

Barnfield College

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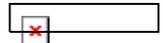
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Basic information about the college



| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Name of college: | Barnfield College |
| Type of college: | General Further Education |
| Principal: | James Horrocks |
| Address of college: | Enterprise Way Luton LU3 4BU |
| Telephone number: | 01582 569 500 |
| Fax number: | 01582 569 539 |
| Chair of governors: | Stephen Howarth |
| Unique reference number: | 130599 |

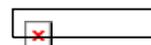
Name of reporting inspector:

Tony Nasta HMI

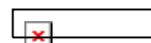
Dates of inspection:

3-14 February 2003

Part A: Summary

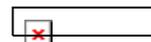


Information about the college



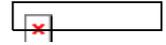
Barnfield College is a large further education (FE) college. It has four campuses in Luton and a fifth campus for adult students in Bedford. There is extensive provision in community centres, much of it in wards with high levels of economic and social deprivation. Just under 29,000 students were enrolled in 2001/02. Using the measure of full-time equivalent students, approximately 45% of students were aged 16 to 18. Using the measure of total student enrolments, about 80% of students were aged 19 or over. Many adults are enrolled on part-time vocational, basic skills and information and communication technology (ICT) courses, especially at entry and foundation levels. The vast majority of students aged 16 to 18 are recruited from maintained schools in Luton. Performance in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Luton is well below the national average where, in 2001/02, only 38% of young people obtained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. With the exception of one 11 to 18 secondary school, all of the maintained schools in Luton are 11 to 16 schools. There is a large sixth form college in the town, which provides an extensive range of General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced-level (A-level) courses. Given the close proximity of Luton Sixth Form College, Barnfield College does not provide a full-time general education programme. Instead, it concentrates upon vocational courses. There are Centres of Vocational Excellence that specialise in advanced vocational training. These are in computer integrated networking systems and motor vehicle engineering. There is substantial provision of work-based training in engineering and in hairdressing. The college has a separate unit, Barnfield Training Services, to manage this aspect of provision. Approximately 49% of the college's student enrolments come from minority ethnic groups, reflecting the large minority population ethnic in the immediate catchment area. In its mission, the college stresses its commitment to being an inclusive community, achieving cost effectiveness and utilising technology to promote learning.

How effective is the college?



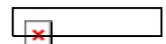
Students on the vocational courses in which the college specialises demonstrate high standards of attainment. Many enter the college with low prior achievements and make good progress. Teaching and learning are good and students enjoy working in secure and well-furnished accommodation with excellent specialist equipment. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college has successfully widened participation, through its extensive provision in the local community. It is a key partner in contributing to the economic regeneration of Luton and the surrounding area. The quality of teaching and learning and the students' achievements are outstanding in four out of the twelve curriculum areas inspected, good in five, and satisfactory in three.

Key strengths



- the excellent progress made by students with low prior achievements
- the outstanding provision in hairdressing, beauty therapy, computing, ICT and health and care courses
- the consistently strong guidance and support for students
- the generally good standards of teaching, learning and attainment
- the excellent specialist equipment to support the curriculum
- the development of specialist vocational courses which address local employment needs
- the outstanding record of widening participation
- outstanding leadership and management
- effective financial management and good value for money.

What should be improved

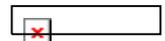


- the standards of teaching of some part-time staff

- the retention of adult students on level 1 courses
- the low levels of achievement of trainees of the modern apprenticeship framework.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

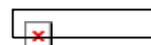


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

| Area | Overall judgements about provision, and comment |
|--|---|
| Construction | Good. Students benefit from working with highly specialist equipment and the standard of their practical work is good. Retention and pass rates are good. The teaching of practical aspects is better than the teaching of theory and key skills. There is an over-reliance on part-time teachers. |
| Engineering | Good. Students make good progress as a result of good teaching and close attention to their individual needs. Many start with low prior achievements and progress to advanced-level courses. However, key skills are not well developed and there has been unsatisfactory achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework. |
| Business and management | Good. There is good teaching, guidance and curriculum management and students have access to modern ICT resources. Pass rates are good on level 1 and level 2 courses, but need to be improved on level 3 courses. There is insufficient work-based assessment on the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) accountancy courses. |
| Information and communication technology | Outstanding. High standards are maintained on the specialist computing courses at the technology centre and on the large range of courses taught in the community. There are excellent specialist resources. Students take pride in their work. Leadership and management of the diverse range of courses are excellent. |
| Hospitality and catering | Satisfactory. There is careful monitoring of students' attendance and progress and a record of good student retention and pass rates. Effective links with industry have been developed. Students' practical skills of food preparation are insufficiently developed and poor practice in this area is not given enough attention. |
| Travel and tourism | Satisfactory. Pass rates are generally good and students benefit from well-established links with local industry. Much of their practical work is good. Much of the teaching is satisfactory. More attention needs to |

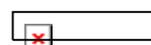
| | |
|---|---|
| | be given to the use of assessment in planning teaching and learning. |
| Hairdressing | Outstanding. Students achieve high standards on both the college and work-based programmes. Staff from the college and local industry work closely together so that students benefit from supervision by skilled practitioners and common approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. |
| Beauty, holistics and sports therapy | Outstanding. Teaching focuses successfully on developing high professional standards. There are excellent facilities for developing occupational skills and good opportunities for enrichment through working with local industry and community groups. Teachers and students are enthusiastic and committed to improvement. |
| Health, social care and public services | Outstanding. Student guidance and support are excellent and high pass rates have been achieved over several years. Students benefit from very good teaching and excellent links with the local community. |
| Art, design and media | Good. Students develop good skills in visual research and critical analysis. They benefit from the many opportunities to display their work and from teaching by experienced practitioners. Resources and accommodation are good. Student retention rates have been unsatisfactory on some courses. |
| English for speakers of other languages | Satisfactory. There is good attention to identifying and attending to the specific learning needs of students. The area has expanded to meet community needs. There is too much unskilled teaching of language and insufficient resources in a few of the outreach centres. |
| Literacy and numeracy | Good. Adults benefit from the wide availability of basic skills teaching in the community, which has been carefully adapted to their needs. Individual students receive good support and the teaching has a strong practical emphasis. The learning support for students on vocational courses is generally good. However, there have been delays in providing students with skilled literacy and numeracy support in some subjects. |

How well is the college led and managed?



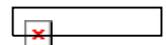
Leadership and management are outstanding. Governors, the chief executive and senior managers provide excellent leadership and strategic direction. Staff are committed to the values, aims and objectives of the college. A consistent approach to teaching, learning and guidance, based upon the Learner Provider Handbook, is adopted across the college. Curriculum management is consistently good. Communications are effective. Arrangements for assuring the quality of provision are outstanding and effective use is made of accurate and reliable management information. Teachers and support staff enjoy working at the college and form effective teams. There are targets and success factors for managers that are monitored and reviewed regularly. Governance is strong and financial management excellent.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



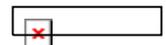
courses from pre-entry level to advanced level. Teaching staff give attention to the individual needs of all learners in their schemes of work, lesson plans and teaching. There is provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, both for students aged 16 to 18 and for older students. About half of these students progress on to mainstream courses or into employment. Links with the local community are very strong. The college has extensive provision in the community and recruits strongly from under-represented groups. Just under half of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, well exceeding the proportion in the local population. In the local area, the college has made a substantial contribution to the local Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) 1998 to 2001 widening participation targets. Equal opportunities are promoted very well and incorporate race relations. All categories of staff have been trained to raise awareness of cultural issues. Strategies to widen participation are effective. The college is an inclusive community.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive good guidance and support. Pre-course advice is good, founded on strong links with local schools. All full-time students and those on major part-time courses benefit from thorough initial assessment. Learning support is effective and integrated into a vocational context. Individual learning plans are used very effectively in the reviews of student progress. Pastoral care is very good, both from tutors and personal advisors in the student services unit. However, there are occasional delays in referrals to specialist counselling. Support for work-based students is good. There is very good support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Students benefit from well-planned tutorials. Careers guidance and assistance with progression to higher education (HE) are generally good.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- friendly, helpful teachers and students

- good support

- being treated like adults

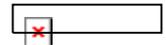
- good access to learning in the local community

- the generally safe environment
- good specialist resources and facilities
- the choice of courses and flexible timetables..

What they feel could be improved

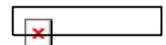
- long queues in the canteen and the cost of food
- insufficient access to computers in some area.

Other information



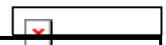
The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must 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 is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

| Aspect & learner type | Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) % | Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) % | Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) % |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| | | | |

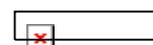


| | | | |
|----------------|----|----|---|
| Teaching 16-18 | 70 | 25 | 5 |
| 19+ and WBL* | 71 | 25 | 4 |
| Learning 16-18 | 72 | 23 | 5 |
| 19+ and WBL* | 71 | 24 | 5 |

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. Barnfield College offers a wide range of courses that can be studied full-time and part-time. Some 12 out of the 14 of the LSC's areas of learning are covered, as Table 2 in Part D of the report shows. Taking patterns of retention and pass rates at a college-wide level, all the key indicators show that the college is performing at, and in the main above, the FE national averages. The only exception to this pattern is the level of student retention on level 1 courses for students aged over 19, which until 2001/02 were below the national average. Retention and pass rates show an improving trend for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults over the four-year period 1998/99 to 2001/02. The retention and pass rates for adults taking short courses are outstanding. In 2001/02, there were approximately 18,000 student enrolments on short courses. The retention rate on these was 94% and the pass rate was 93%.

16 to 18 year olds

2. About 45% of students, as measured by student full-time equivalents, are in the 16 to 18 age range. Students generally make excellent progress. Many start with low prior attainments and achieve well beyond the level expected. The immediate catchment area of the college includes five wards that are on the Department of Environment's list of wards with the highest levels of social deprivation. Student attainment was judged to be outstanding by inspectors in hairdressing, beauty therapy, computing and ICT, and health and social care. In general, the standards of vocational skills demonstrated by students were above the levels expected for the stage of the course that they had reached. In two curriculum areas, catering and travel and tourism, attainment was judged to be satisfactory. The good progress made by students is reflected by high student attendance and pass rates, which in most cases exceeded the national averages. The overall attendance rate during the inspection was just under 82%, in comparison to the national average of 76% for general FE colleges.

3. Students are well prepared for progression to work and employment. They gain good occupational skills through working with modern equipment in workshops and simulated work environments. Each of the four main campuses specialises in a group of vocational courses so that there is a clear subject identity and concentration of resources. Students enjoy working with good specialist equipment and with staff and other students who are committed to a common subject area. In most vocational areas, they are able to gain additional specialist qualifications and experience of the workplace. For example, in beauty therapy, students worked with local theatrical groups and excelled in the arts of make-up and period costumes. In engineering, advanced modern apprentices had gained a good knowledge of motor vehicle maintenance and restoration, including work on vintage cars.

4. Students display a high level of sensitivity to equal opportunities issues. They are encouraged by their tutors to celebrate the diversity of the local community. Many develop good research and

investigative skills. For example, visual arts and media students undertook a group project, which focused upon the history of immigration to Luton. They traced each of the main cultural groups in the town by speaking to members of the local community and obtaining photographic evidence of the key stages of settlement. Their work culminated in an exhibition and displays in local schools and libraries.

5. Students are generally highly motivated and able to work independently. In some vocational areas, key skills in communication, application of number and ICT are successfully developed. For example, in health and social care, students are able to apply these skills to their vocational work. In other vocational areas, for example, engineering and construction, treating these skills in isolation from the subject area inhibited students' progress. Student destination data shows that about half of the students enrolled on courses in 2001/02 progressed on to more advanced courses at the college and another 40% progressed to employment.

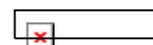
Adult learners

6. About 20,000 adults are enrolled. Retention and pass rates, particularly on level 2 and short courses, are well above the national averages. Through close co-operation with local communities, the college attracts adults who have had little previous success in formal education. Many have poor skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. For example, at Marsh Farm, a New Deal Trust venue where the college offers a wide range of courses at foundation level, the college has played a key role in local economic regeneration by training local residents for work in the locality. In most areas, student progression from low-level to higher-level courses is good. Students gain confidence by taking foundation level courses in the community and then progress to higher levels of study at the main college campuses. However, the record of student progression to more advanced courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is more limited.

7. The attainments of work-based trainees in hairdressing are outstanding. Students benefit from a seamless transition between working in the salons at the college and working in the industry. Liaison officers from the college have a good working relationship with employers and trainers, who are involved in the review process and ensure that trainees gain a wide range of occupational skills through their experience in work placements. They have a good record of success in achieving NVQs. However, less than a third of modern apprentices in engineering in 2001/02 achieved the full modern apprenticeship framework.

8. Students on advanced-level courses in computing and motor vehicle engineering benefit from the two centres of vocational excellence. The college is a regional centre for training in computer integrated network systems such as CISCO and ORACLE. Full-time and part-time computing students are able to take specialist modules in these areas, which enhances their opportunities for employment. Modern apprentices from Volkswagen attend day-release courses at the college's technology centre to develop their skills using modern vehicle testing equipment. Some 40% of learners who progress to level 3 courses originally entered the college to take level 1 courses.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 233 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 70% of lessons, which is significantly above the average for FE colleges. Teaching was satisfactory in 25% of lessons and there was a small proportion, 11, or under 5%, of unsatisfactory lessons. The standards of teaching and learning are particularly high in hairdressing, beauty therapy, health and care, and visual arts and media. The grades awarded for learning were similar to those for teaching.

10. There was some variation in the quality of teaching. The highest proportion of good or better teaching was at level 1 and the lowest proportion at entry level. The teaching delivered by full-time

teachers, who provide 77% of the teaching at the college, was graded much higher than that delivered by part-time teachers.

11. The college has developed a learning provider handbook, which gives clear guidance for teachers on preparing schemes of work and lesson planning. Teachers make effective use of the handbook and in all curriculum areas, teaching is well planned with detailed schemes of work and structured lesson plans. In most lessons, learning objectives were clear and were shared with the students, although in some less effective lessons learning objectives were poorly defined. In many lessons, full account was taken of the differing needs of students. As a result, most students work productively and make good progress. The good or better lessons engaged the students in a broad range of appropriate activities and teachers used a variety of teaching methods. Good use was made of students' experiences to develop understanding. In care, teachers used the students' own experience of storytelling to help them identify the value of books for children. Teaching was good in most practical lessons with students developing high professional standards. The profile of grades was not as strong in the teaching of theory, especially in construction. The quality of teaching in the community centres is excellent on the ICT courses and students are confident in the tasks they are set by teachers. Teaching and learning on other courses in the community centres are generally good.

12. Students are highly motivated and enjoy their studies. They work enthusiastically and confidently. In ICT, students made effective use of the hardware and software available to work on imaginative, real-life projects, which had been well thought out. In a hairdressing class, students, with guidance from the teacher, effectively learned cutting techniques and then applied previously learned skills in blowing and drying to complete the task. In a beauty therapy class, students developing epilation skills questioned the teacher and discussed new massage techniques with their client. They were highly motivated and worked hard at improving their skills. Childcare students actively engaged in discussions and role-play, trying out behaviour-modification techniques and evaluating their effectiveness. Students were able to relate their workplace learning to behaviour theory.

13. Individual learning plans are used very effectively and applied consistently across the college. Reviews take place every six weeks with full-time students and those on major part-time courses. Particular attention is placed on monitoring students' performance in their early course assessment because tutors are conscious that difficulties at this stage have a marked effect in reducing student motivation. Progress is thoroughly reviewed and in most cases appropriate targets are set with students for the next period. Full-time students' attendance is monitored promptly on a daily basis, and parents are informed of significant problems. Parents receive summary reports on the outcomes. Review processes on work-based learning are of a good standard.

14. All full-time students and those on substantial part-time courses are assessed at the start of their courses to check their competence in literacy and numeracy and to identify their preferred learning styles. Additional support is provided on an individual basis, in small groups or within lessons. Take-up is high. Support is closely linked to the context of the student's vocational course. A significant number of teachers have undertaken a basic skills support qualification to enable them to offer direct assistance to students in lessons. Students make good progress and are periodically re-tested to check how far they have improved since the initial diagnostic assessment. Those who receive additional support have higher pass rates on their main qualification than the average for students at the college. Students strongly value the quality of the additional support they receive. However, there have been delays in providing learning support in business, hospitality and travel and tourism since extra staff needed to be recruited.

15. Assignments are well designed. Students' work is marked thoroughly to appropriate standards. Feedback on students' work is constructive and usually prompt. Marking helps to identify specific targets for improvement and internal verification is generally effective in raising assessment standards. However, assessment practice and the monitoring of students' progress in key skills are underdeveloped. There is insufficient workplace assessment on the NVQ in accounting. Also, assessment schedules are not shared with students in travel and tourism, so that students are not able to plan their work effectively.

16. College accommodation across all curriculum areas is attractive, clean and well maintained. Well-trained security staff help to maintain a secure and safe environment. All sites have satisfactory access and facilities for people with mobility difficulties. Curriculum areas have been very effectively co-located into vocational groups to provide a clear occupational focus, for example, the technology centre provides a dedicated set of workshops for computing, engineering and construction. The original 1960s school buildings at New Bedford Road and Rotherham Avenue have been adapted and modified to provide good teaching and vocational training areas. The college has established very good ICT facilities at the Marsh Farm and Bury Park community centres, as a result of New Deal Trust funding.

17. There is a very good range of specialist resources, providing learners with realistic environments for acquiring vocational skills. The resources for hairdressing, beauty and sports therapy are outstanding and representative of the highest current industry standards. There are very good resources for computing, motor vehicle engineering, construction, hospitality, and art and design. Stimulating and imaginative displays around the college celebrate the success of students' practical work in national competitions and external projects. Painting and decorating students have used the corridor walls in the technology centre to good effect to demonstrate their range of skills and techniques. The good reputation that the college has gained for 'high-tech' training has led to buoyant student demand and some overcrowding in the workshops in the technology centre.

18. There are good supplies of consumable materials for all courses, which are provided free or at heavily discounted prices. There are sufficient up-to-date computers for students, with one computer for every five full-time equivalent students. All full-time and substantive part-time staff have a networked computer on their desk. Open access computers are available at all sites. However, in some areas, there is limited availability of computers outside of normal teaching hours. Sites have their own local area networks that are connected to the college-wide network for e-mail, Internet and intranet access. There is good technical support at all sites for computing. The campus resource centres have good stocks of learning and teaching material. There is a wide range of audiovisual equipment available for students and staff. Library opening hours provide satisfactory access for students on full-time and part-time courses. Space in the libraries is at a premium and some individual study areas are crowded.

19. There are well-equipped nurseries providing crèche facilities at New Bedford Road, Rotherham Avenue and Westbourne for students with children under school age. Students needing crèche places for their children have priority at the two nurseries, with subsidies for those on low incomes. Flexible crèche hours enable student parents to take full advantage of their courses without distraction. All classrooms are well furnished and well decorated, although some classrooms in the technology centre are poorly ventilated and noisy. Students make good use of the common rooms and refectory facilities, which are attractive and welcoming. Some students on outreach programmes and at the technology centre do not have sufficient access to the general recreational facilities.

20. Staff are generally well qualified. Full-time and substantive staff teach about 77% of lessons with the remaining 23% taught by part-time staff. In adult education, 61% of teaching is by part-time staff. The majority of permanent teaching staff have a recognised teaching qualification and the remainder are working towards achieving an appropriate qualification by the end of 2003. All teaching staff new to the profession are undertaking teacher training, with a bonus scheme in place for part-time teachers who achieve an appropriate qualification by 2003. The college has appointed 25 advanced learning practitioners to improve the quality of teaching, learning materials and learner experience. It has also established a department dedicated to the training and development of its own staff. In all areas, staff are encouraged and given the opportunity to update their curriculum knowledge and skills. For example, five computing teachers have recently attended high-level courses on integrated computer systems in the United States of America.

21. The college has had difficulties in recruiting teachers in ICT, art and design, engineering, construction, basic skills, ESOL, additional support, beauty therapy and sports therapy. In construction and ESOL, an insufficiency of specialist staff had an adverse impact on teaching and learning. In most curriculum areas, teachers have satisfactory levels of technical support, but the college has experienced difficulties in recruiting ICT technicians.

22. The college provides a broad range of full-time and part-time vocational courses that meet students' needs. Courses are offered across the college's five main sites and in 90 outreach locations. Courses range from pre-entry level through to advanced level. Work-based programmes are available in engineering, hospitality, hairdressing and care. Market research is successfully used to identify demand and to develop new courses. There are clear progression routes in all curriculum areas, but provision at level 3 in catering, travel and tourism, and business and management is limited. Progression by students between courses is good in many curriculum areas.

23. Provision is carefully planned. The college works closely with the local LSC, the Bedfordshire Federation of Further and Higher Education Colleges, and the local sixth form college, in order to develop a cohesive approach to the curriculum offer. In recent years, the college has developed a highly successful technology centre and has Centre of Vocational Excellence status in two areas of learning. There are very good links with employers in most curriculum areas, but links are underdeveloped in business and management, and in construction there are insufficient formal links. There are very strong links with the community. The college has been particularly successful in the development of ICT and UK Online centres in deprived areas of the community, and there is good provision in the community for English for speakers of other languages and for literacy and numeracy.

24. The college has broadened its range of enrichment activities this year and participation levels by students on the main college sites have improved, but participation levels are low in the technology centre and in outreach centres. Students in travel and tourism, hairdressing and beauty therapy are able to gain a wide range of additional qualifications.

25. Students receive very good pastoral and academic support. Pre-course guidance is good. There are strong links with local schools, with productive vocational taster programmes. There is an innovative Saturday taster programme for Year 9 students and their parents. Course information is also made available in some of the religious centres where courses are delivered. Induction suitably prepares students for their programmes and college life. There is a well-developed tutorial system for full-time students and part-time students on substantial courses. It is based on the framework set out in a comprehensive tutorial handbook. There are weekly group tutorials and regular individual tutorials, which are linked to the six-week cycle of student reviews. Group sessions cover prescribed themes identified in the tutorial handbook and also topics negotiated to reflect students' interests or current issues. Careers education is good.

26. The college avoids additional course charges, which could deter students from study, and offers help for those facing financial difficulties. The educational maintenance allowance scheme has also provided financial support with incentives for good attendance. Effective support is offered to students with disabilities and learning difficulties. For example, the height of some computer desks is adjustable for wheelchair users and there is assistance for hearing impaired and dyslexic students. Reception staff are also trained in sign language. Although students can contact helpful guidance advisors in the event of personal difficulties, there have been delays in referring students to specialist counselling support in a minority of cases. Careers guidance and help with applications for HE are generally good, though there is insufficient advice for ESOL students on progression to vocational courses.

Leadership and management



27. The leadership and management of Barnfield College are outstanding. Governors, the chief executive and senior managers provide excellent leadership and strategic direction. There is a good level of delegation to site principals and heads of department who, although accountable, feel empowered to make decisions within their areas of responsibility. The college has grown quickly, extending its provision into the community whilst maintaining or improving the quality of delivery.

college's strategic plan is regularly revised to meet the changing demands of the local area through residential events involving governors, senior managers and middle managers. This plan is used as the basis for a thorough college development plan. Individual performance improvement targets are then determined for each of the senior managers, site principals, heads of department and managers of support functions.

28. Staff are strongly committed to the values, aims and objectives of the college. There are highly effective systems of control for ensuring understanding and compliance with the requirements of the development plan. The Learner Provider Handbook sets out the procedures and documentation to be used across all sites. The use of this document and its supporting proforma is a contractual requirement. It is a very thorough document that is valued greatly by staff. Its use has ensured a consistent approach to teaching, learning and guidance across sites.

29. Curriculum management is consistently good. Grades awarded by inspectors were satisfactory or better. Nine out of the twelve areas of learning inspected were judged as good or outstanding and one of the two work-based learning areas also received an outstanding grade. Course management files, schemes of work and lesson plans are meticulously checked by heads of department. The quality of teaching is above the national average for FE colleges. Schemes of work are well developed. Teachers carefully track and record individual learners' progress. They set clear targets for individual students, helping them improve their work, and regularly monitor their progress

30. Communications within the college are very good. Staff are kept well informed through regular meetings, e-mail, the college intranet and a 'Principal Matters' newsletter. Minutes of senior management reviews are circulated to staff with notes on the relevance of issues for individual areas of work. Senior managers are approachable and know the staff well. They are very willing to consider the views of staff and students.

31. Arrangements for assuring the quality of provision are outstanding. Review processes are generally thorough. Course teams make judgements on the quality of provision based on sound evidence. Review meetings are carefully documented with clear action points. The results of these inform planning and are aggregated to form departmental and whole-site reviews. Teams receive effective feedback on the reviews from line managers. Substantial improvements are made in response to teacher and student feedback. These include re-scheduling course modules and expanding entry-level provision to meet students' needs. Service standards are used to assess the effectiveness of the business support areas. Self-assessment is thorough and accurately identifies major strengths and weaknesses.

32. Effective use is made of accurate and reliable management information. Managers and course teams have access to the data online. Governors, managers and course teams use a wide range of statistical reports to judge the quality of provision. The information is updated regularly to monitor recruitment, retention and pass rates, and to inform planning.

33. Staff enjoy working at the college and form effective teams. Performance reviews linked to annual appraisals are well established and are used successfully for managing change and improving provision. Precise corporate targets and critical success factors are determined by governors with senior managers and are integral to the strategic and development plans. There are targets and success factors for senior post holders, annual performance contracts for site principals and action plans for middle managers. All full-time and part-time staff are subject to appraisal. Staff-development needs are identified partly through the appraisal system. There is an extensive programme of staff development that meets the needs of individuals, course teams, departments and managers. However, there is scope for improving the links between the training of new teachers and their supervision and support from advanced learning practitioners and subject mentors. The evaluation of the quality of the staff development is not sufficiently comprehensive.

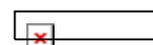
34. The college promotes equal opportunities very well. The equal opportunities policy is comprehensive, incorporating race relations. The action plan has clear targets for implementation. Local community representatives are consulted on the plan. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds in college is 49%, against a local community profile of approximately 22%. Student achievement and progression routes are analysed to identify patterns of progression by

ethnic group. The college is working with the University of Luton in order to address the needs of the low numbers of black students who enter HE. Staff are given a cultural awareness pack containing useful summaries of the beliefs and traditions of the main cultural groups. It is a requirement that all staff complete equal opportunities training. Promotional materials, schemes of work and lesson plans are reviewed annually to ensure that opportunities to promote equality are used. Two members of staff were trained on the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) in January. The college has made preparations to carry out an audit against the requirements identified. Strategies to widen participation are effective. The college has productive links within the community. There are many developments of courses that meet specific needs. Courses for Asian carers are delivered with the aid of an interpreter. Here, students submit written work for accreditation in their first language. The college is a dynamic partner in the regeneration of specific areas of Luton.

35. Governance is strong. Members of the board are fully involved in setting the vision and mission of the college. They monitor the achievement of the strategic objectives in a variety of ways including regular reports and appraisal of senior staff. A quality and standards committee has been in existence for many years. This committee has been important in ensuring that the data held centrally in the college are accurate. The data are used extensively to monitor progress towards retention and pass rate targets at various levels of aggregation in the college. Results are analysed by level, mode of attendance and ethnic minority. Governors have a very good understanding of the curriculum and its delivery. They meet regularly with students and staff.

36. Financial management is excellent. The college is in financial category A and has been so for many years. Careful monitoring of expenditure has led to substantial reserves and substantial investment in new accommodation and equipment. Curriculum areas requiring substantial capital investment, such as construction and engineering, have been expanded against the national trend of decline. There is very careful analysis of group and class sizes through a rigorous analysis of staff-student ratios. The average class size observed during inspection was above average and the ratio calculated from college information is high at approximately 16. Value for money considerations have a high priority and lead to a good use of resources. Student retention rates are satisfactory or better and pass rates are very good and have improved during the last three years. Staff are highly valued and are used effectively.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates
- good attainment of vocational skills

- wide range of provision and good opportunities for progression
- good specialist resources reflecting industry standards.

Weaknesses

- a few ineffective theory lessons
- poor development of key skills
- over-reliance on part-time staff.

Scope of provision

37. Full-time and part-time building craft courses are available at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. Courses are offered mainly during the day, but also in the evening. Courses for construction technicians include General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), national certificate and diploma and higher certificates. Enrolments have steadily increased on craft courses over the last three years, but remain relatively static on technician courses. At the time of the inspection, over 1,100 students were enrolled. Approximately 40% were in the 16 to 18 age range. Most students study at foundation or intermediate level. Taster courses are offered in all crafts for pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools.

Achievement and standards

38. The standard of students' work in all practical lessons is good. Students are able to produce industry-standard work. In carpentry and joinery, students use accurate full-size workshop drawings for making and assembling panelled frames. In plastering, students demonstrate high levels of skills in their work on arched structures and achieve high-quality finishes. Students' attainments are good, especially given the diverse backgrounds from which they are recruited. Progression from foundation to intermediate level courses is high with over two thirds of students moving to a more advanced level of study between 2001/02 and 2002/03. Student motivation is good. Students on work-based programmes successfully gather evidence from their workplace towards their NVQ. This process is particularly good in electrical installation and plumbing. On many building craft courses, students are able to gain additional qualifications. For example, GNVQ students are able to gain the Institute of Carpenters qualification.

39. Retention rates are good on most courses and have been above national averages over the three years. Similarly, the pass rates for students are above the national averages.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
|---------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|-----|-----|-----|
| City and Guilds 2360 electrical installation part 1 | 1 | No. of starts | 71 | 57 | 15 |
| | | % retention | 90 | 93 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | 80 | 100 | 88 |
| NVQ bricklaying | 2 | No. of starts | 6 | 22 | 17 |
| | | % retention | 50 | 89 | 81 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 100 | 80 |
| NVQ wood occupations | 2 | No. of starts | 57 | 57 | 59 |
| | | % retention | 88 | 86 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 82 | 85 | 83 |
| NVQ painting and decorating | 2 | No. of starts | 21 | 22 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 29 | 79 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 75 | 33 | 82 |
| NVQ plastering | 2 | No. of starts | * | 23 | 21 |
| | | % retention | * | 78 | 84 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 100 | 83 |
| NVQ gas services | 2 | No. of starts | 6 | 12 | 17 |
| | | % retention | 100 | 90 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 67 | 100 | 100 |
| National certificate/diploma building studies | 3 | No. of starts | 24 | 19 | 10 |
| | | % retention | 50 | 94 | 78 |
| | | % pass rate | 73 | 78 | 100 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

40. The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons was satisfactory or better. Most workshop activities are well planned and organised. Students work at a pace that suits their individual needs. Health and safety is given a high priority and risk assessments have been completed and are displayed in the workshops.

41. Theory teaching ranged from being very effective to unsatisfactory in a minority of classes. In the most successful lessons, planning was good. Clear objectives were set and shared with students. The differing abilities within the group were acknowledged in the lesson plan and teaching strategies were adopted which challenged all students. The teaching was stimulating and motivated students to high attainment. In one lesson, which exemplified these features, students with limited mathematical skills were able to apply complex formula to calculate power and current for lighting and ring circuits. In the less effective teaching of theory, objectives were unclear and the quality of handouts was poor. Students were unclear of what was expected of them and there was insufficient challenge.

42. The development of students' key skills needs to be improved. Students are often unsure about the requirements and opportunities to collect evidence from work are not exploited. Many students are unnecessarily repeating, for assessment purposes, key skills that have already been covered in their occupational area. More successful work was observed with electrical installation students where key skills were well related to the subject area.

43. There is a good range of specialist equipment and consumables in all occupational areas.

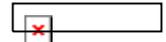
Students enjoy working in a centre devoted to developing their craft and technician skills. All practical work is well supported by technicians. Some of the classrooms used for teaching theory are too small to accommodate the numbers of students. This inhibits the use of group work. Many of these same classrooms are poorly ventilated and lack natural daylight.

Leadership and management

44. The construction area is effectively managed. There are regular course-team meetings and course reviews, which contribute effectively to the self-assessment process. The Learning Provider Handbook is widely used by staff in the context of course development and quality assurance. Staff appraisal leads to clear targets for pass rates, retention rates and enrolment. The management information systems data used by managers is effective, assisting with the analysis of programme performance and informs planning.

45. There is scope for improving the sharing of good practice, particularly in the teaching of theory. The department provides off-the-job training for a range of managing agents including the Construction Industry Training Board. However, the formal links with employers need to be strengthened. The department recognises this and will establish an advisory panel of employers in April 2003. At the time of the inspection, there was high staff turnover in electrical installations and extensive use of part-time staff. These factors were inhibiting curriculum planning and development and were linked to some of the weaker elements of practice observed during the inspection.

Engineering



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

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

Strengths

- much good teaching and learning

- equipment and resources which reflect good industry standards

- high attainment by students of low prior achievement

- effective support for work-based trainees

- curriculum developments that meet the needs of a wide range of students

- good pass rates on level 3 motor vehicle courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on a number of programmes with low enrolments
- low pass rates of the full framework by work-based learners
- weak development of key skills.

Scope of provision

46. Full-time and part-time courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels are offered in motor vehicle, electrical, electronic and mechanical engineering. In 2001/02, there were 756 enrolments of students aged 16 to 19 and 1,151 of students aged over 19. Good links have been developed with industry. The college is a national centre for Volkswagen motor vehicle training provision and has been awarded funding for a Centres of Vocational Excellence in motor vehicle engineering. It has exceeded its target number of students and is developing good provision at level 3. At the time of the inspection, there were 35 foundation modern apprentices and 46 advanced modern apprentices. These schemes are delivered in engineering, production and manufacturing operations, motor vehicle engineering and body repair.

Achievement and standards

47. The standard of attainment is generally good in practical and theory sessions. Students, including some with a previous record of low attainment and poor study skills, concentrate on their tasks and acquire a good knowledge of topics such as engine lubrication. In the engineering workshops, students demonstrate good attainment across a range of craft processes. Work-based learning students confidently service and repair vehicles. They often work at a level above that expected for the stage of the course. The majority of the trainees are employed in local companies that provide students with a wide range of experience and good vocational training. For example, one learner is placed with a prestigious company specialising in the restoration of expensive vintage cars.

48. Pass rates are generally above the national averages, particularly on the courses with high student numbers. They are particularly good on level 3 motor vehicle programmes. However, on a few of the engineering courses with low enrolment numbers, pass rates are low. Retention and pass rates on the City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle programme, which is taught at a community location by college staff, are excellent. This course is designed for young people with a record of poor prior achievement and often challenging behaviour. The achievement of modern apprentices has been mixed. Most are successful in gaining an NVQ. However, the completion rate for the full modern apprenticeship frameworks has been low. This is because the development and assessment of key skills are often unsatisfactory. Opportunities to develop key skills through occupational tasks are not sufficiently exploited. A new system to track the progress of trainees has been introduced, including weekly visits to the workplace.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|--|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| City and Guilds 3267-01 introductory welding skills | 1 | No. of starts | 17 | 66 | 65 |
| | | % retention | 94 | 100 | 92 |
| | | % pass rate | 69 | 83 | 77 |
| City and Guilds 3980-01 vehicle body competences | 1 | No. of starts | 25 | 26 | 50 |
| | | % retention | 92 | 65 | 78 |
| | | % pass rate | 48 | 82 | 100 |
| City and Guilds 6958-01 progression award in electrical and electronic servicing | 2 | No. of starts | * | 23 | 19 |
| | | % retention | * | 87 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 84 | 27 |
| City and Guilds 4351-07 computer-aided design | 2 | No. of starts | * | 104 | 100 |
| | | % retention | * | 80 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 75 | 80 |
| National certificate in engineering | 3 | No. of starts | * | 42 | 49 |
| | | % retention | * | 83 | 76 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 32 | 88 |
| City and Guilds 3980-03 vehicle body competences | 3 | No. of starts | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| | | % retention | 90 | 100 | 91 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 91 | 100 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

49. Some 75% of observed lessons were good or better. Students were generally enthusiastic about their studies. In the better lessons, teachers inspired learners who made good progress and were eager to complete the tasks set. For example, in a computer fault diagnosis session, students worked enthusiastically on increasingly complex faults, demonstrating their competence. There was a suitable focus on health and safety awareness in practical sessions. Learners worked carefully and safely. In some lessons, effective use was made of computers, but in others there was insufficient use of ICT.

50. There is a positive working relationship between staff and students. Attendance is good. Schemes of work and lesson plans follow guidance in the Learning Provider Handbook. The engineering workshops are spacious and equipped to modern industrial standards. There is a computer-integrated manufacturing system and modern diagnostic equipment in the vehicle workshops and a good range of modern cars and commercial vehicles. The machine tools in the engineering workshops are fitted with electronic safety gates and digital readouts. The resources include good computer numerical control and spark erosion equipment. Electronic laboratories are well equipped. The technology centre library offers students a quiet and comfortable study environment with access to computers and a good range of current technical books and periodicals. The classrooms used for teaching theory have insufficient ventilation, lack natural light and are often noisy because of their proximity to the adjoining workshops.

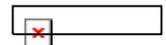
51. The co-ordination of on-the-job assessment for work-based trainees has been improved since 2001/02 and is now generally good. There are weekly review visits by college liaison officers who have established excellent links with employers.

52. Teachers make good use of their industrial experience. The progress of students is carefully evaluated. Students' assignments are well structured with clear assessment guidelines. They are returned promptly with appropriate constructive comment. All full-time students are assessed to determine their key skills level and additional numeracy and literacy needs. They receive good additional support. Full-time learners' progress is reviewed at six-weekly intervals. Arrangements for reporting to parents and employers are good.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. Team meetings are held regularly and are useful. The Learning Provider Handbook is valued by staff and used to ensure consistent approaches to teaching and learning. Comprehensive course files are maintained. There is a good system of communication between the college liaison officers and workplace supervisors to ensure coverage of vocational standards. Courses and qualifications have been designed to meet the needs of the local community and industry. Learners are offered a range of additional qualifications that improve their employment prospects. The tracking of students undertaking qualifications with low enrolment numbers is poor and the department was not fully aware of the poorer achievements on these qualifications.

Business and management



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on full-time courses at levels 1 and 2

- good teaching

- strong support for students

- good curriculum management

- extensive progression opportunities

- good ICT resources.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on full-time level 3 business programmes

- restricted range of part-time vocational programmes

- insufficient work-based assessment on accountancy courses.

Scope of provision

54. The departments of business and management studies and of training and professional development offer a range of business and professional courses from entry level to post-graduate. These include full-time courses for legal secretaries, e-business, NVQ level 2 accounting, GNVQ at foundation and intermediate level, the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) business and access to business. Part-time provision includes courses in marketing and personnel practice and NVQs in administration and accounting. An entry-level business course was introduced in 2001 in response to an identified need in local schools. The department of business and management also offers higher national awards in business and related subjects. There are currently 191 students aged 16 to 18 and 52 adults enrolled on full-time courses. Of the 495 part-time students, 95% are over 19.

Achievement and standards

55. In many lessons, students demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the key concepts in their subject area. They could apply this understanding to practical situations and showed good analytical and evaluative skills. In accounting lessons, students demonstrated they could apply accounting concepts to practical tasks, for example, they produced ledger accounts and three-dimensional spreadsheets. Students on marketing courses used their understanding of stake holding to give presentations evaluating the importance of this concept to their own organisations. At level 3, e-business students worked confidently with information technology (IT), manipulating databases and undertaking graphical manipulation. Students on the legal studies course worked confidently with specialist legal software to develop practical skills. Students on entry-level and GNVQ foundation courses produced work that was frequently at a level above the normal standards expected for the stage of their courses.

56. Students on foundation and intermediate business courses consistently achieve at levels above national averages. A high percentage of students on the recently introduced pre-foundation business programme are achieving at levels that allow progression on to level 1. On a minority of courses, pass rates are below national averages and below college targets. Students achieve at or above national rates on the part-time vocational programmes such as the Certificate in Personnel Practice, NVQ administration and the Chartered Institute of Marketing courses. Retention and achievement trends over the past three years have been inconsistent across the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) courses. The AAT courses are unit-based and students' success in passing individual units is good, even where they have not completed the full award. The retention rate on the full-time level 3 business programmes is poor.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business and management, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|-----------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| GNVQ foundation | 1 | No. of starts | 29 | 18 | 14 |
| | | % retention | 67 | 82 | 77 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | % pass rate | 94 | 100 | 90 |
| GNVQ intermediate | 2 | No. of starts | 36 | 32 | 33 |
| | | % retention | 89 | 78 | 79 |
| | | % pass rate | 87 | 84 | 81 |
| NVQ administration | 2 | No. of starts | 68 | 19 | 44 |
| | | % retention | 76 | 72 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | 94 | 92 | 100 |
| AAT intermediate (NVQ) | 3 | No. of starts | 101 | 96 | 94 |
| | | % retention | 82 | 66 | 85 |
| | | % pass rate | 40 | 65 | 42 |
| GNVQ/AVCE business | 3 | No. of starts | 58 | 31 | 54 |
| | | % retention | 67 | 74 | 35 |
| | | % pass rate | 88 | 74 | 42 |
| Certificate in personnel practice | 3 | No. of starts | 40 | 63 | 36 |
| | | % retention | 87 | 83 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | 71 | 96 | 94 |
| AAT technician level | 4 | No. of starts | 74 | 49 | 63 |
| | | % retention | 86 | 85 | 85 |
| | | % pass rate | 43 | 50 | 38 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

Quality of education and training

57. The standard of teaching is good. Teachers attend to the specific needs of students and ensure that they make good progress. Specific learning targets are set and progress is closely monitored. In a foundation business lesson, students were divided into groups for a role play that helped them understand the concept of teamwork. All students were actively involved and took part in final presentations, which were excellent. Diploma in marketing students worked well in small groups analysing a realistic case study that helped develop their understanding of strategic marketing decision-making. In many lessons, ICT resources are effectively used. Students worked confidently with up-to-date industry-standard software packages. In a minority of lessons, poor teaching did not sufficiently interest or engage students.

58. The standard of assessment on most courses is good. Internal verification systems are thorough. Assessment is used to plan learning and monitor progress. On accounting courses, there are insufficient opportunities for assessment in the workplace. Assessment and review processes are good on the NVQ administration and legal secretarial courses. Guidance and support are very strong. Diagnostic assessment is used thoroughly. On the entry-level business course, literacy and numeracy support are fully integrated into the main teaching programme and individual learning is enhanced by the small class sizes. Attendance is generally good and is regularly monitored through team meetings.

59. Excellent opportunities exist for entry on to courses for students with low prior achievement. Recruitment to these programmes is expanding through close liaison with the schools in the local area. There are good progression opportunities within the curriculum area from pre-entry to HE business courses. Significant numbers of students take advantage of these progression opportunities up to level 3. Many accounting students progress from level 2 to level 4 within the college. However, there is limited progression from level 3 to HE courses. The range of part-time

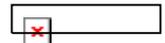
vocational courses is underdeveloped and there is a narrow range of level 3 business courses in the college.

60. Staff are generally well qualified in academic terms and most have relevant occupational experience. However, there is a lack of industrial updating for business staff teaching on vocational programmes. There is an effective staff-appraisal system linked to staff development. For example, business staff have gained basic skills teaching qualifications in recognition of the need to improve their effectiveness in supporting students with poor literacy and numeracy. The teaching accommodation is good and there is excellent access to ICT facilities.

Leadership and management

61. Curriculum management is good. Staff morale is high and there is strong teamwork at course and departmental level. Course teams meet regularly to monitor courses and action planning is used effectively to make improvements. Students participate in this process. For example, on part-time secretarial courses, student feedback has led to timetable changes that better suit the needs of the groups. Quality-assurance procedures are applied rigorously. Whilst college self-assessment processes are firmly embedded, targets on some programmes are not sufficiently challenging. There are problems with staff recruitment and retention rates in some subjects, such as accounting, which constrain the opportunities for curriculum development.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- a wide range of courses and good progression opportunities

- the high standard of students' work

- good teaching and learning

- strong leadership and management

- high level and industrially relevant courses

- excellent ICT resources and technical support across all sites

- o the extent of provision in diverse local communities.
- o high levels of student satisfaction
- o effective systems for guidance and support.

Weaknesses

- o poor retention rates on the national diploma course.

Scope of provision

62. There is an extensive range of full-time and part-time courses, both in the technology centre and in the community outreach centres across Luton and Bedford. At the technology centre, the provision ranges from GNVQ foundation level through to Higher National Diploma (HND). The technology centre offers national training in integrated networking systems such as '3COM Training', CISCO and Oracle. This allows the centre to offer training to education and industry and to provide internationally recognised qualifications. Community courses are run at a number of college sites, including a variety of religious and cultural centres such as churches and mosques. Much of the outreach work is linked to community regeneration projects such as Marsh Farm. The department is extremely responsive to local demands and has designed and developed new courses, for example, in the computer maintenance and networking areas. Staff from other colleges and from local firms take updating courses at the centre because of the specialist training that it offers.

Achievement and standards

63. On full-time courses, a high percentage of students continue their studies for a second or subsequent year to gain more advanced qualifications. Full use is made of the specialist resources to enhance the attainments of students on mainstream courses. Students can take specialist training courses devised for local employers. For example, they can take those run by the 'Barnfield Cisco Academy', in addition to their main vocational qualification. These specialist qualifications are in high demand by local employers and students easily secure relevant employment. Students work enthusiastically on imaginative projects. For example, four female students on the national diploma course were producing a video diary of life as a woman on a computing course. This will be made available via the Internet in an attempt to attract more female students on to specialist computing courses. Computers assembled by students at the technology centre are used across the college sites.

A sample of retention and pass rates in ICT, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| CLAIT | 1 | No. of starts | 760 | 761 | 915 |
| | | % retention | 92 | 87 | 79 |
| | | % pass rate | 84 | 80 | 84 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|-----|-----|-----|
| GNVQ foundation | 1 | No. of starts | * | 40 | 53 |
| | | % retention | * | 80 | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 70 | 79 |
| GNVQ intermediate | 2 | No. of starts | 64 | 60 | 56 |
| | | % retention | 77 | 80 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 71 | 79 | 70 |
| NVQ installing and supporting ICT systems | 2 | No. of starts | 99 | 136 | 171 |
| | | % retention | 71 | 71 | 75 |
| | | % pass rate | 84 | 74 | 76 |
| Integrated Business Technology | 2 | No. of starts | 397 | 360 | 310 |
| | | % retention | 78 | 84 | 77 |
| | | % pass rate | 73 | 74 | 84 |
| National diploma | 3 | No. of starts | 35 | 49 | 46 |
| | | % retention | 69 | 57 | 61 |
| | | % pass rate | 88 | 96 | 100 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

*course did not run

64. Over the last three years, the number of students taking computing and ICT courses has more than doubled. Many new courses have been introduced that have not run for sufficient time to be included in the table above. Students generally start their course with modest prior attainments and reach high levels of skills. Pass rates for full-time courses all exceed national averages and the pass rate on the part-time computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) award, with over 900 enrolments, was well above the national average. The student retention rates for the national diploma were below the national average in 2001/02. However, levels of in-year student retention rates are much higher for the cohort of diploma students who are due to complete in 2003.

Quality of education and training

65. There was no unsatisfactory teaching or learning and about three quarters of teaching and learning was adjudged good or better. These figures are significantly above the national average for this subject. Lessons are well planned and tutors make good use of opportunities to challenge and stretch students. Specialist resources and technician support are good on all sites, including those in the community. At the technology centre, these include networking laboratories. Staff utilise the college intranet to share resources such as work packs with each other and with students. This helps to maintain the high quality of teaching and learning.

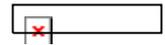
66. Systems for guidance and support are effective and begin with a diagnostic test at initial interview aimed at ensuring the correct choice of course. Student progress is monitored at six-weekly intervals and, where necessary, students are moved to a higher or lower level of study. There is a high level of student and employer satisfaction with the ICT provision. Students value highly the excellent support from staff. Many expressed their pride in being computing students at the college and clearly enjoyed working in a well-equipped and specialist centre. Students' investigative and research skills are enhanced by a combination of imaginative teaching and good systems of guidance.

Leadership and management

67. Curriculum management is outstanding. High standards are maintained across the wide range of courses offered both in the community and in the technology centre. The curriculum is equally well

adapted to the needs of adults with little formal education and to the needs of staff from industry seeking highly specialist training. All staff have an input into strategic planning and development. Good use is made of reliable management information systems data to inform management decisions. Staff development is linked to appraisal and to the needs of changing teaching roles. So far, five staff have attended technical training courses in the USA, with a further two due to attend this academic year. Students benefit from the extra skills now available within the department. