



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Havering Sixth Form College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Business studies](#)

[Information and communications technology](#)

[Sports, leisure and tourism, health and care](#)

[Visual and performing arts and media](#)

[Humanities](#)

[Social sciences](#)

[English and modern foreign languages](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

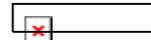
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

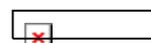
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

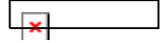


Name of college:	Havering
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	David Blake
Address of college:	Wingletye Lane Hornchurch Essex RM11 3TB
Telephone number:	01708 514400
Fax number:	01708 514488
Chair of governors:	Keith Darvill
Unique reference number:	130445
Name of reporting inspector:	Clive Rowe HMI
Dates of inspection:	7-11 March 2005

Part A: Summary



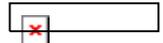
Information about the college



Havering Sixth Form College is located on a single site in the London Borough of Havering, an economically prosperous borough with low unemployment. It is located between Hornchurch and Upminster some five miles inside the M25 ring road. There are now 2,054 students nearly all of whom are aged 16 to 18. The 82 part-time adult students are enrolled on evening courses and study information technology (IT). Recruitment is buoyant and the college has exceeded its recruitment targets comfortably in recent years. In 2004, over 40% of Year 11 students from Havering chose to attend the college while over 25% of students travel from outside the borough. These students are more ethnically diverse.

There is a strong concentration on level 3 courses particularly advanced subsidiary levels (AS levels) and general certificate of education advanced levels (GCE A levels). A steady growth has taken place in the number of students who enrol on pre-vocational courses; 30% of students study for a vocational certificate of education (VCE) or general national vocational qualification (GNVQ). A relatively large proportion of students, about 30%, mix GCE and VCE courses. Some 53% of students are female. Approximately 18% of the college's students are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with 3% in the borough.

How effective is the college?



Provision is good in two of the eight curriculum areas inspected and satisfactory in the other areas. There is no unsatisfactory provision. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- successful actions to improve retention rates

- good personal and academic support for students

- efficient administration and organisation of learning

- good financial management

- extensive enrichment opportunities.

What should be improved

- students' progress at GCE A level and in mathematics at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE)
- the proportion of good and better teaching
- the application of quality assurance processes
- the proportion of students progressing to higher education (HE)
- use of value added data.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high, but pass rates are low on several courses. Teaching is mostly satisfactory though the needs of the more able students are not always met. Students' work is monitored carefully at course level and learning facilitators are highly valued. Insufficient progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.
Business studies	Good. Pass and retention rates are high on GCE A-level courses, but pass rates are below average on VCE and GNVQ courses. The quality of teaching and learning is high and students are supported well. Assessment is consistent, supportive and rigorous. Curriculum managers are unclear as to how far their responsibilities extend in developing and monitoring the courses for which they are accountable.

Information and communications technology	Good. Pass and retention rates on level 3 courses are high. While most teaching and learning is good the needs of some of the more able students are not being met. Assessment and marking are rigorous and fair, and support for students is well planned. Students' achievements on level 2 courses and key skills are unsatisfactory.
Sports, leisure and tourism, health and care	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on most pre-vocational courses, but retention rates are low. Teaching and learning in health and social care and leisure, travel and tourism are good. There is some poor teaching in sport and the assessment of students' progress is unsatisfactory. Students take full advantage of the wide range of enrichment activities.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. High standards of students' practical work are a strong feature of most courses and the teaching in art and design is good. Many students do not reach the standards predicted for them from their prior attainment levels. Assessment practices are rigorous and students are supported well although management information is not always used effectively. Unsuitable accommodation in some dance, workshop and rehearsal areas restricts teaching methods.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses. Teaching is satisfactory but, in some lessons, more able students are not encouraged to work to their full potential. Day-to-day departmental administration is good, but targets for improvement are not clearly identified through self assessment.
Social sciences	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for law is outstanding . Pass and retention rates are high on most courses although pass rates were low on GCE A-level psychology and AS-level government and politics in 2004. Most teaching is at least satisfactory, but in some lessons there is insufficient challenge to learning for the more able students. Support for students is very good and curriculum management is effective.
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. Pass and retention rates are satisfactory or better across most subjects, but many students do not reach the standards predicted for them. Students receive good personal support from staff. Day-to-day management of the curriculum is good. The self-assessment report contains inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

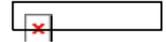
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, students' pass rates have risen in line with national averages, but the progress made by students taking GCE A-level courses compared to that expected on the basis of their GCSE grades is unsatisfactory. Students' achievements have been significantly below expectations in each of the last four years. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The college has placed a strong focus on improving teaching and learning through investment in support for learning, revisions to the lesson observations scheme and a programme of staff development. Curriculum management is satisfactory, but there are several examples of weaknesses in the application of quality assurance processes. The self-assessment report in several curriculum areas either contains inaccuracies or does not provide sufficient detail. Staff and governors make little use of value added measures to enable them to make accurate judgements about the achievement of students in the subjects for which they are responsible. Performance management procedures are satisfactory. The college's strategic aims are

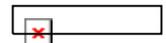
make a valuable contribution to the determination of the strategic direction of the college. Financial management is sound. The college enjoys a good reputation in the local community. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



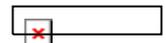
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The proportion of black, minority ethnic students at the college has grown rapidly over the last four years and most achieve well and are integrated fully into the college community. There is a comprehensive equal opportunities policy and related topics are featured in tutorials and teaching programmes. In some tutorials, enrichment activities and many lessons, teachers promote effective understanding of moral and cultural issues. Support for students with physical disabilities is good and there is appropriate access to nearly all buildings. Resources for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good and students with basic skills needs are supported well. The college meets statutory requirements in relation to race relations and special educational needs and disabilities. It is making satisfactory progress in its arrangements for safeguarding young people in education.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. The college has brought together academic and pastoral support systems and has set up effective tracking and liaison systems for all staff involved in supporting students. There is good subject-specific additional support. The Learning Zone is a valued and very effective learning support facility both for those already identified as having specific needs and as a drop-in centre which students can access readily. Members of the college's staff work in complementary networks which are effective in supporting students at risk of leaving their courses or those who are underperforming. Induction and enrolment procedures are generally effective in helping students make the transition from school to college. The college has so far been relatively unsuccessful in raising students' aspirations and in challenging their preconceptions about HE. Currently, 57% of students progress to HE. This percentage has not changed significantly over the last five years.

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

- enrichment opportunities

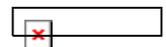
- the academic and personal support provided

- access to IT
- trips and work experience opportunities
- learning facilitators.

What they feel could be improved

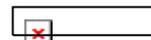
- lack of recreation spaces
- too many course reviews
- some tutorials
- some classrooms
- length of lessons.

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 Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole



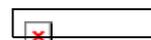
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	67	27	6
Learning 16-18	64	31	5

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. Data on students' achievements, drawn from the individualised learner records for 2001/02 and 2002/03, were provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2003/04. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses.

2. Students' achievements are satisfactory. In 2004, retention rates on level 3 courses were in line with the high sector average although pass rates were below average. On level 2 courses achievement is unsatisfactory. On GCE A-level courses, the proportion of students achieving the grades expected of them on the basis of their GCSE results has been significantly below the national average in each of the last four years. Black and minority ethnic students, including African Caribbean and Bangladeshi students, achieve high pass rates. Students' attainment in lessons is no more than satisfactory. The proportion of students gaining high grades is small in most subjects in relation to sixth form college averages, though not in relation to value added expectations.

16 to 18 year olds

3. Over 90% of full-time students aged 16 to 18 follow advanced level courses. Less than 1% of students follow a foundation programme. Some 30% of level 3 students study pre-vocational courses and a similar proportion combine a VCE programme with a GCE A-level subject. Psychology and law account for over 10% of the provision.

4. Retention rates are in line with the national average although there are significant variations among courses. For example, retention rates are high on all GCE A-level science, mathematics, computing and IT courses, but they are below national averages in religious studies and on many GNVQ courses. Current retention rates are improving on most courses. The pass rate on level 3 courses was 3% below the national average in 2002 and 4% below in 2003. Pass rates were high in GCE law, economics, geography, history, computer science, IT and German, but low in GCE psychology, Spanish, chemistry and biology.

5. Pass rates on vocational and pre-vocational courses vary widely. For example, in 2004, on the

advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) travel and tourism and AVCE IT courses, pass rates were high at 100% and 95% respectively, but in the business AVCE double award and the business intermediate GNVQ pass rates were low at 62% and 50% respectively. Pass rates on the legal secretaries' diploma were 100% but for the Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) course in administration the pass rate was 64% and 33% at level 2.

6. Many students do not achieve as well as might be expected given their GCSE grades. Efforts to improve GCE A-level achievement have not been effective. In 2004, value added data show that only in GCE law and general studies and AS-level mathematics did students achieve significantly better than expected. In 27% of GCE A-level and AS-level subjects students' achievements were significantly below expectations.

7. Females achieve better than males. In 2004, the gap was 6%, although there is little difference between genders in the achievement of high grades.

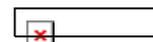
8. Achievements at level 2 are unsatisfactory in many subjects, particularly in GCSE mathematics, where just 33% attain a higher grade pass, and in key skills IT. However, between 2003 and 2004, in GCSE English language the higher grade pass rate rose from 46% to 66%.

9. The proportion of lessons observed during the inspection where students' attainment was judged to be good or better was 55%, which is well below the national average. In most lessons, students work hard and acquire full sets of course notes, but too many remain very dependent on the teacher to plan and direct their work. Few students ask probing questions. Their coursework assignments are usually well structured and competent, but rarely show signs of scholarship or originality. Most use information and learning technology (ILT) competently and develop their research, analytical and practical skills satisfactorily. Only 57% of students progress to HE. Of these, a significantly larger proportion is from the science, social science and humanities curriculum areas than from other curriculum areas.

10. The college provides a wide range of enrichment activities. For example, over the last few years in sport, a large number of students have successfully represented the eastern region at the British Colleges Sports Competitions. A number of current and past students have represented the county in a wide range of sports and some have also represented their country. Performing arts students have visited New York and Paris recently and media students have visited television studios. In music, dance and drama there is a high level of participation by students. Geology students also benefit from a strong fieldwork tradition and the majority of students on vocational courses undertake work experience. However, in information and communications technology (ICT) and some social science subjects not all students have opportunities to take part in appropriate enrichment activities. There is a lack of work experience in media art and design.

11. Students' attendance in the week of the inspection was 82%.

Quality of education and training



12. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching and learning were graded by inspectors in 135 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 67% of these, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in 6%. Teaching was very good or excellent in 26% of the lessons observed. Most lessons are planned well and organised carefully; in nearly all, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The teaching covers the requirements of the examination specifications effectively, but rarely stimulates or inspires students. As the college's self-assessment report acknowledges there are several subjects where there is some unsatisfactory teaching. These include sport, key skills IT, performing arts and media, mathematics, and humanities. The only curriculum areas where no unsatisfactory teaching was observed were business and social sciences.

13. Where teaching is most successful, lesson plans include detailed information on how different needs will be met and time is allocated accordingly. In these lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and make effective use of question and answer sessions. Larger proportions of good or better teaching and learning were observed in lessons that involved a mixture of group, individual and whole-class activities. In many lessons, there is effective use of ILT but, in some lessons, there is an over use of one particular method, often a Powerpoint presentation. Some students benefit from good e-learning programmes that allow them to assess their own progress. In contrast, there are also subjects, for example, in the social sciences, which make too little use of available technologies. Limited access to computers in some classrooms is sometimes a reason.

14. In the small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons, classroom management is poor. Teaching fails to gain students' interest and they become bored and unco-operative. Teachers' explanations are sometimes too long or the work set can not be completed in the time available. In these lessons too little learning takes place.

15. Students' learning was judged to be good or better in 64% of lessons. Students are well motivated, diligent and work purposefully. By the end of most lessons students make at least satisfactory progress. Most VCE students in IT, science, leisure and recreation, and travel and tourism develop their research and practical skills appropriately. In a second year physics lesson, students moved from a position of bemused uncertainty to one in which they demonstrated a real understanding of radioactive decay. Using a website simulation, they successfully predicted and drew the graphical outcome. In performing arts and media, humanities, social sciences, English and modern foreign languages, students showed over the course of the lesson they could apply new technical vocabulary confidently. This is not the case in all lessons. In some lessons, students are not confident enough to share their ideas in whole-class discussions. While most students show a satisfactory understanding of recent work, they are less secure when asked to apply their knowledge and understanding more generally.

16. Teachers and members of the support staff are well qualified. All teachers have a professional teaching qualification or are working towards one and many have second specialist degrees. All members of staff have good opportunities for relevant professional and college-based staff development activities and the take up rate is satisfactory. The development programme is well planned although the college recognises that its management training is less well developed.

17. The college campus is compact, but attractive. Since the last inspection, many improvements have been made to the buildings, accommodation and learning resources. Most classrooms are well maintained; many classrooms and corridors have stimulating and vibrant posters and other suitable wall displays. Some of the accommodation for visual and performing arts is not fit for its purpose and the sports hall used for dance is unsuitable. The college is aware of limitations in its accommodation and has a realistic building and refurbishment programme to address most of the deficiencies.

18. Resources are of a high standard. A significant investment in IT has been effectively planned and implemented. Students have good access to up-to-date ICT and other resources in attractive, well-equipped independent learning areas. Learning resources are kept up to date and learning areas are well used by students across all curriculum areas. All members of staff have been issued with laptops and the college's intranet is now used much more widely, not least for cross-college e-mail communications.

19. The college provides a healthy and safe environment for students. Health and safety procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed. Appropriate systems are in place including comprehensive risk assessments and records of action to control risks. The college has adopted the London Borough of Havering's Child Protection Policy, but the college plans to adapt this to create a young adults policy. All members of staff are briefed on child protection issues, but have not received recent formal training in this area. The college has invested in building alterations and improved signage to meet the requirements of disability discrimination legislation although two classrooms in one building remain inaccessible to students with mobility difficulties. Social and recreational areas for students indoors are also limited.

20. Assessment is fair, accurate and meets the needs of awarding bodies, although it varies in its

thoroughness. Six weekly reviews provide an effective assessment mechanism to help judge how well students are achieving. The close tracking of students' progress is bringing about improvements to students' retention rates and performance. There is much good assessment practice at course level and a college-wide assessment policy is building on and disseminating this good practice. External moderation confirms the accuracy of the college's assessment practices. Reports to parents make clear judgements and reflect students' progress accurately.

21. The use made of value added analysis in the assessment and monitoring process is unsatisfactory. Most teachers have had no recent relevant training and some make little use of the data available to them. Senior managers question the statistical validity of the value added system chosen and make only selective use of it. They do not disseminate the headline data fully and trends show a serious and sustained decline from 1994 to 2000 and show that students' achievements have been significantly below average in each year since.

22. The college offers a broad curriculum of AS-level and GCE A-level with over 40 subjects taught. The response to students' interest for more pre-vocational courses has been good. Provision at level 2 for full-time students is appropriate. There is very little foundation provision. Curriculum planning and management are satisfactory. The college's provision is socially inclusive, ensuring good access for all students. The college plans its provision carefully taking into account local educational needs and requirements. The management of key skills is satisfactory and the college actively promotes the achievement of key skills.

23. Links with parents are good and there are satisfactory links with partners in the community. Many of these partners speak highly of the college's work. There are several productive links with external organisations and local schools although these do not take place in all curriculum areas. In business, there are productive relationships with a range of appropriate local businesses.

24. Guidance and support for students are good. Arrangements to ensure that all new students are placed on the most appropriate courses are efficient and, for the most part, effective. In the college's own survey, 84% of students felt that they had been well advised and were content with their programmes.

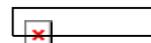
25. The tutorial provision is managed well. In addition to daily contact with personal tutors for registration and to deal with any administrative matters, all students have a weekly tutorial as part of the college's extended tutorial programme. The quality of the materials and of their delivery varies, but further development is being carried out and new materials are in preparation. In the week of the inspection, all tutors were delivering a themed extended tutorial focused on International Women's Day. There is no regular observation of tutorials to assess the quality of this aspect of pastoral support.

26. Students and teachers show a good awareness of equality and diversity issues. The college has a caring ethos and actively promotes equality and inclusion. The college's policy on attendance and punctuality is managed effectively through common procedures across all curriculum areas.

27. Students with specific learning needs receive very effective support. For example, there is specialist help for dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. Students with disabilities are supported well. Learning mentors closely monitor and support students on probation. Support for students on their programmes is good. The recently introduced learning facilitators, attached to particular courses, are valued highly by students and teachers. The subject-specific advice provided in class and in the popular Learning Zone is highly effective.

28. Careers education and guidance and support for students as they prepare to leave the college are good. A Connexions personal adviser is attached to the college and a Connexions careers adviser supports the work of college staff two days a week, focusing largely on individual interviews with students identified by the college as having particular needs. The Connexions advisers are not involved sufficiently in the self-assessment and action planning of the college's careers services. The self-assessment report does not fully acknowledge the low rates of progression from the college into HE.

Leadership and management



29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, students' pass rates have risen in line with national averages. In each of the last four years students' progress on GCE A-level courses has been below that expected on the basis of their GCSE grades. The achievement of college targets for students' success rates is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection, effective action has been taken to address weaknesses that were identified in students' punctuality and the use of ILT to support learning. The weakness identified in relation to the lesson observation scheme has been addressed through recent revisions to the process. There has been a strong focus on improving teaching and learning through investment in support for learning and staff development. There are encouraging signs that this investment is proving successful, for example, in ICT and business. The college enjoys a good reputation in the local community.

30. Leadership by the principal and senior managers is satisfactory. The college's strategic aims are clear and understood by most staff. Teachers and governors have been involved in reviewing the college's mission and in setting the college's objectives. The strategic objectives address weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. The management structure has been revised recently to provide a stronger basis on which to meet these objectives. Roles and responsibilities of senior staff are clear. There are regular communications with all staff through briefings, bulletins and staff meetings. Frequent e-mails keep staff well informed. However, members of the support staff have not had sufficient involvement in reviewing the college's priorities. The action plans associated with the college's strategic objectives lack precision in relation to measures of success, key milestones, resource implications and strategies for monitoring and evaluation. Senior managers have been reluctant at times to share some key information about the performance of the college. There is a clear commitment to partnership working in the local community with well-established links with partner schools. These links support effective transition for school leavers, but not all curriculum areas have yet established links and the college is taking action to address this.

31. Leadership and management are satisfactory in all curriculum areas inspected. There is much effective administration and routine operational management at course level, for example, in general studies and on courses in English and modern foreign languages. There have been good measures to improve teaching and learning in ICT. However, quality assurance processes are not applied effectively in sport. Some weaknesses identified through self-assessment are not addressed effectively in science and mathematics. Management accountability in business is not clear to all staff.

32. Quality assurance and self-assessment are unsatisfactory. There have been improvements in the monitoring of teaching and learning and there are clear guidelines and protocol for lesson observations. There is detailed analysis of retention and pass rates data in the self-assessment report. However, there are weaknesses in the application of quality assurance procedures in several curriculum areas. In 2003/04, the college's monitoring of teaching and learning did not take sufficient account of weaknesses and many teachers still do not have a clear understanding of the use of value added measures in self-assessment. Some of the quality assurance paperwork is cumbersome. There are instances of the moderation of curriculum self-assessment reports which has taken place without adequate consultation with curriculum managers.

33. Performance management of staff is satisfactory. Members of staff have individual development plans which are used as the basis of the college's staff development plan. Teachers and members of the support staff have good opportunities for staff development and in particular for the improvement of teaching and learning. Senior managers take effective action to address weaknesses identified in lesson observations. Arrangements for the performance management of the senior team are unsatisfactory. There has been no systematic management training for middle managers or for the newly restructured senior team. There is no staff handbook.

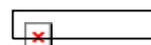
34. College information systems are managed well. Transition to the new college information system was carried out effectively. Members of staff have good access to data on their laptops and are able to generate useful reports on students' progress. There is an annual schedule of reports which are provided for managers. The college has a good record of data returns to the local LSC.

35. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. There is a systematic approach to addressing issues of equality and diversity at policy-making level. The equality and diversity group has analysed the achievements of different groups carefully and identified areas for development. There are clear responsibilities for implementing equality and diversity policies at all levels and there is good achievement of objectives in equality and diversity operational plans. The involvement of students in reviewing policies and the promotion of equal opportunities is effective. The college's code of respect is well understood and the college's approach to addressing the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 has been sensitive and rigorous. The impact of equality and diversity policies on planning learning is not yet consistent and curriculum teams do not yet have enough information at course level about the achievements of different groups of students.

36. Governors are involved effectively in developing the college's vision and strategic objectives. They monitor the college's self-assessment report closely. New governors receive a good induction and the training needs of all governors are assessed each year. The annual conference is used effectively for updating governors on local and national issues affecting post-16 education as well as college and governance issues. Governors have good opportunities for contact with staff and students and a large proportion attend the college on an annual visiting day, often visiting lessons and other activities. Governors regularly monitor their performance against targets. Attendance at meetings was good in 2003/04, but below the college's target. The quality assurance committee scrutinises the college's pass and retention rates carefully, but governors have not had sufficient information to enable them to judge adequately the progress of students in relation to their prior attainment. For example, governors were not sufficiently aware of the long-term decline in value added scores of students taking GCE A levels.

37. Financial management is good. There has been continued strong financial management over a period of significant growth. The management of resources is good. Senior managers pay attention to efficiency measures when allocating staffing resources. The average class size in lessons observed during the inspection was 14.6. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses

- good academic and personal support by learning facilitators

- o effective tracking of students' progress at course level.

Weaknesses

- o unsatisfactory students' achievements on several courses
- o insufficiently challenging work set for more able students
- o lack of progress in addressing self-assessment shortcomings.

Scope of provision

38. There are currently 460 full-time students aged 16 to 18 studying courses in science and mathematics, mostly at level 3. The range of provision includes AS-level and GCE A-level biology, mathematics, further mathematics, physics, chemistry, electronics, environmental conservation, VCE science and GCSE mathematics and science. Key skills application of number is taught at levels 1 and 2. City and Guilds numeracy has been introduced recently. Some 160 students are studying GCSE mathematics.

Achievement and standards

39. Students' achievements are satisfactory. On most AS-level and GCE A-level courses pass rates are close to national averages, but on GCE A-level biology, AS-level physics and chemistry they are well below. Achievements on GCSE mathematics are unsatisfactory and entry requirements have been raised in an attempt to improve pass rates. Retention rates are high. There is good progression to HE. During the inspection attendance was 82%.

40. The proportion of students gaining high grades is below the national average on most AS-level and GCE A-level courses in relation to sixth form college averages though not in relation to predictions based on students' GCSE attainment. On the AS-level mathematics course, students achieve better grades than those predicted on the basis of their GCSE scores, but the achievements of students on GCE A-level chemistry and physics in 2004 were significantly below those expected.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	178	155	182
		% retention	79	76	85
		% pass rate	19	14	34
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	159	140	132
		% retention	92	87	94
		% pass rate	90	80	83

GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	76	98	77
		% retention	99	100	99
		% pass rate	85	88	88
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	271	211	272
		% retention	89	91	92
		% pass rate	72	81	73
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	136	155	122
		% retention	85	100	99
		% pass rate	90	99	93
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	34	28	25
		% retention	94	96	100
		% pass rate	89	100	92

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

Quality of education and training

41. Teaching and learning on most courses are satisfactory. Lesson planning is thorough and the use of ILT in mathematics is growing. In the most successful lessons, teachers use challenging questions and provide opportunities for individual, paired and group work. In the least successful lessons, teachers provide too much background information and allow students too little scope to ask or answer questions. Students in these lessons do not learn as much as expected and many of the more able students are not sufficiently stimulated.

42. The quality of students' written, spoken and practical work is satisfactory and occasionally good. Students carry out practical work competently, giving appropriate attention to accuracy and health and safety. AS-level students in chemistry and biology have adapted well to the use of complex equipment.

43. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Many are examiners in their subjects and all participate in relevant training and subject updating. The technicians provide good support. Resources for teaching are up to date and science laboratories are well equipped. Students' work is displayed attractively and there is much useful information on the college's intranet which students can access from home.

44. Assessment is rigorous and carried out regularly. Students receive valuable, detailed feedback from well-planned tests. Most teachers maintain comprehensive records of students' progress. Marking is good, detailed and includes guidance on how students might improve. Personal tutors monitor progress against individual plans. Six-weekly reports provide students with detailed assessments of progress against target grades.

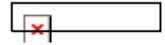
45. Students' additional support needs are identified through good initial assessment. Students with a grade B at intermediate GCSE mathematics now follow a bridging course while on programme to enhance their mathematical skills. Effective support is given to individual students by subject teachers and learning facilitators, both during and outside lessons. Students make good use of the help available in the Learning Zone.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular meetings and good teamwork contribute to good departmental organisation. Work in the curriculum areas is well organised and managed. Documentation is detailed and use is made of value added information to analyse students'

achievements. Operational plans identify areas for improvement, but have not adequately addressed some issues in the self-assessment report. Lesson observations are carried out, but have not yet brought about improvements in standards of teaching and learning. There are too few opportunities for the sharing of good practice. Staff are aware of equal opportunities issues and apply their knowledge sensitively.

Business studies



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCE A-level courses

- high and improving retention rates on all courses

- good teaching and learning

- well-judged support for students

- good assessment practices.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on pre-vocational courses

- inadequate definition of managers' roles and responsibilities.

Scope of provision

47. There are 687 students aged 16 to 18 on business and related courses studying at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Courses include a GNVQ foundation programme, a first diploma in business, VCE business with 3, 6, and 12 unit provision, a level 3 legal secretaries' diploma, and provision for administration students. There are 283 students on AS-level and GCE A-level business courses in economics, business, and accounts. Recruitment is buoyant and students' attendance during the inspection was above national and college averages.

Achievement and standards

48. There are high pass and retention rates on GCE A-level courses and below national average pass rates on VCE and GNVQ courses. Value added data indicate that most students achieve in line with expectations at both AS level and GCE A level. The pass rate for legal secretaries was 100% in 2004. On the foundation programme, pass and retention rates are at least satisfactory and show an improving trend.

49. Students demonstrate a good grasp of the key concepts necessary for them to pass their examinations. For example, on a foundation level GNVQ business lesson, students showed a sound understanding of the main business sectors and were keen to display their knowledge. When tested, most students reach a pass standard though relatively few produce answers that show that they read around the topic or do more than the necessary minimum. GCE students display a greater ability to apply their growing understanding of a subject to less familiar contexts than VCE students. The latter, however, display particularly good organisational skills and some show initiative in their research work. All students use technical terms appropriately in lessons and in their written work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	*	16	20
		% retention	*	56	90
		% pass rate	*	67	50
GCE A2 economics	3	No. of starts	22	42	46
		% retention	100	93	100
		% pass rate	91	92	98
AS-level accounting	3	No. of starts	25	62	56
		% retention	96	94	95
		% pass rate	75	62	79
GCE A2 business	3	No. of starts	91	124	86
		% retention	99	99	100
		% pass rate	98	93	99
GNVQ double award business	3	No. of starts	46	18	20
		% retention	74	78	70
		% pass rate	79	93	69
Legal secretaries diploma	3	No. of starts	17	19	21
		% retention	71	100	90
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

50. Teaching and learning are good on most courses. Carefully prepared lesson plans and schemes of work provide a good basis for ensuring that students learn effectively. Relationships are good and lessons proceed on the basis of mutual respect. Teachers display good subject knowledge and

make use of a suitable range of teaching strategies. In an administration lesson, the college's health and safety officer updated students on how the college was responding to recent legislation on health and safety. The students asked thoughtful questions that reflected their interest and growing understanding of the issues raised.

51. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic. Nearly all take part regularly in relevant training and are up to date with recent subject developments. In a recent drive to improve teaching and learning all staff are now observed by senior managers, and peer observations encourage the sharing of good practice. Resources and accommodation are good and IT provision is well used. The library contains a well-stocked section of books and other resources for business students.

52. Business students benefit from a wide range of subject-specific and broader enrichment activities. All VCE and GNVQ students take part in work experience which broadens their understanding significantly. Students are asked to draw on their experiences frequently and all are keen to do so. Links with local employers are used to good effect, providing opportunities for visits and guest speakers as well as work placements.

53. Assessment is consistent, supportive, rigorous and meets the requirements of the awarding bodies. There is effective tracking of students' progress and students are given suitably detailed and timely feedback on what they need to do to improve. Internal verification of coursework is effective and appropriate actions are taken when necessary. Challenging targets for improvement are set and parents receive detailed reports on students progress six times a year that include actions for improvement.

54. Students benefit from very good support in lessons. Initial assessment identifies additional support needs and the support provided by the full-time learning support facilitators is highly effective and contributes significantly to the good learning seen in most lessons. Tutorial support is good and attendance is monitored satisfactorily.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The three team managers manage day-to-day matters effectively and are aware of the priorities to address weaknesses identified within the self-assessment report and other review documentation. There is a good team spirit, supported by open classrooms, encouraging the sharing of good practice. Satisfactory use is made of the management information available although too little focus is placed on reviewing examination outcomes in relation to value added expectations and the new measures of success for non-GCE courses. Curriculum managers are unclear as to how far their responsibilities extend to promote, develop and monitor progress in the subjects for which they have a responsibility.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- good and improving students' achievements on level 3 courses

- much good teaching

- good learning support for individual students
- effective measures to improve teaching and learning
- good assessment of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory students' achievements on key skills and level 2 courses
- unsatisfactory teaching of the most able students.

Scope of provision

56. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses, mostly at level 3. Courses include AS-level and GCE A-level ICT, and VCE ICT single and double award courses. Level 2 courses include Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) ICT and GCSE applied ICT. Flexible part-time evening courses include City and Guilds 7262 levels 1 to 3, and networking courses covering a range of applications. There are currently 390 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 82 part-time adult students.

Achievement and standards

57. Students' achievements on level 3 courses have improved significantly in the last three years and are now good. Value added data show that most students make good progress. Pass and retention rates are high on most level 3 courses and the proportion of higher grades is above the national average. While the retention rates on level 2 courses are near the national averages, the pass rates are below. Pass rates on key skills courses at both level 2 and level 3 in 2004 were well below the national averages.

58. The standard of students' work at level 3 is high. VCE students demonstrate good research skills when looking for information on networks and communication protocols. They incorporate their results effectively into computer presentations, the best of which use hyperlinks to relevant websites. However, some students' communication skills are poor when presenting their work to the rest of the group. Level 2 students demonstrate some good attainment, such as the ability to incorporate sophisticated macros into spreadsheets. Students have a good attitude to work and the attendance rate at lessons during the inspection was above the national average.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
---------------	-------	------------------	------	------	------

GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	44	15	17
		% retention	80	93	82
		% pass rate	100	50	64
Key skills IT	2	No. of starts	299	487	368
		% retention	96	91	67
		% pass rate	15	21	26
AS-level IT and information	3	No. of starts	71	114	127
		% retention	89	93	92
		% pass rate	84	75	90
AVCE (double award) in ICT	3	No. of starts	45	41	30
		% retention	62	85	100
		% pass rate	100	97	94
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	45	36	46
		% retention	98	94	98
		% pass rate	98	100	91
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	25	28	*
		% retention	92	100	*
		% pass rate	100	96	*

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

59. Most teaching is good, well planned and responsive to the needs of individual students. Teachers provide good encouragement and support for students. They are good at identifying most students' needs and intervene well to help them. Teachers use a mixture of firmness and good humour, and students are encouraged to work hard. Teachers have a good range of technical skills, a good knowledge of their subjects and make good use of the limited range of teaching aids. Where available, data projectors and interactive whiteboards are used well to support teaching and learning. Lessons are often well structured to maintain a brisk pace. A first year VCE single award group planned and tested a spreadsheet to ensure that it met the specifications. Progress was rapid and interest was maintained through short explanations by the teacher interspersed with periods of students working in pairs on their design. Students' learning is good. Students work well together and make useful contributions during lessons.

60. Some lessons do not cater for the needs of the most able students. Extension activities are not always available. Key skills lessons concentrate too much on the use of low level IT skills and have insufficient emphasis on developing and practising new skills appropriate to the level of the course.

61. Resources are satisfactory. Teachers are generally qualified and experienced and good professional development contributes to their effectiveness. The computer system and software meet current industrial standards, and hardware is adequate for the courses taught. The accommodation provides a suitable setting for teaching and learning. Most classrooms are not equipped with fixed data projectors and interactive whiteboards; this limits teaching methods and learning opportunities.

62. Assessment of students' progress is good. Work is marked accurately and internal validation is

carried out appropriately. Good verbal and written feedback is given to students to help them improve the quality of their coursework. Students' progress is monitored and tracked effectively and teachers develop good individual learning plans that take account of initial assessment results. There is some good use of data, but assessment information, including the analysis of performance of different groups of students, is rarely used to guide course and programme development.

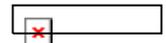
63. There is a good range of courses at level 3. Part-time courses include current interests such as digital imaging and website design. Students have good opportunities to broaden their experiences and enhance their personal development through a variety of enrichment activities, but work experience is only available on the VCE courses.

64. Support for students is good. The open evening and the induction sessions assist students to choose appropriate courses. However, guidance at enrolment is sometimes unsatisfactory and some students are taking inappropriate course combinations. Individual learning needs are diagnosed accurately and students have access to effective additional support throughout their studies. Guidance and support are sensitive to factors such as gender, race and ethnicity. Support is well integrated with courses; the facilitator has excellent IT knowledge and his work is valued by both teachers and students.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are good. Course files are well kept. Annual course reviews have action plans for improvement with target dates for completion. Members of staff work well together and good practice is recognised and shared. Staff development is good. There has been an effective programme to raise teachers' effectiveness. All teachers are encouraged to update their professional qualifications. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, but most students taking ICT courses are white males. Most lessons use good non-stereotypical examples to reinforce learning. Quality assurance procedures do not include a full analysis of performance data.

Sports, leisure and tourism, health and care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- good teaching and learning in health and social care and leisure, travel and tourism

- very good take up and pass rates on enrichment activities

- effective learning support.

Weaknesses

- low and declining retention rates on many courses

- unsatisfactory teaching in sport

- unsatisfactory self-assessment practices in sport.

Scope of provision

66. There are 422 full-time students aged 16 to 18 of whom 180 are on sport courses and 262 on leisure and recreation, travel and tourism and health and social care courses. Most courses are taught at both level 2 and level 3 and include AS-level and GCE A-level sport and physical education, intermediate leisure and tourism, GCSE leisure and tourism and VCE travel and tourism and leisure and recreation. The two VCE courses are offered as 3, 6, 12 or 18 unit options. All full-time sport students have the opportunity to take additional qualifications, such as the community sports leader award.

Achievement and standards

67. Most pass rates are high and improving. In VCE health and social care (double award) and travel and tourism (double award) all students passed in 2004. Retention rates on leisure and recreation courses are very low and unsatisfactory in sport. Most full-time courses show a decline in retention rates in 2004 and some rates have now dropped to below national averages. A large proportion of students on the VCE in health and social care transferred to a local nursing cadet scheme and just 14% completed the course. Retention and pass rates on a number of the enrichment courses are high and significantly above the national averages.

68. Over the last few years, a large number of students have been selected to represent the eastern region at the British Colleges Sport Competitions with much success. The college runs sports teams for men and women in approximately 11 different sports, which compete with success in regional and national competitions. There is some good attainment in lessons. Students in an AS-level sport lesson were able to describe and explain the way a blood cell moves around the body and explain the significance of each of the structures and processes involved. Students follow instructions diligently and build up a sound portfolio of work.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sports, leisure and tourism, health and care, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Community sports leaders award	2	No. of starts	115	85	66
		% retention	83	86	90
		% pass rate	86	84	84
Intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	20	*	18
		% retention	85	*	61
		% pass rate	82	*	91

AVCE (double award) leisure and recreation	3	No. of starts	*	16	23
		% retention	*	81	48
		% pass rate	*	100	91
AVCE (double award) travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	35	20	20
		% retention	40	85	70
		% pass rate	100	94	100
AS-level sport and physical recreation	3	No. of starts	128	107	109
		% retention	92	88	83
		% pass rate	96	84	91
GCE A2 sport and physical education	3	No. of starts	67	84	60
		% retention	99	100	93
		% pass rate	95	92	95

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

69. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching is very good in health and social care, but there is too much unsatisfactory teaching in sport. Lessons are usually planned carefully, but in many the teachers make few demands on students to undertake critical thinking. In the best lessons, the teaching builds on students' prior knowledge effectively and teachers employ a broad range of teaching methods to maintain students' interest. In a health and social care lesson, a careful choice of props helped to explain cell division. In most lessons, students make satisfactory progress and understand what their teachers want them to learn.

70. Teachers are well qualified and keen to pass on their enthusiasm for their subject to students. Many teachers are developing their IT skills effectively. The introduction of additional ILT resources is promoting improvements in teaching and learning. In a GCSE leisure and tourism lesson, students used the Internet effectively to access information on electronic booking systems and demonstrated good IT skills to cut and paste work into their assessment documents. Sports staff make regular use of a good range of e-learning programmes. The teaching accommodation is of a high standard and is well used.

71. Assessment of students' progress is thorough. Coursework is marked carefully and accurately. It indicates clearly how students can improve. In all three curriculum areas, the assessments are well written and provide further guidance on how to achieve the range of grades. There are assessment calendars in leisure and tourism but not in other subjects and students have to negotiate their own amendments when different teachers set the same deadlines.

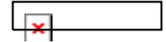
72. Teachers provide very good support. Students benefit from excellent and timely support from subject tutors. They enjoy their tutorial sessions which consider their academic, personal and social targets. In sport and health and social care there are learning facilitators who are graduates in the relevant subject specialism who offer considerable support to students in those areas. This is valued highly by students. The two learning zones provide for students to call in when they require support and both are well used.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are good in health and social care and leisure and tourism, and satisfactory in sport. Staff appraisals are conducted on an annual basis and form a useful way of

identifying staff development needs. Staff development is supported and encouraged by line managers. Teaching observations are undertaken regularly and the feedback is detailed. However, the lesson observation scheme has not identified some weaknesses in teaching observed by inspectors. Members of staff are involved in the self-assessment and review process, but the quality of the reviews in sport is unsatisfactory and does not form a good contribution to the self-assessment review.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- good teaching in art and design
- effective assessment practices
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in GCE A-level dance, AS-level performance studies and music
- poor progress by students on some courses
- insufficient use of management information
- unsuitable accommodation in some dance, workshop and rehearsal areas.

Scope of provision

74. There are 950 full-time students aged 16 to 18 studying courses in art and design, performing arts and media mostly at level 3. Courses include graphic design, product design, dance, theatre studies, music theory, music technology, textiles, interior design and VCE courses in media and art and design. There are GCSE courses in photography, media studies and art. The area contributes widely to the college's enrichment programme which includes drama productions, dance, song writing and individual subsidised tuition on all orchestral instruments.

Achievement and standards

75. Students' achievements are satisfactory and, on most courses, pass and retention rates are close to national averages. Retention and pass rates on VCE programmes are high. On design technology, music technology, media studies and graphic design courses, pass rates are high and in fine art and theatre studies they have improved significantly and are now satisfactory. Pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level dance, AS-level music theory and AS-level performance studies are low. In several subjects, students do not achieve the grades expected of them based on their GCSE scores and in no subject do students significantly exceed expectations.

76. Students are generally confident in their approach to practical work and collaborate effectively with one another during group work. Teamwork is encouraged and students share and develop ideas collectively. Most are able to use appropriate technical and critical vocabulary to express their ideas. This often leads to the development of thoughtful and original work based on sound research. Around 50% of students progress to courses related to the subject area including foundation courses, degree and higher national diploma (HND) courses. Many media students go directly into industry.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE media studies	2	No. of starts	54	56	34
		% retention	89	80	76
		% pass rate	92	98	96
AS-level performance studies	3	No. of starts	66	54	46
		% retention	83	80	93
		% pass rate	80	91	79
AS-level art studies	3	No. of starts	127	120	172
		% retention	86	86	89
		% pass rate	89	89	96
GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	82	121	134
		% retention	96	100	96
		% pass rate	99	99	98
GCE A-level fine art	3	No. of starts	101	109	88
		% retention	97	98	97
		% pass rate	95	95	96
AS-level design technology	3	No. of starts	63	82	81
		% retention	87	95	86
		% pass rate	98	96	91

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

Quality of education and training

77. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, learning objectives are clear and lively discussion and challenging targets encourage students to take appropriate charge of their own learning to explore their own ideas and raise the standard of their work. In a music enrichment session, the teacher carefully nurtured individual creativity among students who were new to the course enabling the group to make very good progress. Art and design lessons are characterised by a brisk pace, stimulating activities, helpful feedback to students and teaching methods that take account of different abilities.

78. Some teaching is unsatisfactory. In the less effective lessons, not enough attention is paid to the differing learning needs of individuals within the class and the needs of the more able students are often ignored. Some teachers do not allow enough opportunity for students to express their views or use subject-specific language and some students learn relatively little.

79. Classrooms and studios display useful information to support the work of students. Learning is also supported by visits which enrich students' experience and contribute to the breadth of their work. Recently, performing arts students have enjoyed a visit to New York art and design students visited galleries in Paris and media students visited television studios. Specialist musical projects have been undertaken in liaison with professional orchestras.

80. Teachers are well qualified and resources are good, with an ample range of computers and software. Students make good use of a wide range of library resources. While most accommodation is appropriate, some of the rehearsal areas for performing arts students are inadequate and some rooms and studio areas are too small restricting the tasks that can be carried out safely by students.

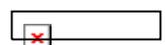
81. Assessment is good. Students' work is marked accurately and meets the requirements of the awarding body. In lessons, there is useful informal feedback and assessment. Good work is praised and inadequate effort is challenged sensitively. Assignments have clear criteria to guide students. In most cases, feedback is clear with helpful directives for improvement. Internal moderation systems are underdeveloped and do not take place on every course.

82. Support for students is good. Subject specialists interview prospective students and identify appropriate prior experience. Each student is screened to identify learning support needs and individual lessons are timetabled in the Learning Zone. Learning facilitators provide good support in their subject areas. Current in-year retention rates show improvement on most courses. Students have target grades based on GCSE scores and progress is checked regularly. Fresh targets are agreed and monitored through the tutorial system. There are good records kept of attendance, personal attitude to work and a system to warn of causes for concern. Students receive good support from personal tutors.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Provision is co-ordinated efficiently. There are effective informal communications and good working relationships between members of staff. The self-assessment reports identify most weaknesses, but there is insufficient evaluation of data. Subject leaders manage their programmes well. Curriculum development does not take enough account of the accommodation needs of students, particularly in relation to rehearsal and studio space.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses at GCE A level
- good support for students
- good assessment practices
- efficient departmental administration.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in some AS-level subjects
- unsatisfactory self-assessment reports
- unsatisfactory teaching for more able students.

Scope of provision

84. The college provides courses for students aged 16 to 18 at AS level and GCE A level in geography, geology, history, philosophy, and religious studies and history at GCSE. GCE A-level general studies is taken by most second year students. Enrolments have remained constant except in general studies where enrolments have increased sharply.

Achievement and standards

85. Pass and retention rates are high in most subjects at GCE A level but, at AS-level, pass rates on almost half the courses are below the national averages. The performances of GCE A-level students, measured against their previous attainment, are generally better at AS level than GCE A level. Only in general studies do students achieve significantly better than expected in both AS-level and GCE A-level examinations.

86. In lessons, students work hard and most are keen to do well. In all subjects, there is effective development of the necessary specialist vocabulary and terminologies, but few students show evidence of reading beyond the minimum required. Students ask few questions although they supply answers willingly when asked. There is no significant difference in the standards of work between genders and insufficient evidence to generalise in respect of ethnicity.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	84	54	74
		% retention	95	96	88
		% pass rate	88	88	94
AS-level geology	3	No. of starts	29	19	40
		% retention	90	84	88
		% pass rate	100	75	89
AS-level religious studies	3	No. of starts	24	30	25
		% retention	96	83	84
		% pass rate	74	60	86
GCE A-level general studies	3	No. of starts	308	506	586
		% retention	85	92	90
		% pass rate	72	78	87
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	41	51	28
		% retention	98	100	100
		% pass rate	98	94	100
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	74	82	74
		% retention	99	94	100
		% pass rate	99	100	95

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

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. Lesson plans are sound. Group work is usually managed effectively with well-judged feedback to the class to ensure that the findings of individual groups are shared by all. Students are competent in using Powerpoint and this contributes to the high quality of many feedback presentations by students. Less successful lessons make few demands upon students and some of the more able students become bored. In a few lessons, work is undertaken at the pace of the slowest students.

88. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Homework is set regularly and recorded carefully. Most marking indicates how students can improve their work. Coursework is organised and monitored efficiently and external reports are complimentary. Well-established systems are in place for teachers and tutors to monitor students' progress and set targets for improvement. Parents are kept informed of the outcomes of the half-termly reviews.

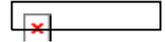
89. Teachers are keen, well qualified and have good subject knowledge. Resources for learning are good. Effective use is made of the college's intranet and CD ROM in geology, geography, general studies and history, but the use of ILT in teaching is still underdeveloped.

90. Students are supported well. Initial information is clear and impartial. Students have the opportunity to consult subject specialists before deciding upon their course of study. Attendance is monitored closely and students register daily with their tutors so that concerns can be addressed promptly. For students causing serious concern, appropriate support is provided.

Leadership and management

91. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the day-to-day management of subjects is good. General studies is very well organised and delivered. Pass rates in most subjects have risen and many now exceed national averages. Support for teachers is inadequate. Too little time is spent by teachers meeting to share good practice and express problems. The accuracy of the self-assessment report is unsatisfactory. There is little analysis of how well students are achieving nor identification of actions to bring about improvement.

Social sciences



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

The contributory grade for law is **outstanding (grade 1)**

Strengths

- high retention rates on all courses

- good teaching and learning in law

- high pass rates on GCE A-level law, sociology and government and politics

- good personal support for students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in GCE A-level psychology and AS-level government and politics in 2004

- unsatisfactory teaching of the most able students

- little use of ILT

- inconsistent monitoring of students' progress.

Scope of provision

92. There are 1,279 students aged 16 to 18 studying AS-level and GCE A-level courses in psychology, law, sociology, and government and politics. Of these, nearly 700 are studying psychology and a further 250 are studying law.

Achievement and standards

93. In law, pass rates are high and students make better progress than might be expected from their earlier GCSE results. GCE A-level pass rates are high in government and politics and sociology, but they are low in the largest subject area, psychology. First year students make at least the expected amount of progress across the social sciences. Almost all complete their courses and a relatively large proportion for the college progress to HE.

94. Students work diligently and slowly acquire the knowledge and understanding that they need to pass examinations. A large number are heavily dependent on their teachers and very few ask questions or challenge ideas unless they are explicitly asked to do so. Many students have limited oral skills at the start of their course, but learn to express themselves with improved fluency over time. The best piece of written work is usually the most recent one.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	208	223	214
		% retention	89	88	87
		% pass rate	83	84	90
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	76	128	129
		% retention	100	98	99
		% pass rate	92	98	99
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	437	458	449
		% retention	85	87	86
		% pass rate	88	75	84
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	188	286	249
		% retention	97	97	98
		% pass rate	89	91	87
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	165	152	125
		% retention	90	81	82
		% pass rate	81	69	84
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	62	83	45
		% retention	97	99	96
		% pass rate	98	98	98

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

Quality of education and training

95. Teaching and learning are satisfactory except in law where they are good. In many lessons,

teachers talk too much and students are not actively involved in learning. In the best lessons, teachers use a broad range of strategies to involve students. Progress is monitored carefully and effective use is made of question and answer sessions to identify how far important information and ideas are understood. In an outstanding AS-level law lesson the teacher devised an exercise to identify the merits, or otherwise, of rules developed by judges for their interpretation of statutes. The exercise produced some thoughtful and perceptive comments from students and the teacher used the interest generated to reinforce some important conclusions. In the least successful lessons, teaching for the most able students is insufficiently challenging. Too many of these students do not learn as much as they can reasonably be expected.

96. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable about their subjects and are keen to pass on their enthusiasm to students. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory except for the lack of computers and related learning technologies in classrooms. There are few opportunities for students to take part in educational trips, listen to visiting speakers or to debate issues relating to their chosen subjects.

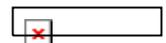
97. The standards of oral and written assessment of students' work are inconsistent. The assessment of students' work and progress in some lessons is exemplary, but in other lessons marking is cursory and some students are given too little guidance on what they need to do to improve. Students in need of additional support from staff in the Learning Action Zone are identified.

98. Personal support for students is very good. All teachers work hard to understand and motivate students. Suitable forms of additional support are provided to help students to become more confident with their speaking skills, which are generally weak. Successful mentoring and support schemes in psychology and sociology have been established.

Leadership and management

99. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and very good in law. Curriculum management is generally sound although it is unsatisfactory in psychology where too many students who take the subject do not succeed. The measures taken to improve this situation have not so far been effective. Some of the strategies to improve teaching and raise retention rates are starting to have a beneficial impact. Teachers are not supported well. They devote too little time to meeting and sharing good practice.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses

- good day-to-day departmental management

- effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- low achievement in GCE A-level Spanish
- low attainment of students on some courses against predicted grades
- inaccurate self-assessment report.

Scope of provision

100. Currently, 919 students study English and modern foreign languages, all but one of whom are aged 16 to 18. The English curriculum area offers three AS-level and three GCE A-level English courses. The GCSE English course has almost 150 students, but relatively few take GCSE English literature. In modern foreign languages, the college offers French, German, Spanish and Italian at AS level and GCE A level. Students of English outnumber the linguists by approximately three to one.

Achievement and standards

101. Students' retention and pass rates are satisfactory. Most pass and retention rates are high and improving in English though many students do not do as well as value added measures suggest they should in GCE A-level English literature and AS-level English language and literature. The pass rate on GCSE English in 2004 improved considerably. Pass and retention rates in examinations in modern foreign languages, with the significant exception of Spanish, are high. Students make good progress in GCE A-level German in relation to their GCSE profiles, but their achievements fall significantly below expectations in French. In no subject in this curriculum area do students' achievements significantly exceed expectations.

102. The quality of students' work in lessons is satisfactory. Most written work is of an appropriate standard and shows a slow, but steady improvement over time. A significant minority of students have poor oral skills. Some are slow to volunteer answers and need encouragement. More able students can speak at length and sustain a reasoned argument. In modern foreign languages, students' listening and comprehension skills are developing well. While most students speak with some fluency on familiar and rehearsed topics, many still make basic grammatical errors.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and modern foreign languages, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English language 1 year	2	No. of starts	195	139	139
		% retention	83	84	84
		% pass rate	57	53	66
AS-level English language 1 year	3	No. of starts	114	148	116
		% retention	86	89	89
		% pass rate	97	86	93
AS-level English	3	No. of starts	92	78	105

language and literature 1 year		% retention	95	97	89
		% pass rate	95	79	91
AS-level French 1 year	3	No. of starts	44	50	49
		% retention	91	96	82
		% pass rate	60	100	90
GCE A2 English literature	3	No. of starts	76	73	70
		% retention	97	100	97
		% pass rate	97	99	99
GCE A2 English language	3	No. of starts	38	74	88
		% retention	97	100	98
		% pass rate	97	99	98

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

Quality of education and training

103. Teaching is mostly good and the learning is mainly satisfactory. Teachers know their students well and are aided by regular updates from the Know Your Students programme. They tailor tasks and activities carefully to meet the learning needs of most students. In some lessons, however, more able students learning is not extended sufficiently and they work well within their comfort zone.

104. In the best lessons, teachers use paired and small group work well to assess students' learning so that they can give immediate help and guidance where necessary. They encourage students to think for themselves and be more independent. For example, over 20 AS-level students of 8 different nationalities worked enthusiastically in German following a framework of questions provided by their teacher. The culmination of the group work was a detailed picture of the situation of asylum seekers and other immigrants in Germany.

105. Resources for English and modern foreign languages are good. Teachers are well qualified and foreign language assistants are deployed effectively. Wall displays are colourful, informative and celebrate students' achievement. The library is popular and has welcoming quiet areas and a good book stock. Enrichment opportunities include study trips abroad and visits to theatres and cinemas.

106. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Students value the six-week assessment exercise because it leaves them in no doubt about their rate of progress. Course handbooks are presented attractively and are full of important hints and information on how to succeed. Similarly, high-quality oral and written feedback makes students realise what they need to do to improve. The accuracy of internal marking is verified in external moderators' reports.

107. Students are supported well. Staff and students have welcomed the newly devised system of mentors and facilitators situated in the Learning Zone and are confident that it has helped to improve retention rates. Students rate pastoral and academic support as one of the main strengths of the college. Lesson plans almost invariably contain information about the support and help that is available. However, there is seldom any mention of more able students and of agreed strategies to help them extend their knowledge and understanding.

Leadership and management

108. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the day-to-day management is good. Course materials, including handouts, are of a high quality and are used effectively. Students find course handbooks informative and helpful. They are well presented and are an excellent point of reference. The self-assessment report, however, contains inaccuracies and inconsistencies, and is not

sufficiently self-critical. The head of English and the co-ordinator for languages are good role models and help to promote a good team-spirit. It is too early to assess the impact of the college's changes to leadership and management on the subjects in this curriculum area.

Part D: College data

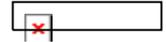
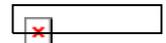


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	1	29
2	12	44
3	85	24
4/5	0	0
Other	2	3
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,198	0	13
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	183	1	2
Business administration, management and professional	667	1	7
Information and communication technology	1,248	28	14
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	487	0	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public	100	3	1

services			
Visual and performing arts and media	939	1	10
Humanities	2,472	2	28
English, languages and communication	1,543	1	17
Foundation programmes	67	0	1
Total	8,904	37	98

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		1	Starters excluding transfers	141	61	108	3
	Retention rate %	76	61	96	100	0	100
	National average %	81	75	83	71	72	73
	Pass rate %	66	89	86	0	0	50
	National average %	67	75	72	68	73	75
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,103	1,413	1,123	1	0	8
	Retention rate %	81	84	85	0	0	100
	National average %	80	81	81	71	70	69
	Pass rate %	82	89	84	0	0	25
	National average %	84	84	86	69	70	74
3	Starters excluding transfers	6,850	5,899	6,292	38	12	24
	Retention rate %	85	87	91	61	8	64
	National average %	80	89	90	65	72	73
	Pass rate %	75	84	84	70	100	73
	National average %	86	87	88	67	88	77

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges). Where applicable, the national rates used in the table are for GFE colleges which are grouped in the LSC benchmarking data as colleges with a high widening participation factor.

Sources of information:

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

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

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)	67	27	6	109
Level 2 (intermediate)	52	40	8	23
Level 1 (foundation)	67	33	0	3
Totals	64	30	6	135

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

