Work-based NVQ courses in care and in early years are offered to adult students. Short courses for adult students include childminding, safe handling of medicines and occupational health and safety. Many short courses are offered at venues convenient to students. Of 508 students, 232 are enrolled on full-time courses and 276 are enrolled on NVQ and other part-time and short courses. Most of the students on full-time courses are aged 16 to 18 and those on NVQ and short courses are 19 and over. An entry level introduction to childcare course is offered to school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

103. Pass rates are high and significantly above the national average on the certificate in childcare and education and the national diploma in care. The pass rate on the national diploma in early years has declined over a three-year period and was significantly below the national average in 2004. Retention rates were significantly below national averages on the NVQ level 3 in early years and education and the certificate in childcare and education in 2004. The standard of students' work in portfolios, assignments and in lesson tasks is satisfactory. Students' work is satisfactory during collaborative learning in lessons, and most are eager to answer and ask questions. Early years and education students have developed a range of practical skills, and care students have developed appropriate professional behaviour.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	21	31	23
		% retention	86	74	61
		% pass rate	100	96	93
NVQ early years and education	2	No. of starts	*	16	23
		% retention	*	94	83
		% pass rate	*	73	84
Intermediate diploma in care (short)	2	No. of starts	66	103	29
		% retention	86	77	83
		% pass rate	88	82	100
NVQ early years and education (2 years)	3	No. of starts	25	24	29
		% retention	60	33	45

		% pass rate	60	100	77
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	24	21	27
		% retention	79	86	70
		% pass rate	89	83	58
NVQ caring for children and young people	3	No. of starts	26	23	*
		% retention	31	48	*
		% pass rate	88	82	*

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

104. Teachers integrate the teaching of theory and professional practice effectively. Students are proficient at identifying examples from work placements that match and illustrate theoretical knowledge. They are encouraged to do this in all lessons. Teachers make effective use of relevant illustrative examples from their own vocational experience. Teachers are skilled at integrating the world of work and the good practice principles and theories that are explored in lessons. Lessons are well planned and students are given clear descriptions of the lesson learning goals. Key skills opportunities are identified and taught in lessons, and key skills achievements are improving. The work in lessons is well paced and keeps students focused. Practical activities are used well. In one lesson, safe practice at home was introduced by the teacher who displayed a range of cleaning and domestic materials. Students were encouraged to identify the hazards associated with each. However, in some lessons, no strategies are used to encourage active participation from passive students. All teachers make use of initial assessment information to ensure that lessons are taught in ways that best meet the learning needs of students. The different needs and abilities of students are understood and planned for. In the best lessons, teachers use different questions, different learning materials and different expectations effectively to meet the needs and varying abilities of individual students. Some teachers do not sufficiently extend and challenge the learning of more able students. In some lessons, teachers talk too much and give insufficient opportunities for students' input. In a number of lessons, the timing of activities is managed poorly. In these cases, the checking of main learning points is rushed and learning is not consolidated sufficiently.

105. Resources to enhance learning are satisfactory. Appropriate equipment is available and ILT is integrated successfully into many lessons. Textbooks, journals, craft materials and demonstration materials are located conveniently in the classrooms.

106. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory for both full-time and part-time students. All students receive an initial assessment and the results are reflected in individual learning plans. Assessments are planned and are regular. Feedback to all students is fair and contains suggestions to help students make further progress. Action plans are negotiated helpfully between the student and the tutor during individual progress reviews. However, there are no short-term targets set to improve individual learning. Internal verification meets the requirements of the NVQ code of practice.

107. The college has responded well to meeting identified community training needs. Short courses such as safe handling of medicines and occupational health and safety meet community demands. A successful partnership offers essential training in childminding. Many courses are located at community venues. NVQ training in the workplace meets the needs of employers and students. Childcare studies are taught successfully to pupils aged 14 to 16. In 2003/04, many of the pupils progressed to college courses and most of the current cohort is also intending to progress to FE.

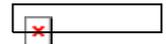
108. Students are supported effectively. Learning support is offered in response to identified learning, physical and psychological needs. Many students attend support sessions in the learning support workshop. Other students are supported in class both by teachers and by learning

assistants. Individual students' work is appropriately planned and evaluated. Records are kept and they underpin further action plans for these students. Voice text is used helpfully to gather assessment evidence for students who have writing difficulties. Learning support is available for community and work-based learners. For example, arrangements can be made for support to be provided in the workplace. Additional support surgeries, at convenient locations, are arranged for the many childminding students who have been assessed as having learning needs.

Leadership and management

109. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Teams, assessors and internal verifiers meet regularly and document their meetings. Appropriate improvements are identified at these meetings. The self-assessment report identifies the key weaknesses in this area and there is an appropriate action plan. However, the impact of improvement strategies has been limited. For example, while teaching and learning improvement strategies have led to an improvement in lesson planning and meeting the different needs and abilities of individual students in lessons, they have not yet resulted in a teaching and learning profile that matches the national average. Some weaknesses identified by external verifiers have yet to be fully addressed. Some employers are not satisfied with communication from the college relating to NVQs in the workplace. The use of individual learning plans is not yet effective fully. However, staff work well together, provide valuable support to each other, and are committed to further improving the quality of provision.

Art, design and media



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

Strengths

- very high retention rates and outstanding pass rates on the diploma in foundation studies

- very high progression rates to HE or other relevant courses

- high standards of students' work

- much good and very good teaching and learning

- good support for students

- good curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on AS-level art and national diploma in design courses
- inadequate provision at entry level and level 1
- insufficient attention to assessment criteria in many assignment briefs.

Scope of provision

110. There are 201 students aged 16 to 18 and 55 aged 19 and over studying on full-time courses. Most courses are offered at level 3 with two new first diploma courses being offered at level 2. There are 77 students studying part time. A small number of craft courses are offered in the local community. There are currently no students aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

111. Retention and pass rates on the national diploma in foundation art and design are well above national averages. In 2004, the retention rate was very high, at 93%, and the pass rate was outstanding, at 100%. Progression on to HE or other relevant courses is very good. In 2004, 74% of students progressed to HE courses and a further 13% progressed to other relevant FE courses. Pass rates in AS-level art, at 68%, and on the national diploma in design, at 76% in 2004, are substantially below national averages. Low and declining retention rates on the AVCE media communications course have resulted in this qualification route, together with AS-level art, no longer offered by the college.

112. The standard of students' work is high. Experimental work in art and design shows an innovative use of materials and media. Very good portfolios and sketchbooks show the successful development of visual research, design concepts and creative ideas. In three-dimensional design, students design and make complex sculptural and functional items. Media students produce documentary and animated films of a professional standard.

A sample of retention and pass rates in art, design and media, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NCFE foundation certificate in creative crafts	1	No. of starts	121	30	85
		% retention	79	83	61
		% pass rate	97	88	92
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	40	50	29
		% retention	80	66	93
		% pass rate	97	97	76
Diploma in foundation studies (art and design)	3	No. of starts	38	33	28
		% retention	95	97	93

		% pass rate	97	94	100
AVCE/VCE (double award) media: communications	3	No. of starts	22	*	18
		% retention	64	*	44
		% pass rate	86	*	88
AS-level art studies/fine art	3	No. of starts	51	64	72
		% retention	80	53	74
		% pass rate	68	65	68

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

113. Most teaching and learning is good or very good. There is good planning of learning which includes inspirational assignments which stretch and challenge students. Field trips and visits are integrated successfully with course plans and enhance the students' experience significantly. In one visual art session, tutors developed a constructed installation to challenge students' spatial awareness. Students developed creative ideas to explore the concepts of space, construction and deconstruction. Tutors use ILT confidently, for example, interactive whiteboards are used well to enhance the learning in history of art. In one computer-aided design session, projection facilities were used well to demonstrate industrial-standard software. Students develop a good range of technical and creative skills in drawing, design and media. They use sketchbooks and portfolios well as a means of collecting, recording and developing visual information. A good range of technical and professional vocabulary is used by students to communicate ideas and engage effectively in reflective learning practices. Final major projects promote independent learning and encourage students to plan and manage their own time effectively. However, in a few lessons, teaching is undemanding and does not maintain students' interest sufficiently.

114. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory; they have been improved recently in some specialist and staff areas. However, some accommodation is inaccessible to students or staff with restricted mobility. Specialist resources in three-dimensional design and textiles are good. However, in a few lessons, the rooms are too small for the number of students and adversely affect learning. Technical support is good and teaching staff are well qualified in specialist subjects.

115. Assessment procedures are largely satisfactory with effective verbal and written feedback which enables students to improve and make progress. However, insufficient links are made in assignment briefs to unit assessment criteria, and to the assessment of key skills through practical art and design work. Students do not always understand how they will be assessed or how they can achieve a higher grade. Students' progress is monitored effectively in lessons and tutorials, with much encouragement for students to record their own progress.

116. Courses generally meet the needs of students and the range of courses at level 3 is extensive. However, provision at entry level and level 1 is inadequate and there are only two full-time courses at level 2. Very few evening classes leading to qualifications are offered at the college or in community venues.

