



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Norwich City College of Further and Higher Education

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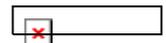
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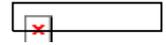
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Basic information about the college

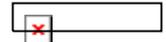


Name of college:	Norwich City College of Further and Higher Education
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Dick Palmer
Address of college:	Ipswich Road Norwich NR2 2LJ
Telephone number:	01603 773311
Fax number:	01603 773301
Chair of governors:	Bryony Falkus
Unique reference number:	130764
Name of reporting inspector:	Vivien Bailey HMI
Dates of inspection:	28 February-4 March 2005

Part A: Summary



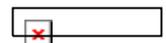
Information about the college



Norwich City College of Further and Higher Education is located at a campus south of Norwich city centre. The college also has centres in the market towns of Diss, Watton and Dereham, and three further sites within Norwich. The college attracts students widely from across Norfolk, as well as from the city of Norwich. It has 314 full-time teachers, 196 part-time teachers and 496 administrative and support staff. The college's budget was approximately £39 million in 2003/04. The principal joined the college in January 2003 and is supported by a senior management team comprising the deputy principal, two directors and two assistant principals. In 2004/05, there were almost 9,900 students, of whom 40% were studying full time. Approximately 81% of full-time students were aged 16 to 18. A quarter of enrolments by young people were at level 1 or below, with the remainder divided evenly between levels 2 and 3. There were over 300 pupils aged 14 to 16, from 25 schools, engaged in learning at the college. The college provided part-time courses for about 5,900 students, 86% of whom were aged over 19. Enrolments by adults were divided evenly between levels 1 and below, and level 2 and level 3, with a further 4% taking courses at level 4 and 11% taking other courses. There were 332 work-based learners, 67% of them aged 16 to 18, and 47 learners on entry to employment (E2E) programmes. In 2003/04, 58% of students were female, 4% of students were from a minority ethnic group and 9% declared a learning difficulty and/or disability.

The wide range of provision covers 13 of the 14 Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas of learning, although provision is small in one area. The college has increased provision at entry level and levels 1 and 2, including basic skills and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), to meet local needs. It has three centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs) in hospitality; accounting and financial services; and computing and networking, the latter in collaboration with two other colleges of FE. The college is an associate college of Anglia Polytechnic University and has developed programmes with the University of East Anglia; about 1,400 students are studying HE programmes. The college provides education services to 10 prisons in East Anglia. Although the region is one of comparative affluence, there are pockets of disadvantage. In 2003/04, the college received additional funding for about 3,160 students from disadvantaged areas. Educational attainment at Key Stage 4 in Norfolk and Norwich is below the national average, as is participation in full-time education at the age of 16. About one third of adults living in Norwich have basic skills needs.

How effective is the college?



Four curriculum areas were judged by inspectors as good and seven as satisfactory. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- beneficial links with employers, the community and external organisations

- high pass rates and good practical skills of students

- improved retention rates
- progression within and from college courses
- good facilities for learning in the CoVEs
- wide range of courses and progression routes to widen participation
- provision for 14 to 16 year olds
- enrichment of courses with additional activities
- effective initial assessment and diagnostic testing for literacy and numeracy
- welcoming, friendly environment.

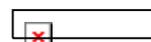
What should be improved

- the proportion of good or better teaching and learning
- the planning of teaching to meet the needs of individual students
- achievement on work-based learning programmes
- achievement of key skills qualifications

- o internal verification of assessment on work-based learning programmes
- o the rigour of course review and evaluation, and follow-up action plans.

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

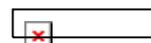


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	Good. The contributory grade for E2E is good . Pass rates are high on most courses, and overall retention rates are average and improving. E2E learners in construction make good progress. All learners develop good vocational skills and E2E learners also develop good personal skills. Most teaching is good or better.
Engineering	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . Overall retention and pass rates are average, except in work-based learning. The teaching in most lessons is at least satisfactory, but a below average proportion is good or better. Support for students and progression opportunities are good.
Business	Satisfactory. Pass and retention rates on professional and management courses are above average. The teaching in most lessons is at least satisfactory, but a below average proportion is good or better. There are very good links with employers, particularly with the accounting and financial services sector, and high-quality accommodation. Teaching is poorly planned and there is insufficient rigour in the review of some programmes.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Short courses and the foundation general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) have high pass rates, but retention rates on most courses are low. Progression rates to more advanced courses and to employment are high and students demonstrate good personal and technical skills. The teaching in most lessons is at least satisfactory. Most courses for students aged 16 to 18 have poor attendance and there is insufficient work-related learning. The well-managed centres in the community provide high-quality, easily accessible learning environments.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . There are high pass rates on the majority of courses and, on full-time courses, students develop excellent creative skills.

	The teaching in most lessons is at least satisfactory, but the proportion in which it is good or better is below average. There are good opportunities for 14 to 16 year old school pupils to achieve qualifications. The management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory.
Health and social care	Good. Pass rates are high on most courses. There is a wide range of courses at varying levels with opportunities for progression. Assessment practices are good. Teaching in all lessons is at least satisfactory and, in the majority, it is good or better. There is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) within the curriculum.
Hospitality, leisure, sport and travel	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . There are high retention and pass rates on most courses, but low achievement of apprenticeship frameworks. Teaching and learning are very good. There are good links with employers and external bodies.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are average, with good work by students, and good progression to HE from art and design courses. Teaching in the majority of lessons is good or better, with some very good teaching, but also some which is unsatisfactory. There are strong vocational and community links. Quality assurance lacks rigour and there is some poor maintenance of accommodation.
Humanities and English	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses and good achievement in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English, but low and declining retention rates on some humanities courses. The wide range of courses provide good progression routes and extensive enrichment that extends learning. Teaching in all lessons is at least satisfactory, but a below average proportion is good or better.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Pass rates for adult numeracy and GCSE mathematics are above average, but those for key skills and ESOL qualifications are low. There is effective promotion of Skills for Life and provision in basic skills is being established in curriculum areas. Most teaching is satisfactory or better.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. Students achieve well in their personal development and in a wide range of practical skills; they make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. There is a very good range of courses and most have high rates of progression into work, training and more advanced programmes. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Students are involved well in setting their own targets, although planning to achieve these targets, together with monitoring and recording of learning, are variable in quality.

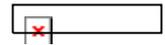
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Governors, the principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and strategic direction. They set challenging targets and have raised overall success rates. There is rigorous analysis and monitoring of performance at all levels. Collaborative working with an extensive range of partners is effective in widening participation and

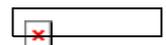
disadvantaged groups, improved retention rates and maintained pass rates at, or above, national averages. The self-assessment report is self-critical and inspectors agreed with most of the grades awarded. There is good promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity. Governance and financial management are good and the college provides good value for money. The management of curriculum areas is satisfactory or better, but management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory. Pass rates on key skills qualifications and the achievement rates of work-based learners are low. Insufficient progress has been made in improving the overall standard of teaching and learning since the last inspection.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



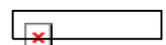
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college's successful strategies to widen participation contribute strongly to inclusion in Norwich and Norfolk. The implementation of the college's Skills for Life policy has increased access and opportunities for a wider range of students, particularly at entry level and levels 1 and 2, and through provision in community venues and in the workplace. The expanding programme of courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 has attracted more than 300 young people. The college's very good partnerships with a wide range of employers is increasing access to learning. The overall quality of its provision in basic skills is satisfactory. The college's response to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 is good. Strong efforts have been made to promote cultural awareness. The college has increased the proportion of students and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds successfully and is working with external bodies to improve the ratio of black and minority ethnic staff in relation to the local population. The college has initiated some positive action such as a 'study buddy' scheme to support underachieving students from minority groups. The response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) is good. The college provides specialist equipment to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Significant work has been undertaken to improve the accessibility of the college's buildings for those with restricted mobility and most areas are now accessible.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. They receive valuable advice and guidance before joining courses and have access to effective personal support services. Guidance on preparing for HE is good. Students feel well supported. The well-designed enrichment programme broadens students' learning. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally good. There is an active student parliament and a very effective students' union. The college has an experienced child protection officer and has made progress in implementing child protection requirements. The provision of additional learning support in lessons is good in many cases although it is not yet consistently effective. The retention and pass rates of students who receive ongoing additional support significantly exceeded the college's average rates in 2003/04. Students have regular individual tutorials or reviews. However, target setting and the use of individual learning plans are not always sufficiently rigorous, while group tutorial schemes do not always contain sufficient breadth of content.

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

- helpful tutors and student services staff

- freedom and responsibility of being treated like adults

- progression routes

- access to computers

- friendly atmosphere

- good teaching

- enrichment related to the course.

What they feel could be improved

- insufficient parking space and the cost of parking

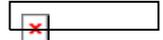
- prices in the refectory

- ancillary costs related to the course

- lack of social and common room facilities

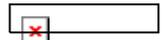
- o insufficient locker or storage space.

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

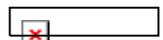


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	55	37	8
19+ and WBL*	57	36	7
Learning 16-18	58	34	8
19+ and WBL*	59	34	7

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. The college offers courses at all levels, from entry level to HE. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time vocational programmes which includes courses in 13 areas of learning, although

vocational programmes leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs), GNVQs, first and national diplomas and to the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE), or choose from the good range of advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level), GCE A-level and GCSE or foundation courses. Most adults are enrolled on accredited vocational courses, including NVQs and other short or long courses, for example, in ICT, basic skills or foundation studies, or choose from one of the range of access to HE programmes, higher national or foundation degree programmes.

2. Data on students' achievements indicate above average pass rates and an improving trend in retention rates. Data for the years 2001/02 to 2002/03 show that the college's retention rates on long courses for 16 to 18 year olds at levels 1, 2 and 3, and for adults at level 3, were in line with those in the middle 50% of all general FE and tertiary colleges. Retention rates on long courses for adults at levels 1 and 2 were in line with those in the bottom 10% of colleges. The college's data for 2003/04, however, indicate an improvement in retention rates for adult students at all levels, although the rates were still below average at levels 1 and 2. Retention rates also improved for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 2 and 3 in 2003/04. Pass rates on long courses were in the top 10% for students aged 16 to 18 at level 1, and for adult students at level 2 in 2002/03, and in the top 25% for 16 to 18 year olds at level 2 and adults at levels 1 and 3. Pass rates were in line with those in the middle 50% of colleges for 16 to 18 year olds at level 3. College data for 2003/04 show a slight improvement trend in pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 3.

3. Students' attainment was good or better in 55% of the lessons observed which was broadly in line with the national average for similar colleges in 2003/04. Attainment was unsatisfactory in 7% of lessons which again was broadly in line with the average.

4. The overall attendance rate in lessons observed by inspectors, at 77%, was in line with the national average in similar colleges in 2003/04. The highest attendance rates were in construction; business, management and professional studies; hairdressing and beauty therapy; health, social care and public services; and visual and performing arts and media. All had attendance rates at 80% or higher in the lessons observed. The lowest attendance rates, at about 70%, were in ICT and humanities and English.

16 to 18 year olds

5. In 2004/05, the largest proportion of enrolments by students aged 16 to 18, at 37%, were on level 2 programmes. A further 25% of enrolments were on entry level or level 1 courses and 36% on level 3 courses. The largest proportion of enrolments were in science and mathematics at 14%; other areas with a large proportion of enrolments by young people were English, languages and communication, and foundation programmes, both at 13%; and in ICT at 12%.

6. In 2001/02 to 2002/03, the college's retention rates were broadly average for 16 to 18 year olds at all levels. Pass rates at levels 1 and 2 showed improvement and were above average, whilst those at level 3 remained average in 2002/03. College data for 2003/04 show an improvement in retention rates at levels 2 and 3, and a slight improvement trend in pass rates at level 3. On short courses, retention rates fell to just below average in 2002/03 and rose again to average level in 2003/04, with above average pass rates.

7. Retention rates are below average on GCSE, GNVQ and precursor courses, such as first diplomas at level 2, and slightly below average on GCE A-level and AS-level courses at level 3. Pass rates are above average on NVQ, GNVQ and precursor courses at level 1, and on NVQ and GNVQ courses at level 2. They are below average on GNVQ precursor courses. Pass rates are broadly average on AS-level and GCE A-level courses, but above average on vocational courses at level 3. There is no comprehensive information available on the value added to students' prior achievements on GCE A-level and AVCE courses.

8. Inspectors identified high retention rates and/or pass rates on a number of courses. Retention and pass rates are high on the foundation GNVQ in ICT. There are above average or high pass rates on most courses in construction and in hospitality, leisure, sport, and travel; on the NVQ level 1 in engineering operations; in hairdressing and beauty therapy; health and social care and public

services; in humanities and English; and in GCSE mathematics. Retention rates are high on GNVQ business programmes. Inspectors observed good development of practical and other skills, for example, in construction, where students handle building materials and components well, and develop good craft skills. Students aged 14 to 16 develop good occupational skills in a range of areas. Other examples include the high standard of work in health care and public services, and in visual and performing arts. Students in hairdressing and beauty therapy develop good creative skills. Examples of good progression for students include the high numbers of students in art and design who progress to HE at a local HE institution. E2E learners in construction progress well to other learning, work or training opportunities.

9. In some areas, retention rates and/or pass rates are low. Retention rates are low and declining on the intermediate GNVQ in health and care, the diploma in childcare and education and on some AS-level and GCE A-level humanities courses. Pass rates on key skills qualifications are low and learners in work-based learning have low achievement rates for their apprenticeship frameworks.

10. Students' attainment was good or better in 54% of lessons, which was broadly in line with the national average for all colleges in 2003/04, as was the proportion of lessons in which attainment was unsatisfactory, at 7%.

Adult learners

11. In 2004/05, enrolments by students aged 19 or over were spread evenly between those at entry level and level 1, level 2 and level 3. A further 4% were enrolled at level 4 and 11% on other programmes. The largest proportion of enrolments for adults was in ICT, at 21%. A further 12% of enrolments were on foundation programmes and 16% on courses in business, management and professional studies.

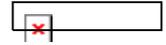
12. In 2001/02 and 2002/03, retention rates for adult students were average at level 3, but had declined and were low at levels 1 and 2. Pass rates for adults in both years were well above average. The college's data for 2003/04 indicate an improvement in retention rates for adult students at all levels, although the rates were still below average at levels 1 and 2. Pass rates remained above average at levels 1, 2 and 3 in 2003/04. On short courses, retention rates for adults were low in 2002/03, but improved in 2003/04, and pass rates were above average.

13. Retention rates are low at level 1 for most qualification types, and on GCSE courses at level 2, but they are average or high on most courses at level 3. Pass rates are high on most qualification types for adults.

14. There are examples of high retention rates and/or pass rates on a number of courses. There are high pass rates on the national certificate in engineering, on short courses in ICT, and for most courses in construction, hospitality, leisure, sport and travel, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health care and public services and adult numeracy. Retention and pass rates are high on professional and management programmes in business. By contrast, there are low pass rates on accountancy courses, low retention rates on most courses in ICT, and students made slow progress in achieving their NVQ qualifications in electrical installation. Retention rates on the part-time access programme in humanities are low. Examples of good practical skills were evident, for example, in welding and furniture-making lessons in engineering. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve good practical skills and personal development. They have high rates of progression to more advanced courses, to training and to work. In humanities, a number of students have progressed from GCSE programmes through GCE A-level or access courses to the college's degree programmes.

15. Students' attainment was good or better in about 60% of lessons observed, which is broadly in line with the national average for adults. At 6%, the percentage of lessons in which attainment was unsatisfactory was also similar to the national average.

Quality of education and training



16. Inspectors graded teaching and learning in 223 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 56% of these lessons, satisfactory in 36% and less than satisfactory in 8%. The proportion of teaching which was good or better is seven percentage points below the national average for general FE and tertiary colleges in 2003/04, while the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is broadly in line with the national average. Teaching and learning are better in lessons for adult students than in those for students aged 16 to 18, although the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is similar for both age groups. The largest proportion of good or better teaching for students aged 16 to 18 is at level 3 and for adult students it is at level 1. Most unsatisfactory teaching for students aged 16 to 18 is at level 1, while for adult students it is at level 3. The standard of teaching by full-time teachers is higher overall than that provided by part-time teachers. No lessons are less than satisfactory for work-based learners, but the proportion which is good or better is significantly below the national average.

17. Teaching is particularly effective in hospitality, leisure, sports and travel. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in health care and public services or in English and humanities. The proportion of teaching which is good or better is well below the national average in engineering; business administration, management and professional studies; hairdressing and beauty therapy; visual and performing arts and media; and English and humanities. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in construction; visual and performing arts and media; literacy, numeracy and ESOL; and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

18. In the best lessons, teachers' plans are thorough and take careful account of students' individual learning needs. Teachers use a variety of effective teaching and learning methods in ICT for adult students, and in construction; hospitality, leisure, sport and travel; health care and public services; and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers develop students' technical skills well in construction; ICT; and hospitality, leisure, sport and travel. Teachers of hairdressing and beauty therapy help students to develop their creative skills effectively, including students aged 14 to 16. Good use is made of ILT in hospitality, leisure, sport and travel to help learning. The good rapport between teachers and students in English and humanities lessons facilitates learning, while engineering teachers motivate their students effectively. In some ICT lessons, there is good use of humour to engage students in learning. Most construction teachers employ questioning well to check students' understanding. In some vocational lessons, there is good use of literacy, communication and language support staff to improve learning. In visual and performing arts and media, students' skills in evaluating each others' work are developed carefully and this contributes to their learning.

19. In the less successful lessons, teachers use a narrow range of learning activities and fail to challenge students' learning. Teaching in these lessons is dull, uninspiring and fails to develop learning at an appropriate pace. There are weaknesses in planning learning in engineering; business administration, management and professional studies; visual and performing arts and media; English and humanities; and in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. The main weakness is a lack of rigour in planning, particularly with regard to how students' individual learning needs are to be met. Teachers also pay too little attention during lessons to the plans they have made. Other weaknesses observed in lessons include: insufficient clarity for students about the aims and objectives of lessons; allowing individuals or small groups to dominate discussions; ineffective use of group work, for example, teachers not enabling effective discussion or taking over the discussion themselves; and insufficient use of ILT for learning.

20. The college provides a welcoming and friendly environment for students. Most accommodation for students and staff is clean and well maintained. Over the last two years, a programme of planned maintenance and refurbishment has kept most accommodation up to date and in a good condition. There is excellent accommodation for business courses in a designated business school. Some accommodation is shabby, particularly for visual and performing arts and media students, and there

is some low-quality hatted accommodation. With the exception of eating areas, the college has few communal spaces for students. The college has made progress in its actions to comply with the requirements of disability discrimination legislation. Following an accessibility audit, a significant programme of work was carried out to improve access. Most of the college is now accessible for those with restricted mobility although a small proportion remains difficult to access.

21. The range of specialist resources for curriculum areas is mostly good, particularly in the CoVEs in hospitality and accounting and financial services. Students and staff have good access to personal computers and the Internet. The college invests regularly in new ICT and software for students and staff. There is good access to ILT in the CoVEs in hospitality and accounting and financial services. The well-used college library has a good range of relevant resources and materials. There is good communication between library and curriculum area staff to plan library resources effectively. The wide range of resources to help students who require additional support includes hearing loops, and specialist learning materials and equipment. Increasing numbers of staff support students with additional learning needs. Most staff are appropriately qualified for the areas they teach. However, there is insufficient industrial updating for teachers of business administration, management and professional studies, and construction. There is inadequate monitoring to ensure effective use of teachers' self-directed development days.

22. The initial and diagnostic assessment of students' literacy and numeracy needs is effective and leads to the provision of appropriate support. Different formats of individual learning plans are in use to meet the differing needs of students. However, the conduct of students' progress reviews, and the setting and use of learning targets for individuals, are ineffective in many areas. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are involved well in setting their own learning targets, although these are not used to monitor learning sufficiently. The efficiency of the attendance monitoring procedures is inconsistent across the college. The college does not produce overall data on the level of attendance on programmes.

23. Assessment is generally well planned, particularly in hairdressing and beauty therapy, health care and public services, and work-based learning in engineering. Work is usually returned to students promptly and feedback is constructive in most cases. Internal verification is satisfactory on college-based programmes. However, it has not been implemented to review assessment practice in the workplace on NVQs in engineering and hairdressing.

24. The college responds well to the needs of the community and local and regional employment needs. It has a particularly broad range of general and vocational courses, ranging from entry level through to higher levels, and is widening participation effectively in education. Over the last two years, the college has strengthened its provision significantly at entry level and levels 1 and 2 to meet local and regional needs, while maintaining its provision at level 3 and above. The numbers on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have also increased significantly. The college has sites in urban areas of high deprivation, rural locations and in workplaces to reach those who would not otherwise attend the college. It has developed a good range of community links and provision for disadvantaged groups including migrants, ex-offenders, the homeless and travellers. Good opportunities for progression are available to students on general education and occupational courses. However, there is no level 3 hairdressing or level 1 beauty therapy provision. In visual and performing arts and media, there is insufficient provision at levels 1 and 2.

25. The college has exceptionally strong connections with a wide range of organisations. Links with employers and employer associations are very good, particularly with the financial services industry, hospitality employers and the health services. Employers consider the college to be very responsive to their needs. Managers from the college work closely with local agencies to develop the economy in Norwich and Norfolk. There is also a wide range of partnerships with other providers of education, including effective links with local schools and HE. Over 300 students aged 14 to 16 from 25 local schools study at the college and develop good occupational skills. The college has set up a partnership with neighbouring schools to provide a more relevant curriculum for students aged 14 to 18. Partnership arrangements with local HE providers are also good and include the provision and development of foundation degrees.

26. The provision of key skills has been ineffective for both college-based students and work-based

learners. Overall pass rates on key skills qualifications in communication and application of number have been very low, although the proportion of entrants passing the external tests improved in 2004. The college has put in place a range of actions to remedy the weaknesses, overseen by the director of the faculty for essential skills. At the time of inspection, it was too early for inspectors to assess how successful the college's actions were in resolving the weaknesses in key skills.

27. Support for students is generally good. Initial advice and guidance are provided effectively through the college's information centre and the learning shop in the city centre. Good counselling, financial and careers support are available, and students receive good support in applying for HE. Students feel well supported by tutors who readily offer help. Group tutorial periods are sometimes used to consolidate coursework rather than broaden students' perspectives. A well-designed enrichment programme covers themes such as fair trade and black history. There is an exceptionally active and effective students' union, which, as well as providing services, entertainment and assistance for students, strongly supports the exercise of students' democracy through the students' parliament. The students' parliament provides opportunities for student representatives to discuss areas of concern with managers. As a result, a cash point has been set up in the college and refectory contracts have been changed.

28. The college has expanded additional support to meet students' learning needs in literacy, language and numeracy. As well as individual support in the learning centre, there is additional staffing in lessons. Support staff work effectively with subject teachers in some lessons, but are not yet deployed well in all cases. Pass and retention rates of students who regularly received additional support exceeded the college's average rates significantly in 2003/04. The provision of equipment and personal support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally good.

29. The college has made some progress in meeting child protection legislation requirements. An experienced child protection officer has been appointed. Criminal record checks have been carried out on most, though not yet all, staff working with younger students. Child protection is not formally included in new staff induction. The chairman of governors acts as a point of reference for child protection on the corporation and is due to undertake training.

Leadership and management



30. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, who has been in post since January 2003, and the senior management team, provide strong and effective leadership. There has been significant progress in implementing the college's strategic aims. This has had an impact in particular on students' retention rates, achievement and the range of courses provided. The college's links with employers and external organisations have been strengthened. There has also been a focus on improving the quality of the provision and services for students. The college's management structure has been reorganised and is now more coherent. There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for managers at all levels. Communication has improved within the college and is now good. Staff value the openness and ease of access to the principal and senior managers, and the regular briefings and updates.

31. Strategic planning is systematic and linked closely to the college's mission, the needs of the local community, and national education and training priorities. Since the last inspection student numbers have increased significantly. The college has widened participation, whilst improving the overall retention rate and maintaining high levels of achievement. The college met its key performance targets for students' retention and pass rates in 2003/04. Although retention rates for adults on level 1 and level 2 courses remained below national averages in 2003/04, they improved significantly from the previous year.

32. Leadership and management of the curriculum are mainly satisfactory, and are good in some areas. There are early indications that the new programme manager posts are having an impact on

the quality of the provision. For example, in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, lesson observations are now more rigorous and classroom practice is improving. Management of the CoVEs in hospitality and in accounting and finance is good and in computing and networking it is satisfactory. The management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory.

33. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive and cover all aspects of the college's work. Managers and governors set challenging targets for retention and pass rates, and progress towards these is reviewed regularly. Courses which are performing poorly are monitored and may be withdrawn. Course monitoring and review procedures have been revised and are more robust. However, some course reviews lack rigour and action points are often imprecise. The college's self-assessment report for 2003/04 is evaluative and self-critical, with a thorough analysis of retention and pass rates. The extensive programme of staff development is generally effective, with priorities aligned to the college's development plan and the individual training needs of staff. There is a comprehensive and compulsory leadership development programme for all managers, including the principal, and mentoring arrangements for all new staff. However, since the last inspection, the college has made insufficient progress in improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. The outcomes from lesson observations are not used effectively to improve the quality of classroom practice and disseminate good practice.

34. The college's promotion of equal opportunities and diversity is good. The implementation of the college's policies is monitored by managers and by relevant committees. The college's successful strategies to widen participation make an important contribution to educational and social inclusion in Norwich and Norfolk. The response to legislation on race relations and disability discrimination is good. Systematic action has been taken to improve the accessibility of college sites. Appropriate procedures are in place to combat discrimination and harassment. There is active promotion of cultural and diversity awareness. The proportions of black and minority ethnic students and staff have risen over the last three years, and the proportion for students is above that in the local population. The proportion for staff is below that in the population, especially at senior levels. The college monitors the recruitment and selection of staff by ethnic origin. It is working closely with regional race equality bodies to advertise employment opportunities. There is detailed analysis of students' performance in relation to age, gender, ethnicity and disability. In response to the underachievement of some minority ethnic students, a successful 'study buddy' scheme operates. Effective action has been taken to improve the proportion of students declaring their ethnicity. Some aspects of the college's race equality policy in relation to employment and the publication of impact assessment are not yet covered in the accompanying action plan.

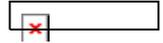
35. The quality of management information is good. A new management information system was introduced in 2004. Teachers and support staff have received appropriate training in its use. Students' achievement data are reliable and accurate, and teachers and managers have confidence in the system. Course teams are able to analyse and compare retention and pass rate data with national averages. Plans are well advanced to implement further additions to the management information system including central timetabling of rooms and attendance reporting.

36. Financial management is good. Arrangements for financial control are thorough and clear risk management strategies are in place. Procedures for allocating resources and delegating budgets are well defined, responsibilities are clear and budgets are monitored closely. Curriculum planning is linked to funding allocations. Income and expenditure, students' retention rates and withdrawals are monitored rigorously and staffing costs are controlled tightly. In 2003/04, the college moved from a deficit financial position and generated a surplus. It also exceeded the target enrolments for students aged 16 to 18 and its income target, but did not meet its enrolment target for adults. The college makes effective use of its limited accommodation and utilisation is good. The college offers good value for money, as demonstrated by the improved retention rates and above average pass rates.

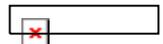
37. Governance of the college is good. Governors have an appropriate mix of expertise and experience. They work closely with managers to provide a clear strategic direction for the college. They have a good understanding of national initiatives in education and training, through regular training and briefings. They are well informed about the academic and financial performance of the college, and now scrutinise more closely improvement targets in areas where there is underperformance. Governors are developing more detailed knowledge of the curriculum through

regular meetings with staff and students. There are good induction arrangements for new governors. There is also good support for the two student governors, who make valuable contributions at board meetings and have been instrumental in improving the learning environment and services to students.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Contributory grade for E2E provision is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- good occupational skills of students
- good progression for E2E learners
- well-equipped workshops and good range of resources
- wide range of provision and effective target setting

Weaknesses

- slow progress by students on NVQ courses in electrical installation
- unsatisfactory teaching in electrical installation

- ineffective planning of learning on some courses.

Scope of provision

38. There is a broad range of full-time and part-time construction courses from levels 1 to 4, which meets the needs of students and local employers and provides good opportunities for students to progress. Provision includes traditional college courses, work-based learning, E2E and Jobcentre Plus programmes. Some 76 students aged 16 to 18 are studying on full-time courses; 113 students aged 16 to 18 and 380 adults are studying on part-time courses. There are 53 apprentices, 107 advanced apprentices, 55 E2E learners and 25 Jobcentre Plus clients. The college also provides sub-contracted training to local and national providers. Around 60 pupils aged 14 to 16 from 17 local schools attend the college to undertake units from the foundation construction award.

Achievement and standards

39. Pass rates are high on most courses and significantly above national averages. Pass rates have been maintained for the last three years at a very high level for the City and Guilds electrical installation qualification and the AVCE (double award) in construction. In 2002 and 2004, the pass rates for the NVQ in mechanical engineering (plumbing) were outstanding at 100%. In 2004, the pass rate at NVQ level 2 in trowel occupations increased by 22% on the previous year. Pass rates declined significantly for national certificate in construction over the last three years to below the national average. Students on NVQ courses in electrical installation make slow progress towards achieving their qualifications. Most retention rates in 2004 were well above the national average. The retention rate for the City and Guilds electrical installation course has increased over the last three years to 10% above the national average.

40. E2E learners in construction progress well after completing their learning programme. Some 58% of learners in 2004 moved to employment or further study, including many who progressed to construction apprenticeships. Most E2E learners achieve the knowledge components of the NVQ at level 1. The achievement and retention rates for work-based learning between 1999 and 2004 were about average. Of the 35 Jobcentre Plus clients who completed learning programmes in 2004, just under a third went into employment.

41. Students develop good occupational skills. Most students make good progress, take pride in their work and achieve high standards of practical work. They handle building materials and components particularly well in college construction workshops. Students have a good understanding of the technical content of their courses. Construction students mostly keep well-organised portfolios and written work on technician courses is of a high standard. In 2003/04, two AVCE students won national awards for their work. E2E learners develop good hand skills quickly in bricklaying and carpentry and joinery. Most E2E learners make good progress towards the foundation construction award, develop good communication skills and gain confidence during their programme.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 6988 plumbing (1 year)	1	No. of starts	46	34	50
		% retention	78	91	82
		% pass rate	78	97	88
City and Guilds 2360/01	1	No. of starts	41	34	35

year)		% pass rate	97	93	94
GNVQ intermediate construction (1 year)	2	No. of starts	25	47	48
		% retention	48	62	79
		% pass rate	92	38	61
NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing 2 year)	2	No. of starts	28	35	25
		% retention	82	66	68
		% pass rate	100	83	100
NVQ trowel occupations (2 year)	2	No. of starts	63	28	30
		% retention	76	68	67
		% pass rate	83	68	90
NVQ wood occupations (2 year)	2	No. of starts	79	34	42
		% retention	61	68	71
		% pass rate	94	83	80
AVCE (double award) construction	3	No. of starts	*	17	16
		% retention	*	53	63
		% pass rate	*	100	90
National certificate in construction (2 year)	3	No. of starts	20	*	18
		% retention	55	*	67
		% pass rate	91	*	75

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

42. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In the best lessons, teachers employ a variety of teaching and learning activities. They make good use of their industrial experience to develop students' understanding of construction. Most teachers use questions effectively to check students' understanding. They use learning materials well to improve students' knowledge. Some teachers make good use of visual aids to explain how to handle building components and materials. On the E2E programme, they plan and co-ordinate personal development, key and basic skills and vocational studies effectively. Teachers use construction topics well to develop E2E learners' literacy, numeracy and work skills. However, they make insufficient use of ILT for craft students. In electrical installation, the teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers lecture from the front of the class for long periods and provide learning at one pace whatever the students' individual needs. Some teachers plan learning well, but others have unsatisfactory teaching and learning plans which do not identify what students need to learn.

43. Construction workshops are well equipped and have a good range of resources. Facilities for civil engineering are particularly good, with a well-equipped laboratory and computer design suites. Most workshops provide realistic workplace environments. The good range of equipment, plant and machinery are of industrial standard and up to date, but some tools need replacement. Classrooms have attractive wall displays. The brickwork shop is too small for the number of students timetabled to use it. There is poor housekeeping in a few of the construction areas. Teachers have appropriate technical qualifications and good industrial experience.

44. Most assessment is thorough, accurate and fair. Many assignments are based on contemporary topics and relate to the local construction industry. Most teachers return marked work promptly.

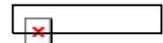
Assessment feedback offers helpful suggestions on how students can improve their marks. However, teachers do not provide written feedback on assessment to NVQ candidates.

45. Students receive appropriate guidance prior to joining construction courses. Initial assessment identifies the support needs of construction students accurately and effective support is provided, with good links between support staff and vocational tutors. Tutorials are well attended and appreciated by students.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are good. There is a good team spirit, high staff morale and effective communications, with regular management and course team meetings. Course reviews lead to targets being set and monitored for pass and retention rates, and this process has led to improvements in performance. Rigorous internal verification ensures that assessors' judgements are fair and accurate. Staff do not undertake sufficient industrial updating with construction employers. There is a lack of an effective system to record continuing professional development.

Engineering



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on national certificate and NVQ level 1 performing engineering operations courses

- high standard of students' practical skills in welding and furniture manufacturing

- good teaching in practical lessons

- good links with secondary schools to improve access to engineering.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for first diploma in manufacturing and City & Guilds 4100 motor vehicle course

- low success rates in work-based learning

- insufficient account taken of students' individual learning needs in lesson planning.

Scope of provision

47. The college offers a wide and appropriate range of engineering courses and work-based learning, including provision for pupils aged 14 to 16. Courses are available on a full-time or part-time basis. The range of courses meets the needs of students and employers. Courses range from levels 1 to 4 and provide good progression routes for students. Courses are available during the day, in the evening and in the workplace. The college has 906 engineering students. Of these, 361 are full time and the majority are aged 16 to 18. The 545 part-time students include 341 adult students. There are 36 work-based apprentices, including 28 advanced apprentices.

Achievement and standards

48. Some pass and retention rates are high, but others are low. There are high pass rates at NVQ level 1 in engineering operations, on the national certificate in mechanical and electrical engineering, and the national diploma in mechanical and electrical engineering. Pass rates for the first diploma in manufacturing engineering and the City and Guilds motor vehicle one year programme declined significantly between 2003 and 2004, to well below the national average. Most retention rates increased in 2004 for engineering courses to around the national average, although the retention rate for the national diploma declined to below the national average. The proportion of work-based learners who complete their programmes and achieve their qualifications is low, at only 43%. The highest proportion of successful leavers was for those on NVQ programmes, at 49%, but only 11% of apprentices completed their framework qualifications successfully.

49. Most students make good progress in developing their practical skills. They select and use tools competently and safely. Welding and furniture manufacture students have high standards of practical skills. In welding, students gain confidence quickly and are able to produce high standards of work including welds for lap and corner joints. In furniture manufacture, students' project work is good. They plan, cost and produce furniture with a clear focus on saleable products, which are of a high standard. Furniture manufacturing students are enthusiastic, their design work is creative and they have high standards of woodworking skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 3267 introduction to welding skills	1	No. of starts	67	30	35
		% retention	90	87	94
		% pass rate	88	85	73
City and Guilds 4100 motor vehicle two year	2	No. of starts	29	35	68
		% retention	55	66	74
		% pass rate	44	48	90
First diploma in manufacturing engineering	2	No. of starts	*	26	27
		% retention	*	69	85
		% pass rate	*	72	48

Progression award in furniture manufacturing	2	No. of starts	68	40	61
		% retention	78	73	84
		% pass rate	57	48	55
National certificate in mechanical and electrical engineering	3	No. of starts	51	44	20
		% retention	73	52	75
		% pass rate	88	100	87
National diploma in mechanical and electrical engineering	3	No. of starts	15	18	29
		% retention	80	61	41
		% pass rate	92	82	92

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

50. Teaching and learning in practical lessons for welding, motor vehicle trades, programmable logic controllers and furniture manufacture are of a high standard. In welding and furniture manufacture, teachers are particularly effective at developing students' practical skills. Welding teachers are very good at demonstrating different weld techniques to students. In practical lessons, teachers motivate students well so that they are keen to learn. In the better theory lessons, planning is good, schemes of work are detailed and teachers use a range of appropriate teaching and learning methods. However, in many theory lessons, teachers take insufficient account of students' individual learning needs. Some theory lessons, including those for key skills, are uninspiring and lack challenge, and there are insufficient checks on students' learning.

51. The college has a broad range of satisfactory resources for engineering. Specialist resources for electrical and electronic engineering, control engineering, pneumatics and hydraulics and computer-aided design workstations and welding are good. Many cars for motor vehicle students are worn and out of date. Classroom accommodation is satisfactory. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and have a wide range of relevant experience.

52. Assessment of work-based learners is good. Assessors for work-based learning use a range of good assessment methods including observation, expert witness testimony and product evidence. Assessors' verbal and written feedback to learners is particularly good, links clearly to NVQ elements and clearly recognises students' achievements. Assessment arrangements for college-based students are accurate and fair. Most students receive feedback from teachers which explains what they need to do to improve their performance.

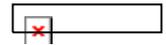
53. The good links with local schools have helped improve the access to engineering courses. There are 50 pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend an engineering operations course at level 1 and 32 attend a motor vehicle pre-apprenticeship programme. The well-planned practical lessons for these students cover bench fitting, turning and milling and are supported by effective development of students' theory knowledge. The college uses ILT to provide a neighbouring school with tuition for AS-level and GCE A-level electronics.

54. Students receive good support from engineering teachers and the college's learning services team. All full-time students and work-based learners receive an initial assessment. Those students and learners identified as needing help receive good learning support. Help includes effective support during lessons, specialist tutorials and individual support. The use and monitoring of individual learning targets for part-time adult students is weak.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management of engineering are satisfactory. The style of management is open and responsive to staff. Team meetings are frequent, but part-time staff do not always attend. Engineering teachers do not attend key skills teachers' meetings. Managers have responded effectively to the needs of employers by adapting and changing the curriculum. The college established a new management and organisation structure for engineering in 2004. The new arrangements are mostly effective. However, the new arrangements for key skills are not well established and students and work-based learners continue to make slow progress in this area. No internal verification of workplace assessment occurs. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but considered that it had insufficient detail on work-based learning.

Business



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

Strengths

- good links with employers

- excellent accommodation and resources

- high retention and pass rates on professional and management courses

- high retention rates on the GNVQ business.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in NVQ accounting at all levels

- poorly planned teaching

- lack of recent industrial updating by staff

- inconsistent quality of course review and evaluation.

Scope of provision

56. The business school provides full-time courses ranging from intermediate level to GCE A level and national diplomas. The part-time provision ranges from level 1 courses through to foundation degree programmes. There are courses leading to NVQs in administration from levels 1 to 3, and in management, personnel, accounting and professional development. A total of 1,635 students are enrolled on business professional and management courses in 2004/05, of whom 189 are full time and 1,446 part time.

57. The CoVE in accounting and financial services is committed to meeting local and regional needs, particularly in financial services. Interim status, granted in October 2003, has been extended for review in April 2005. New initiatives arising from the CoVE include full-cost courses and an academy of finance. The college has worked closely with a group of local financial services employers to develop a foundation degree in financial services, accredited by the University of East Anglia.

Achievement and standards

58. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 and adult students improved in 2004 and are now close to national averages. Retention rates at level 1 have been low, and the college has discontinued some distance learning provision which contributed to this. Retention rates on intermediate GNVQ business courses improved considerably in 2004.

59. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on long qualifications are at the national average, while pass rates for adults are above average at levels 1, 3 and 4, and broadly average at level 2. Both retention and pass rates on professional qualifications are well above national averages. However, pass rates on all levels of NVQ accounting are low. This is an important part of the CoVE provision. Pass rates on key skills qualifications for students aged 16 to 18 are low.

60. Students arrive promptly for lessons. The standard of students' work in lessons is at least satisfactory and students contribute well in discussions. In a first diploma retail lesson, students participated confidently in a role play to illustrate the concept of cross-selling. In a marketing lesson, students were able to apply market analysis techniques to case study materials and identify realistic marketing strategies.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	31	22	24
		% retention	65	73	92
		% pass rate	60	75	73
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	49	38	53
		% retention	69	71	81
		% pass rate	65	59	60
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	41	64	36
		% retention	93	89	86
		% pass rate	87	86	94
AVCE (double award) business	3	No. of starts	42	37	48
		% retention	45	59	54
		% pass rate	74	91	77
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	71	88	87

		% retention	89	75	83
		% pass rate	87	65	74
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	76	56	51
		% retention	87	89	92
		% pass rate	56	22	49
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	46	32	26
		% retention	91	94	88
		% pass rate	95	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

61. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject specialisms and have a good rapport with students. Students' responses are praised regularly to boost their confidence. In a good business lesson, students met to agree the lesson objectives and then moved into the business centre to access previously e-mailed lesson material. They made effective use of websites to gather information and returned to the base room to make electronic presentations of their findings. In general, however, there is insufficiently detailed lesson planning and too small a range of classroom activities. There is very little use of ILT for learning. In weaker lessons, objectives are not shared with students and there is over-reliance on teachers' input. The more able students are often not challenged in lessons. Too often questions are general, allowing more articulate students to dominate.

62. Learning takes place in a designated business school, where a plasma screen and corridor displays create a welcoming environment. The CoVE grant has financed a well-equipped business centre and classroom technology, including visualisers, computer networks and data projectors. Specialist resources are not used extensively in lessons. In one lesson, learning was affected by the tutor's inability to use the visualiser effectively. A majority of staff have not taken up opportunities for industrial updating. There is little use of commercial examples to enrich teaching and contextualise theory lessons. Handouts and other printed materials are too often of poor quality and uninspiring. Many classrooms lack stimulating display materials. The library is well stocked with up-to-date books and periodicals. A librarian, designated to the business school, helps to ensure good collaboration between library and teaching staff.

63. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Level 3 business students study only one unit at the beginning of the course. This introduces them effectively to time management and assessment. Students have individual learning plans which are monitored through tutorials at which targets for improvement are set. Parents are kept well informed of progress.

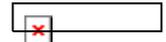
64. The comprehensive range of courses enables students to progress from level 1 to level 4. The CoVE development has resulted in a good range of accounting and financial services courses designed to meet local employers' needs. The curriculum is enriched by their support which includes student mentors from related business sectors. Full-time students benefit from well-managed work placements.

65. Good advice and guidance ensure that students are on appropriate programmes. Some students take advantage of the 'study buddy' support programme for students of minority ethnic backgrounds. Students receive good tutorial support in regular one-to-one meetings with their tutors. Attendance on intermediate GNVQ business courses has improved significantly through rigorous absence monitoring. There is effective initial assessment of students' individual learning support needs which are then met through classroom support or in the learning centre.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management of the business school are good. Changes in systems and procedures have been introduced to improve performance, and financial management is sound. The curriculum has been redesigned to meet students' and employers' needs. The CoVE provision is managed well. Employers are involved in the development of courses and provide an industrial perspective to students' learning experience. Target enrolments have been met in the current year. Action is being taken to address low pass rates on NVQs in accounting. The rigour of course review and evaluation varies between programmes.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on the GNVQ foundation in ICT

- high pass rates on short courses

- good development of personal and technical skills

- effective management of outreach provision.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most courses

- insufficient work-related learning

- poor attendance on most courses for students aged 16 to 18.

Scope of provision

67. The college offers a wide range of ICT courses to full-time and part-time students from levels 1 to 4. Courses are available at the main site, at three other centres in Norwich and at three venues in rural areas. Students can study during the day time and evening. There are 349 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses, with 25 on part-time courses. Some 1,288 adult students are on part-time

courses and 338 on full-time courses. There are 23 work-based learners. The college has a joint collaborative CoVE with two other colleges of FE in computing and networking. This was established in October 2003 and has interim status, which is to be reviewed in April 2005.

Achievement and standards

68. Pass rates for the GNVQ foundation in ICT are outstanding and, except in 2004, retention rates for this award are high. Pass rates for most short courses were high between 2002 and 2004 and consistently above the national average. Retention rates on most courses are below the national average. The college has recognised this weakness and action is being taken to address it. Early indications from college data indicate that retention rates in 2005 are improving on most courses.

69. Students develop good personal and technical skills and confidence, working well on their own and in teams. Adult students in particular develop good skills in using, adapting and designing software, and in computer maintenance and networking. They use these skills well at work, in the home and in the community. Attendance during the week of the inspection was low, especially for full-time students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Open College Network (OCN) entry level ICT	Entry	No. of starts	1,085	1,430	1,336
		% retention	72	60	66
		% pass rate	92	96	97
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	17	15	32
		% retention	94	93	75
		% pass rate	100	100	96
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	186	119	85
		% retention	89	84	79
		% pass rate	79	89	82
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	45	53	37
		% retention	67	87	68
		% pass rate	43	67	88
Diploma for IT practitioners (systems support)	2	No. of starts	19	36	30
		% retention	68	75	77
		% pass rate	92	85	61
AVCE (double award) ICT and precursors	3	No. of starts	47	49	26
		% retention	47	59	46
		% pass rate	82	97	83
National diploma in computing	3	No. of starts	33	72	73
		% retention	61	49	48
		% pass rate	80	69	80

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

Quality of education and training

70. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers employ a variety of teaching and learning methods, employ humour to good effect and make good use of ILT. Teachers at the centres in the community make students feel valued and ensure that they make good progress. In the less successful lessons, there is little use of visual aids and the teaching is uninspiring and does not meet the needs of individual students. Not all students are included in learning activities and there is low student attendance. Too few teachers use ILT in teaching ICT.

71. Resources at the main campus are satisfactory. Most teachers have teaching qualifications. The centres used in the community provide bright and welcoming places to learn and they have good resources. Advisers at these centres have information, advice and guidance qualifications. Three classrooms at the main campus are modern and well equipped with specialist resources and industrial-standard facilities. Some ICT classrooms have insufficient modern ILT and unreliable personal computers, and are shabby and untidy.

72. Assessment is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements. Teachers' well-written assignment briefs help students develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Students' work is marked and returned promptly with constructive comments on how to improve it. Internal verification processes are sound. Assessment and internal verification are particularly good at community centres. There are well-established arrangements for initial assessment which identify students' literacy, numeracy and learning support needs.

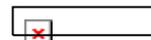
73. The wide range of ICT courses meets the needs of the local community. However, the range of entry level part-time courses with similar syllabuses is confusing to prospective students. The college has made progress with the CoVE, particularly with improving facilities for networking and IT systems support courses. An apprenticeship programme in IT systems support has started and a course devised specially for women in networking has been particularly successful in placing women in work. The college has set up very successful centres in rural and city centre locations for ICT. Each provides an identical range of courses and has close links with local libraries, job centres and other organisations. Progression opportunities for full-time and part-time vocational students are good. Students can progress from levels 1 to 4. Many take advantage of these opportunities and return to gain higher level qualifications and improve their employment prospects. Most full-time vocational students do not benefit from organised work experience or other work-related learning experiences to help support their career plans and prepare them for employment. The college has been slow to develop links with employers. However, this is improving with the establishment of employer forums.

74. Support for students is good. Students identified as needing additional help with learning receive good support. Specialist equipment, such as large keyboards and tracker balls, monitor filters and magnification software, is available at all sites for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support workers attend lessons to provide additional help. Teachers provide good individual support to students during lessons. There are regular group tutorials on vocational courses. At centres in the community, students receive good initial advice and guidance.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management of ICT, including the CoVE provision, are satisfactory. Managers monitor closely the performance of the ICT curriculum area, and have implemented actions to improve retention rates and work-based learning. However, they have not yet raised the standards of teaching and learning. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between staff in the different faculties offering ICT courses and insufficient strategic management and co-ordination of ICT provision. The management and organisation of community provision are good. Centre managers and staff meet regularly to discuss the development of the centres, develop strategies to widen participation locally and review progress towards targets. The quality assurance process has failed to identify some poor teaching and poor attendance.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- good arrangements for assessment on full-time courses

- good provision for pupils aged 14 to 16.

Weaknesses

- insufficient good or better teaching

- low rates of successful learner completion in work-based learning

- inappropriate programmes for some learners.

Scope of provision

76. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. NVQ hairdressing courses are available at levels 1 and 2. The beauty therapy provision offers NVQs at levels 2 and 3. The college also offers sports massage and holistic therapy courses. There are 351 full-time and 489 part-time beauty therapy students, and 299 full-time and 97 part-time hairdressing students. The college offers work-based learning to 128 hairdressing apprentices. Some 111 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend college on level 1 hairdressing and beauty therapy courses.

Achievement and standards

77. Pass rates are consistently high and above the national average for the body massage certificate, NVQs in beauty therapy and NVQ at level 1 for hairdressing. Pass rates for NVQ hairdressing at level 2 are variable, but they have remained above the national average. In 2004, pass rates for the Indian head massage diploma, and theatrical and media make-up diploma (make-up artist), declined significantly from the previous year. Retention rates on most courses over the last three years have been variable. On the beauty therapy course at NVQ level 2, the retention rate has been high, but that for the body massage certificate has declined to below the national average. The proportion of successful work-based leavers is low. Since 2000, only 17% of those who complete

their work-based learning programmes have achieved their qualifications.

78. Students' technical skills are satisfactory or better. Students make appropriate progress compared to their prior levels of attainment, but the speed of work is below commercial standards. Students improve their creative skills well through specialist additional courses, particularly in body painting and photography. Most students' written work is satisfactory or good and portfolios of evidence are mostly well organised.

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	No. of starts	99	135	161
		% retention	87	82	75
		% pass rate	99	99	94
NVQ hairdressing 2 year	2	No. of starts	110	130	103
		% retention	67	54	60
		% pass rate	81	94	85
NVQ beauty therapy 1 year	2	No. of starts	97	102	130
		% retention	85	83	85
		% pass rate	90	94	93
NVQ beauty therapy 2 year	3	No. of starts	38	58	60
		% retention	89	81	83
		% pass rate	91	91	98
Body massage certificate 1 year	3	No. of starts	73	70	52
		% retention	90	80	79
		% pass rate	95	100	93
Theatrical and media make-up diploma (make-up artist)	3	No. of starts	39	35	32
		% retention	67	80	84
		% pass rate	88	86	63
Indian head massage diploma short	3	No. of starts	109	133	128
		% retention	88	85	87
		% pass rate	90	90	73

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

Quality of education and training

79. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory or better, although a low proportion is good. In the best lessons, teachers are adept at developing students' creative skills for body painting and theatrical and media make-up. In a successful beauty therapy lesson, students were asked to create their own interpretations of the four seasons or their favourite signs of the zodiac. The teachers used their extensive knowledge of the media industry to help students to work independently to produce images of a particularly high standard. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not share the aims and objectives with students. Theory lessons are often uninspiring and do not challenge students' learning sufficiently. Teachers use a narrow range of teaching and learning methods such as lecturing for long periods without any contributions from students. The number of clients in the salons is insufficient for students to develop their occupational skills to a commercial speed. Some

students work on practice heads repeatedly. Students do not receive training on salon reception work. In work-based learning, learning targets do not provide clear and specific detail on what learners need to do to develop their job skills.

80. Most staff are qualified for the areas they teach and there are good opportunities for staff development. All college salons are well equipped and use high-quality products from leading manufacturers. The commercial salons used for work-based learning are satisfactory. Salons are too small for the growing number of hairdressing students. In some instances, two groups of students are taught in the same salon, causing the teachers difficulties in sustaining students' interest and maintaining a realistic work environment. Some sterilising procedures are unsatisfactory. There is a shortage of computers and projectors in classrooms.

81. Assessment arrangements are good for full-time hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. Teachers provide students with clear information at induction on assessment and reinforce this regularly throughout students' programmes. There is careful planning of when and how assessment should take place. Teachers make very good use of assessment to provide students with good feedback on how they are progressing and how they can improve the quality of their work. The outcomes from assessments are recorded clearly in students' portfolios of evidence. There is insufficient internal verification of assessment in the workplace to ensure that assessment is taking place correctly.

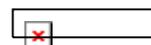
82. The range and quality of provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 in hairdressing and beauty therapy are good. These students follow a level 1 hairdressing course in their first year and a beauty therapy course in the second year. The standard of teaching and learning for pupils aged 14 to 16 is high. The courses prepare pupils aged 14 to 16 effectively for level 2 courses and work in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Full-time beauty therapy students are offered an extensive range of particularly useful additional accredited courses to improve their skills and employability. All full-time hairdressing students and work-based learners are placed on a level 1 course regardless of their prior experience and the results of initial assessment. Many of these students have acquired hairdressing skills in advance of level 1. Many of the skills for level 1 are not used in commercial salons. There are no opportunities for students to gain level 3 hairdressing skills at the college. The college stopped offering the NVQ at level 3 in hairdressing after low pass rates for this award.

83. There are effective arrangements for group and individual tutorials for full-time students. Full-time students and work-based learners receive an initial assessment to identify their support needs. The take up of support for literacy, numeracy and language support for level 1 students is low. Of those identified as needing help, only 13% receive support. Not all teachers providing literacy and numeracy support have appropriate qualifications.

Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have maintained mostly high pass and retention rates. However, they have not yet successfully improved standards of teaching and learning, particularly in theory lessons. The management of work-based learning is ineffective. Managers have not improved learners' progress towards level 2 qualifications, raised the levels of framework achievement or ensured key skills are provided throughout the learning programme.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- wide range of courses with good progression routes

- high quality of students' work

- good assessment practices.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate health and social care and diploma in childcare and education courses

- insufficient and poor use of ILT.

Scope of provision

85. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in health, care, counselling and public services from entry level to honours degree level. There are 483 students aged 16 to 18 and 750 adults. There are 517 students on full-time courses. Courses include national diplomas in early years and public services, certificates and diplomas in childcare and education, and foundation and intermediate GNVQs in health and social care. There are 716 part-time students enrolled on courses that are offered on a day time, evening or weekend basis. These include counselling, first aid and NVQs in care and early years care and education. A number of access and college accredited courses are offered, including access to medicine. Some courses are located in the college with others taking place in locations in Norfolk.

Achievement and standards

86. Pass rates are high, particularly on the national diploma in early years and the GNVQ intermediate in health and social care, with 100% pass rates in 2004. Retention rates are generally satisfactory or above average, although retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate in health and social care and the diploma in childcare and education have declined to below average.

87. Students' work is of high quality. Assignments are well written and presented. Students provide high-quality and innovative presentations using electronic slides with sound and graphics. Work in lessons is of a high standard. In some lessons, students display well developed analytical skills. During one lesson, students discussed human behaviour and analysed the importance of routines to clients in care settings. This was then linked effectively to cognitive development.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	26	24	23
		% retention	81	83	78
		% pass rate	100	100	94
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	22	20	22
		% retention	77	70	68
		% pass rate	94	100	100
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	53	73	69
		% retention	77	74	78
		% pass rate	85	94	96
Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	51	55	52
		% retention	65	67	79
		% pass rate	97	97	100
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	*	29	39
		% retention	*	90	77
		% pass rate	*	81	100
Diploma in holistic therapy	3	No. of starts	19	15	20
		% retention	84	100	95
		% pass rate	100	100	95

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

88. Teaching in most lessons is good or better and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In most lessons, the pace of work is appropriate and teachers use a variety of teaching methods to help students learn. For example, in a foundation level lesson, the group were involved in discussion, small group work and practical activities to plan outdoor play for children. This maintained the interest and concentration of the students. In a very good lesson at level 3, students developed their understanding of, and skills in, acupuncture by practising on their colleagues. The teacher ensured that correct techniques were used and checked learning through the effective use of questions. In a few lessons, students are challenged insufficiently in their learning. There is little use of ILT in the classroom.

89. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. All teachers have occupational expertise and many update their industrial experience regularly. They are able to draw on this professional experience to assist students in making the links between theory and practice. Resources for students' learning are satisfactory. There is a good range of books, journals and learning materials in the classrooms and for use in independent study. The learning resource centre is well stocked with relevant and current materials and library assistants are helpful and knowledgeable.

90. There are good assessment practices. Assessment is fair and accurate, and assignment briefs are clear and detailed with thorough marking and consistent grading. The feedback provided to students is clear, detailed and constructive. Teachers use a range of assessment strategies including students' assessment of each other. For example, in one lesson, students made presentations to the class on the work of educational theorists and fellow students commented on performance. Internal verification is thorough and supports assessment decisions.

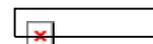
91. There is a wide range of work experience opportunities to meet the requirements of courses and the needs of students. Links with work placement providers to support work experience are good. The wide range of courses, offered at all levels, provides good progression routes for students. Students can move between health and social care, public services, childcare and education as they progress between levels. In 2004, 27% of full-time students and 60% of part-time students progressed to higher level study, and 41% of students progressed to HE courses within the college.

92. Pastoral support, advice and guidance for students are good. Students have regular reviews and tutorials which include specific learning targets against which progress is monitored. Individual learning plans are updated regularly and are used in progress reviews. Students receive effective support for additional learning needs, either through the learning centre or through the use of learning support assistants in lessons.

Leadership and management

93. Leadership and management are good. The college provides suitable opportunities for staff to update their skills and attend relevant training courses. There are regular course team meetings to exchange information and share good practice. Quality assurance is good and includes annual staff appraisal at which professional development requests are acted upon quickly. Courses are evaluated regularly, with findings used to inform teaching and learning and course structure. The self-assessment process is thorough and reflects largely the findings in the inspection. Good practices relating to equal opportunities are incorporated into all aspects of work within the department.

Hospitality, leisure, sport and travel



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses

- good teaching and learning

- good resources

- good employer and external links.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level games and recreation

- o low success rates in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

94. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses in hospitality, leisure, sport and travel, including a programme of short courses and work-based learning. These courses meet the needs of students and employers, and are available from levels 1 to 4. There are clear progression routes to higher level courses. Some 366 students are full time and 520 are part time. Of these, 420 are aged 16 to 18 and 466 are adults. The college has a CoVE in hospitality.

Achievement and standards

95. Pass rates are high on most courses. Pass rates on the City and Guilds certificate in cookery, and the national diploma in sports and exercise science, have been outstanding at 100%. The pass rate on the AVCE in hospitality has been significantly above the national average for the last three years. Pass rates in 2004 for the AS level in games and recreation, and food preparation and cookery at level 3, declined to below the national average. Most retention rates are high, particularly on the City and Guilds certificate in cookery and the AVCE in travel and tourism, although the retention rate on the NVQ level 3 in food preparation and cookery declined to below the national average in 2004. The number of successful leavers from work-based learning programmes is low. Over the last five years, only 21% of those who completed work-based learning programmes achieved their qualifications. On programmes leading to NVQs, 44% of work-based learners completed successfully, compared to only 6% of those leaving apprenticeship programmes.

96. Students are well motivated, enjoy their courses and take appropriate care of their appearance. They have good practical skills, work well in groups and make effective use of ILT. Hospitality students in the college's public restaurant serve food of a high standard. Students are effective at planning and organising functions, events and educational visits to improve their knowledge and understanding of industry. They develop good competition skills, and have won several awards in local and national competitions.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 3330 cookery certificate	1	No. of starts	17	34	*
		% retention	88	91	*
		% pass rate	100	97	*
NVQ food preparation and cookery 2 year	2	No. of starts	97	50	62
		% retention	53	56	69
		% pass rate	71	64	93
Travel agents certificate (primary) 1 year	2	No. of starts	64	36	36
		% retention	89	92	78
		% pass rate	63	85	86
AVCE double award hospitality	3	No. of starts	22	17	20
		% retention	55	71	70
		% pass rate	92	100	93

AVCE double award travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	43	42	37
		% retention	86	64	84
		% pass rate	86	81	94
NVQ food preparation and cookery	3	No. of starts	*	28	17
		% retention	*	86	76
		% pass rate	*	92	77
National diploma in sport and exercise science	3	No. of starts	20	22	21
		% retention	50	64	71
		% pass rate	90	79	100
AS-level games and recreation	3	No. of starts	29	30	23
		% retention	83	77	83
		% pass rate	67	87	58

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

97. Teaching and learning are good or better in most lessons. Teachers use a range of good teaching methods and most take account of students' individual learning needs. Teachers use their good industrial experience to develop students' practical and personal skills well. The college's public restaurant serves the types of dishes that students are likely to encounter when in the industry. Teachers make very effective use of a good range of ILT. They are starting to relate the development of key skills effectively to industry-relevant learning activities. However, in work-based learning, the links are less well developed. There is insufficient co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training for work-based learners.

98. Resources are good. The college has used CoVE funding effectively to improve resources for hospitality and catering. These include high-standard kitchens, restaurants, sports facilities and a lecture theatre. Specialist areas are available for reception and cabin crew courses. CoVE funding has provided good ILT including digital projectors, computers, and audio-visual equipment. There is a wide range of specialist equipment and learning materials. Most teaching and support staff are appropriately qualified and teaching staff have good industrial experience of hospitality, leisure, sport and travel. Staff and students have a good awareness of health and safety procedures.

99. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Students are set learning targets, but this process is not always sufficiently rigorous. Monitoring of most students' progress is adequate, but there are examples where information from progress reviews is not used effectively by teachers to help students to improve. There is insufficient use of assessment to inform the reviews and individual learning plans of work-based learners.

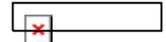
100. Good links with employers, training and careers organisations, and trade associations, have helped the college to increase the range of courses and ensure that learning is occupationally relevant. These links are particularly good with major hospitality companies. The college has developed a mentoring scheme with employers to improve students' knowledge and understanding. It includes industry visits, work placements, talks, and employment opportunities. Chefs from industry visit the college regularly to improve students' culinary skills and have helped the college to develop a junior hotel academy through its good links with local schools. Travel and tourism students work closely with a range of local and national travel agencies. Local partnerships in sports have helped provide sponsorship for equipment and events.

101. Guidance and support for students are mostly effective. All students have an initial assessment. Those identified as needing support receive help. Individual tutorials are used to help students review their progress. Staff have a good knowledge of students and provide good pastoral support. 'Buddy' arrangements provide students with support from more experienced students. Support for work-based learners is less effective.

Leadership and management

102. Leadership and management of the curriculum area, including the CoVE, are good. The college has made effective use of the CoVE funding to improve provision. Curriculum managers, with the exception of those in work-based learning, have maintained high standards of teaching and learning and mostly high pass and retention rates. Managers have worked hard and successfully to develop good links with industry. Communication between staff and with students is good and there is good use of notice boards and staff photographs. The arrangements for quality assurance, including the self-assessment process, are effective at maintaining high standards. There is regular staff development including industrial updating.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high standard of students' work
- effective peer evaluation by students
- high student progression rates in art and design
- good and well-used ILT resources
- strong vocational and community links

Weaknesses

- inadequate lesson planning
- some poor teaching

- o poor maintenance and housekeeping of accommodation and resources
- o weak quality assurance.

Scope of provision

103. The college offers a broad range of courses at levels 2 and 3 in visual arts, performing arts, music and media. These include national diplomas in fine art, media, graphics, textiles, performing arts, music practice and performance and access to HE for adult students. AS-level and GCE A-level courses are offered in photography, film studies, performance, drama and theatre, music technology, textiles, media, and art history. Level 2 courses include GNVQ intermediate art and design, first diploma in performing arts, GCSE art, photography and media, and a range of community courses for adults at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are 1,626 students on roll, approximately one third of whom are aged 19 or over.

Achievement and standards

104. Overall pass and retention rates are satisfactory. There are high pass and retention rates on the access to HE course. Pass rates were above the national average in 2004 on national diploma courses in performing arts and textile design, open college graphic design courses, the GNVQ intermediate art and design and AS-level media studies. However, there were unsatisfactory pass rates on national diploma courses in media and music, and AS-level courses in film studies and drama. There were poor achievements of key skills qualifications. Retention rates were high on national diploma courses in media, textiles and music, AS-level film and video studies and open college advanced graphic design courses. Retention rates in AS-level media studies are improving, but are still below average. Those on the GNVQ intermediate art and design course declined to well below average.

105. Students' work is of high quality with effective development and characterisation work in drama, good concentration in dance, good sketchbook development work in textiles and imaginative drawings for animation projects in graphic design.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in practical crafts (short)	1	No. of starts	29	36	*
		% retention	93	83	*
		% pass rate	93	77	*
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	35	28	21
		% retention	82	82	71
		% pass rate	79	79	100
National diploma drama and performing arts	3	No. of starts	17	23	27
		% retention	59	83	56
		% pass rate	70	95	93
National diploma	3	No. of starts	15	15	18

textiles		% retention	87	73	83
		% pass rate	85	82	100
AS-level film and video production	3	No. of starts	57	61	67
		% retention	60	69	66
		% pass rate	94	93	89
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	36	34	36
		% retention	78	82	81
		% pass rate	82	93	83
Open college graphic design	3	No. of starts	*	19	30
		% retention	*	68	90
		% pass rate	*	77	96

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

106. Teaching in the majority of lessons is good or better, with some very good and outstanding teaching, but also some that is unsatisfactory. In an outstanding lesson in performing arts at level 1, students worked on business, finance and marketing in relation to a production of *The Wizard of Oz*. They devised a 'sales pitch' to potential theatre investors to acquire funding. Key skills were integrated effectively into this activity. In most subjects, students are encouraged to appraise the work of others and offer advice on how to improve the work. Good examples of this were seen in fine art, performing arts and access to HE art lessons. A useful performance evaluation sheet was used in one lesson prompting students to evaluate, in detail, every aspect of their previous theatrical production. There is some unsatisfactory teaching across the range of provision. In weaker lessons, lesson planning is inadequate. There were examples of dull teaching, insufficient engagement of students and lack of enforcement of basic professional studio rules such as no eating and drinking.

107. Resources are good for media and film. There are well-equipped and well-used computer rooms with suites of professional-quality computers. Students throughout the courses use ICT for assignments. There is good professional accommodation at 'The Garage', an external performance venue for performance work. Accommodation in general is maintained poorly. Some inappropriate rooms are used for specialist teaching. Art rooms are shabby, not sufficiently clean, lack storage space and give rise to health and safety concerns. Staff have relevant professional and teaching qualifications and many are active arts practitioners.

108. Assessment and monitoring of students' work are satisfactory. On most courses, students are provided with feedback explaining what they need to do to improve. The practice is especially good in music. There are good individual learning plans on the access to HE art and design course, with useful developmental comments to help students improve their performance. Tutorial sessions do not always monitor students' progress against individual learning targets.

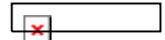
109. There are good partnerships with a wide range of organisations including schools, theatres, television, radio, arts groups, universities and employers. For example, the 'Excellence in Schools' project effectively provided local high school students with the opportunity to work in the television studio on presentation skills. A compact arrangement with an art college gives art students excellent progression opportunities. There are good additional activities for students, with opportunities to perform in live theatre, to produce public art works and to contribute to radio performances. All courses offer study trips and educational visits, both in this country and abroad, to enhance projects and assignments. Subject tutors provide good support for individuals, and good advice on progression to HE, but little guidance to students who want to progress into employment. Timetabled

learning support is not always planned well or used effectively.

Leadership and management

110. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new management structure has not yet led to improved outcomes in the area, although there is a good working relationship between the manager and staff. New strategies have been developed to integrate the development of key skills into the curriculum. Quality assurance is weak in some aspects. There is no formal sharing of good practice and inadequate oversight of technicians to ensure good housekeeping. Some poor timetabling of rooms leads to students' learning being disrupted.

Humanities and English



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AS-level, GCE A-level, and GCSE English courses

- a wide range of courses with good progression routes

- extensive enrichment activities.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates on some humanities AS-level and GCE A-level courses

- inadequate planning of teaching and learning to meet the needs of individual students

- lack of rigour in course reviews.

Scope of provision

111. The college offers GCSE courses in English language, history, sociology and psychology, an AS-level course in critical thinking, and AS-level and GCE A-level courses in archaeology, English literature and language, English literature, geography, history, government and politics, law,

sociology and psychology. In addition, there are full-time and part-time day and evening access to HE courses. These courses represent a broad curriculum offer that provides good progression opportunities for students aged 16 to 18 and adults.

Achievement and standards

112. Pass rates on the majority of AS-level and GCE A-level English and humanities courses are high. In GCE A-level geography and AS-level English literature, for example, pass rates have been well above the national average for the last three years. The proportion of students achieving high grades in advanced level courses is also good. In 2004, 37% of students in GCE A-level geography achieved high grades, compared to 27% nationally. On GCSE English courses, the proportion of students achieving grades A* to C is consistently well above average. However, retention rates on some humanities advanced level courses are declining and were low in 2004, and the retention rate on the part-time access to HE programme was low at 41%.

113. At AS level, students demonstrate an understanding of key concepts and the skills of description and narrative. In the second year of GCE A-level courses, they display effective skills in analysis and evaluation. Students on the access to HE course demonstrate a satisfactory standard of work and the acquisition of sound analytical and evaluative skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English (1 year)	2	No. of starts	213	189	169
		% retention	73	67	68
		% pass rate	65	81	60
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	160	205	250
		% retention	71	77	72
		% pass rate	69	85	82
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	51	72	69
		% retention	76	82	78
		% pass rate	72	86	94
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	85	95	106
		% retention	72	74	67
		% pass rate	64	91	86
Access to HE (1 year full time)	3	No. of starts	83	80	60
		% retention	67	61	71
		% pass rate	90	93	86
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	128	86	79
		% retention	85	87	92
		% pass rate	95	93	100
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	76	97	96
		% retention	71	65	86
		% pass rate	91	94	96
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	41	53	64
		% retention	93	87	94

		% pass rate	97	93	100
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Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

114. Teaching is satisfactory. In all lessons, there is a good rapport between teachers and students, which creates a productive learning environment. There is a good range and pace of activities in most lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use effective questioning to check and extend students' learning, and make good use of praise to encourage students. These techniques were used in a successful AS-level archaeology lesson which developed students' skills of analysis. Students analysed autopsy evidence from a case study of Grauballe Man, and, in the role of detectives, were able to conclude that his death was a ritual sacrifice. In some lessons students are able to work with, and learn from, each other. For example, in an AS-level psychology lesson, students worked in pairs to record their earliest memories and recount them to the class, to explore factors affecting long-term memory. Teachers take naturally occurring opportunities to explore ethical and equal opportunities issues. There is frequent reference to, and guidance on, the specific demands of examination assessment. Support for individual students in lessons is good.

115. In some lessons, teaching is less inspiring and teachers fail to provide enough varied activities to maintain students' motivation. In a number of lessons, classroom management is less effective. In some instances, discussions were allowed to over-run, group tasks were not set up well, or individuals or a minority were allowed to dominate discussions. Some teachers were reluctant to allow students to work independently on tasks in groups or pairs. Students' lateness interrupted learning for others. The use of ILT is underdeveloped, especially for independent learning. In some lesson plans and teaching, there is insufficient attention to meeting the differing needs of students. Some schemes of work lack detail on learning objectives, differentiation of work to meet the needs of students with varying abilities or skills development.

116. Resources within humanities and English are good. Staff are well qualified and experienced, and many are experienced external examiners. There are high levels of staff development in relation to specific syllabuses. Subject base rooms in the humanities are of a high standard and promote effective learning. They are well equipped and good learning aids are displayed on the walls. The learning resource centre has an adequate book stock across all English and humanities courses, but the quality of handouts and other teacher-devised learning resources is not always high.

117. Assessment is satisfactory. Written work is marked carefully, with constructive comments on how to improve. Students have regular reviews of their progress with their teachers, which they find helpful. Little use is made by subject teachers of information on students' prior achievement and the setting of learning targets for individuals is not well established.

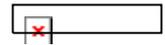
118. The options within English and humanities programmes for both full-time and part-time students are extensive, and there are good progression routes within the college. One student had begun her studies on a GCSE programme and worked her way through an access to HE course on to a degree course at the college. The extensive GCE A-level programme includes minority subjects such as archaeology. Students participate in a wide range of enrichment activities which extend their learning. Theatre trips and visits to museums are available to adults and 16 to 18 year olds. GCE A-level English students studying the literature of the First World War went on a residential visit to the main French battlefield sites.

119. Guidance and support for students are good. Pre-enrolment guidance materials are presented clearly, induction arrangements are effective and there is good initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy skills. There is good support for students with additional learning needs. Parents are informed regularly of students' progress and there are good follow-up procedures for students identified as being at risk.

Leadership and management

120. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Data on retention and pass rates are analysed and compared to national averages. There is effective communication within the curriculum area, both formally and informally, enhanced by the recently established role of programme manager. Regular staff meetings are held within the sixth form academy and by subject teams. Little use is made of lesson observation information in course reviews. Course reviews make very little reference to teaching and learning and in particular to any weaknesses. There is no use of value added data to inform judgements on students' achievement and there is insufficient data on attendance to inform course reviews.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- above average pass rate for the certificate in adult numeracy, and GCSE mathematics

- effective diagnostic testing for literacy and numeracy

- good integration of literacy, numeracy and learning support with some vocational programmes

- effective promotion of Skills for Life.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching in literacy support

- unsatisfactory pass rates in key skills and ESOL

- ineffective monitoring of some students' progress.

Scope of provision

121. There are 635 part-time students attending literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses during the

day time or in the evening. The provision offered ranges from entry level and level 1, to level 2 of nationally accredited Skills for Life programmes. Courses are taught at the main campus, at college outreach centres, in a range of community venues and on employers' premises. Over 580 students receive additional learning support in literacy, numeracy and language. There are 1,368 students undertaking key skills qualifications in application of number at levels 1 and 2, and 1,257 taking key skills qualifications in communication at these levels. All students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have timetabled literacy and numeracy sessions within their learning programmes. A further 163 students are taking GCSE mathematics courses. Students are entered for the appropriate level depending on the progress they make. Numeracy and GCSE mathematics are also offered in the evening at the college and in the community for adults.

Achievement and standards

122. Retention and pass rates in numeracy and literacy courses are generally high for both pre-entry and entry level students. The achievement of Skills for Life targets is satisfactory for adult literacy and high for adult numeracy. However, the retention rates for these courses were below average in 2004. Pass rates on key skills programmes in application of number and communication have declined, and are low at both levels 1 and 2. Retention rates are average. Pass rates at grades A* to C in GCSE mathematics were above the national average in 2004. The pass rates are significantly higher for adult students than for those aged 16 to 18. Retention rates on GCSE mathematics courses have declined and are low.

123. Some students on Skills for Life courses, including ESOL students, make good progress in developing their skills and can talk confidently about how they have improved. Some students on entry level programmes display confidence and pride in their work and display clear evidence of learning in their portfolios. Students with specific learning difficulties talk about their needs and are supported in developing effective coping strategies. ESOL students at levels 1 and 2 are articulate, work together well and produce comprehensive portfolios.

124. Recent developments set out to improve key skills in specific vocational areas. Activities to develop skills in communication and application of number are a central part of vocational studies, or are presented through contextualised materials. Support is offered through an enhanced additional learning support team, who teach with course teams.

Quality of education and training

125. Teaching in the majority of lessons is good or better. However, there is some unsatisfactory teaching on vocational courses. In some lessons, additional learning support assistants work with a vocational teacher to provide literacy, numeracy and study skills in workshop sessions. In the best lessons observed, there was a clear partnership between the additional learning support tutor and the subject teacher. Students improved their communication skills within a vocational context and achievement of online key skills tests was high. In weaker lessons, there was little interaction between the additional learning support tutor and the subject teacher. Additional learning support tutors were not aware of the aims of the session, did not have copies of handouts and were unclear of their role in the classroom. In the best ESOL lessons, teachers build students' confidence through effective and relevant discussion activities and group tasks. Students are well motivated and enthusiastic but, in some lessons, the work lacks pace and teachers fail to use opportunities to develop students' language and understanding, for instance, by drawing on current affairs.

126. In mathematics and numeracy lessons, teachers foster a good working atmosphere. In the best lessons, they encourage students to contribute and challenge them to think for themselves. For example, in a numeracy lesson, students were asked to think of everyday applications of tessellations. The teacher asked them to explain their reasoning and not just give correct answers. Mathematics is put into real life contexts which make it relevant and enhance learning. In less effective lessons, teachers do not give students enough opportunities to contribute their ideas or prior knowledge. The more able students are not challenged sufficiently. Some teachers give students few opportunities to take part in discussions so that they do not develop their verbal reasoning skills. Application of number is integrated well with some vocational courses.

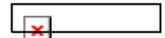
127. New individual learning plans which cover literacy, numeracy, language or key skills needs have been introduced for all students. The individual learning plan is developed after comprehensive initial and diagnostic assessment of students' needs. There is a lack of consistency in the completion of individual learning plans and their use to support students' progress. The planning of lessons is not always related to the needs identified in individual learning plans.

128. The college is developing provision with a wide range of community groups, employers and other agencies. One teacher is based in the local hospital to develop Skills for Life opportunities. In another centre, the basic skills of students with disabilities are developed through the use of ILT. The college is marketing this provision to the wider community. There is a good range of courses in ESOL. The provision has been expanded to meet the needs of community groups, refugees and migrant workers. ESOL and literacy and numeracy courses are now being offered in a range of venues, including community centres and schools and on employers' premises. Recruitment to these courses is expanding and further links with other agencies are being developed. Teaching resources and accommodation for literacy, numeracy and ESOL are of high quality. All rooms are equipped with ILT resources, but these facilities are not used regularly by staff or students.

Leadership and management

129. Leadership and management of the provision are good across the college. The college has improved management arrangements through the creation of an essential skills faculty responsible for addressing the government's Skills for Life agenda and addressing weaknesses in provision. The commitment of senior managers has led to growing provision in the community. There is a new central additional learning support team, and significant numbers of staff and senior managers, have achieved, or are working towards relevant qualifications. Some progress has been made in improving the arrangements for providing additional learning support and the teaching of key skills, but the quality of the provision is not yet consistently high.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- good achievement in practical skills and personal development
- high rates of progression to more advanced courses, training and employment
- wide range of courses
- good involvement of students in setting and reviewing their own targets.

Weaknesses

- low achievement of personal targets
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learning towards individual targets.

Scope of provision

130. Provision for students who have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities includes the 'Futures', 'Challenges' and 'Progressions' courses. Many of these students also have other communication, physical or sensory disabilities. The part-time Challenges programme includes lessons taught in the community at day centres. Courses for students who have moderate learning difficulties, for those who have disrupted education due to emotional and other behavioural difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorders, including Asperger's Syndrome, are within the 'Isis' course and the Phoenix programme. There are six courses within the Phoenix programme. Many of these share some options to create a wider range of choices for individual students. There are also two level 1 vocational courses in ICT and health and social care. The number of students on foundation studies programmes has increased by 76% over the last three years. There are currently 250 full-time and part-time students.

Achievement and standards

131. Students make good progress in developing a wide range of practical skills, for example, in art and creative studies, bricklaying and horticulture. Students on the Progressions course prepared for their forthcoming trip to Berlin by learning key words and phrases in German. Most students work successfully towards nationally recognised awards at entry levels 1, 2 and 3. Most also make good progress in achieving their personal targets in important areas of personal and social development, such as asking questions, speaking up when working as part of a group and not interrupting others. These targets are negotiated with their tutors as part of their individual learning plans. Students make satisfactory progress overall in literacy and numeracy. Many students gain skills and knowledge effectively in literacy and numeracy lessons, including achieving nationally recognised awards. However, they do not make sufficient progress when in other lessons because learning objectives do not usually include the achievement of literacy and numeracy targets.

132. Most students progress on to more advanced courses or into training and employment. The Isis, Progressions and Phoenix Plus courses show very high rates of progression for students who have previously had a disrupted education due to a range of emotional and other learning difficulties. For example, in 2004, 50% of the Isis course students moved into training and employment, and a further 30% progressed to mainstream college courses. Similarly, 42% of students on the Phoenix Plus course went on to other college programmes and 33% went into training and employment.

133. All courses have high retention rates; a few at 100%. Retention rates on the courses for students who are disaffected are particularly high.

Quality of education and training

134. Much of the teaching is good or very good; very few lessons are unsatisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan a range of interesting activities designed to help students achieve their learning targets. The pace of work is brisk and students' enthusiasm is maintained. Teachers and support staff work well as a team and know their students' needs. Teachers monitor exactly what students know through skilful observation and questioning and then provide support to help them learn more. For example, a teacher used role play in a first-aid lesson, enabling him to establish what the students knew about dealing with someone who was unconscious, and then provided further teaching to extend this learning.

135. In less successful lessons, planning is weak and teachers fail to help students to achieve their literacy and numeracy targets and, sometimes, other personal development targets. In a few lessons, staff do too much for the students. They do not allow students to try things for themselves or answer the questions that are asked. In these circumstances, students' concentration wanders and they lose interest.

136. Staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. Accommodation is good and is well situated to allow students to make use of the college's facilities, such as the cafeteria. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. A few students who have physical disabilities or who are blind do not have adequate access to appropriate equipment.

137. Students are well involved in their own assessment, in setting their learning targets and in monitoring their learning towards these goals. This is good practice. Most of these targets are sufficiently specific to allow a focus for teaching and learning. Many targets, especially those for personal development, are used effectively to monitor progress across all of a student's lessons. However, there are too many occasions when this does not occur, especially in relation to literacy and numeracy. Monitoring and recording of progress towards the achievement of awards in practical skills and in literacy and numeracy lessons are effective.

138. The very good range of courses meet the needs of students well and allow progression between levels. The Phoenix group of programmes is designed effectively to provide courses at a series of levels for those who have moderate learning difficulties or who have interrupted education due to disaffection and other behaviour. Options within these courses cater well for students' interests and ambitions. The wide range of work experience opportunities is a particularly important part of many courses. Similarly, there are appropriate and interesting courses for school leavers and adults who have severe learning difficulties.

139. Students are supported well on personal matters and in making progress across their programme, and they value this support. There is effective induction and students feel they are helped to move smoothly into college life. The student council and students' course team meetings are valuable opportunities for students to contribute their views. These are taken note of. The effective transition planning arrangements are helped by the close liaison between the college and the Connexions service.

Leadership and management

140. Leadership and management are good. The rigour in quality assurance has increased since the college restructured and the school's management team expanded in September 2003. Actions have been taken to improve the consistency and quality of teaching, although it is too soon to judge their impact. The self-assessment process involves all staff and builds on course reviews. It identified most of the strengths and weaknesses found through inspection. There is an appropriate action plan. A suitable range of professional development opportunities is provided for all staff. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily, especially through the range of courses offered and the very effective way in which individual students' needs are established.

Part D: College data

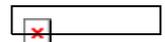
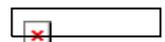


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	23	42
2	39	24
3	36	17
4/5	0	3
Other	2	14
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,774	476	7
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	496	501	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	597	661	4
Business administration, management and professional	797	2,585	10
Information and communication technology	1,923	5,135	22
Retailing, customer service and transportation	106	170	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	1,545	1,492	9
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	954	329	4
Health, social care and public services	659	1,358	6
Visual and performing arts and media	974	1169	7
Humanities	860	666	5
English, languages and communication	2,071	702	8
Foundation programmes	1,506	2,834	13
Unknown area of learning	23	244	1
Total	14,285	18,322	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2002	2003	2004*	2002	2003	2004*
1	Starters excluding transfers	559	598	657	1091	696	731
	Retention rate %	70	76	74	45	43	66
	National average %	76	76	***	71	71	***
	Pass rate %	76	90	86	87	89	87
	National average %	69	73	***	70	77	***
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,311	2,021	2,069	1,448	1,378	1,205
	Retention rate %	73	67	71	65	50	62
	National average %	71	71	***	68	67	***
	Pass rate %	77	81	82	85	86	84
	National average %	70	73	***	71	73	***
3	Starters excluding transfers	3,320	3,162	3,268	1,933	2,117	1,663
	Retention rate %	77	73	77	77	70	72
	National average %	77	77	***	70	69	***
	Pass rate %	78	79	81	84	83	84
	National average %	77	80	***	71	74	***
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	**	**	**	312	260	182
	Retention rate %	**	**	**	71	61	75
	National average %	***	***	***	68	69	***
	Pass rate %	**	**	**	51	63	56
	National average %	***	***	***	54	58	***

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges). 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 2000/21 to 2002/03: College ISR.

* data provided by the college (not validated)

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

*** 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)	58	33	9	105
Level 2 (intermediate)	49	44	7	55
Level 1 (foundation)	59	33	8	46
Other sessions	59	41	0	17
Totals	56	36	8	223

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