117. Support for students is very good. A thorough recruitment and interview process ensures that students choose the right course. Inspirational open evenings and one-day events are held which include displays of students' art and media work. Tutors visit local schools to provide detailed information about courses. Good initial assessment is carried out to identify levels of numeracy and literacy together with art and media-related diagnostic activities. Very good ongoing guidance and support ensures that students are able to keep up to date with their assignments and develop high standards of work. Excellent progression guidance is provided by specialist tutors in lessons and tutorials. Well-focused advice from tutors helps students to select and present their work in a professional manner in preparation for interviews. In-depth information regarding specialist study at

HE establishments enables students to make well-informed choices.

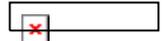
Leadership and management

118. Leadership and management are good. Staff are supported well and are encouraged to attend professional development events. Staff meetings result in minutes with clear action points. Staff share good practice, both formally and informally. The management of ongoing change is effective. Changes in the planning and teaching of programmes in recent months have been successful. For example, the joint staffing of key skills and history of art lessons has increased students' motivation and performance. Actions to improve in-year retention rates, attendance and punctuality have been successful.

119. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The self-assessment report includes most strengths identified by inspectors. Actions implemented recently have improved some previously satisfactory areas. Internal verification is generally effective, and schemes of work and assignment briefs are appropriately moderated and standardised.

120. Equality of opportunity is promoted adequately within the curriculum. Some projects include topical issues, for example, media students have researched binge drinking and analysed the long-term implications to society in preparation for making a short documentary film.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- much good teaching and learning

- good integration of key skills in most curriculum areas

- highly individualised provision on adult courses

- very effective and responsive community provision

- good leadership and management of the range of provision.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates in GCSE English and mathematics
- insufficiently assertive class management in some lessons.

Scope of provision

121. There are courses in basic literacy at entry level, adult literacy and numeracy at levels 1 and 2, GCSE English and mathematics, and key skills at levels 1 and 2. Key skills are integrated fully into vocational programmes and are followed by both full-time and part-time students. Students take GCSE English or mathematics in addition to their main courses. Since September 2004, 405 adult learners have engaged in short work-based courses in IT and skills for life on employers' premises.

Achievement and standards

122. Pass rates are high on most courses. Pass rates on level 1 and level 2 key skills communication and application of number have been well above national averages consistently. Pass rates have improved significantly in the certificates in adult literacy and numeracy at level 1. They were 42% and 57% in 2003 and 81% and 90% in 2004, compared to national averages of 66% and 72%. Retention rates on both the level 1 numeracy and level 2 literacy courses are excellent, at 100%. The number of students on the entry level basic literacy course rose from 40 in 2003, to 103 in 2004, with excellent pass rates of 100% and 98% in the two years. Retention rates are low and declining in GCSE English and mathematics. They fell below national averages in 2003 and 2004.

123. The vast majority of students are making good progress and achieving their individual learning goals. These are defined clearly, linked to national standards and negotiated to meet individual learning needs. The standard of skill development in literacy and numeracy is high. Students perform practical tasks requiring language and mathematical skills competently. In an adult numeracy lesson, one student was able to follow a recipe, select and weigh essential ingredients, compare metric and imperial measures and combine ingredients in the correct proportions. Another student used a variety of measuring instruments to record the dimensions of the room, identifying regular and irregular shapes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic literacy	entry	No. of starts	*	40	103
		% retention	*	83	85
		% pass rate	*	100	98
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	276	406	492
		% retention	77	83	82
		% pass rate	68	62	80
Key skills communications	2	No. of starts	450	495	289
		% retention	87	81	84
		% pass rate	52	49	43

GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	110	127	93
		% retention	72	66	66
		% pass rate	57	65	82
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	74	69	45
		% retention	73	64	60
		% pass rate	72	66	70
Certificate in adult literacy		No. of starts	*	25	106
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	72	87

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

124. Teaching is generally good. Lessons are well prepared and there is thorough long-term and short-term planning to meet individual needs. Teachers are confident and create a purposeful and stimulating learning environment. They use a variety of methods and activities to involve students in their learning. They focus on individual needs and find imaginative ways of helping students to improve their skills and understanding. In courses for adults, highly individualised teaching enhances learning effectively. In an adult literacy lesson, students were working on a range of different tasks at different levels. One student, whose first language is not English, improved her knowledge of English grammar and was able to compare English and Spanish construction of tenses. Two students were working out why some words change their spelling in the past tense and what the rule might be. Students are encouraged to acquire transferable skills and develop their thinking skills. In GCSE mathematics, students improve their ability to analyse data and form hypotheses through coursework investigations. They are provided with a good balance of support and freedom, and are able to identify patterns and create formulae.

125. In the most effective key skills lessons, the class teacher and the key skills teacher work together closely to ensure that students develop skills in literacy and numeracy through their main course of study. In a sound engineering lesson, students calculated the size of a venue to plan the layout of their sound equipment. In a plumbing lesson, one student used the Internet to research the local bye-laws and regulations affecting the installation of cold water supplies. In a small number of key skills lessons, however, learning is affected by the immature behaviour of some students aged 16 to 18. This behaviour is not challenged sufficiently by teachers.

126. Resources are good. Staff are well qualified and keep up to date through a range of external and in-house staff development. However, few staff have yet gained the most recent skills for life qualifications. Learning is supported by a wide range of books, videos, high-quality handouts and the use of ILT. There is a good bank of vocationally relevant resource material to support key skills provision. There are good resources to support the work-based programmes and a satellite van enables delivery at remote sites. There is an adequate range of specialist resources to support students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Accommodation is variable. Some rooms are well equipped with modern ILT provision, but there are rooms that are too small for the size of classes and are not conducive to learning.

127. Assessment procedures and practices are rigorous. Students' progress is monitored effectively. They receive good feedback which enables them to improve. All students have an initial assessment of their individual learning needs. This is followed by diagnostic assessment for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Adult students show good involvement in drawing up their individual learning plans. Progress is reviewed on a regular basis and appropriate new targets are set. Students following vocational courses have an individual learning plan which contains targets for their main programme and their key skills. In some cases, there is insufficient involvement

of students in negotiating targets at specific skill levels. Effective internal and external verification of key skills ensures the quality of provision.

128. Support for students is very good. Pre-enrolment information is detailed and comprehensive. Appropriate support is provided quickly for students identified through initial assessment or self-referral. In-class support is being received by 529 full-time students. Additional needs support tutors have been allocated to 130 students. There is close liaison between course tutors, key skills tutors and learning support staff which ensures a comprehensive and effective system of individual progress reviews. Support and guidance on personal and academic matters are greatly appreciated by students. Students on courses in the workplace have a very useful exit interview to discuss their future options.

Leadership and management

129. Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the area is thoughtful and takes into account the views of staff. Management is collaborative and consultative. Communication is effective at all levels. Team meetings are attended well. Where staff are unable to attend, they receive fully documented feedback. There is a large proportion of part-time staff, but they are involved fully in curriculum development and processes to improve teaching and learning. The self-assessment report is descriptive rather than evaluative. Strengths and weaknesses are appropriately identified and addressed. Quality assurance through lesson observation, internal verification, the analysis of results and use of students' feedback is good. However, there is no mechanism for measuring the extent to which additional learning support contributes to achievement on students' main programmes of study.

Part D: College data

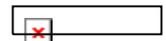
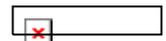


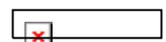
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	34	40
2	48	36
3	14	10
4/5	0	3
Other	4	11
Total	100	100



Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,492	306	8
Land-based provision	37	33	0
Construction	231	275	2
Engineering, technology and manufacture	394	338	3
Business administration, management and professional	58	1,846	8
Information and communication technology	1,053	5,066	26
Retailing, customer service and transportation	20	484	2
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	733	1,902	11
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	451	495	4
Health, social care and public services	622	1,378	9
Visual and performing arts and media	301	589	4
Humanities	24	243	1
English, languages and communication	1,718	789	11
Foundation programmes	1,108	1,136	10
Total	8,242	14,880	100*

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

* do not add to 100 as figures rounded

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		1	Starters excluding transfers	804	773	683	1,560
	Retention rate %	67	72	66	60	47	61
	National average %	75	76	76	70	71	71
	Pass rate %	84	79	85	83	83	83
	National average %	67	69	73	68	70	77
2	Starters excluding	1,333	1,140	944	1,309	2,203	1,828

	transfers						
	Retention rate %	60	71	70	59	61	40
	National average %	70	71	71	68	68	67
	Pass rate %	77	77	77	90	85	83
	National average %	68	70	73	67	71	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	771	752	704	1,369	1,449	1,114
	Retention rate %	67	70	64	60	67	68
	National average %	70	77	77	68	70	69
	Pass rate %	83	76	82	80	80	82
	National average %	75	77	80	68	71	74
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	392	426	507
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	63	64	76
	National average %	**	**	**	67	68	69
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	56	52	67
	National average %	**	**	**	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). Where applicable, the national rates used in the table are for GFE colleges which are grouped in the LSC benchmarking data as colleges with a high widening participation factor.

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 2003.

2. College rates for 2000/01 to 2002/03: College ISR.

*numbers too low to provide a valid calculation

**data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	68	27	5	71
Level 2 (intermediate)	59	37	4	54

Level 1 (foundation)	56	44	0	25
Other sessions	60	35	5	20
Totals	62	34	4	170

© Crown copyright 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced verbatim without adaptation, and the source and date of publication are stated.
Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

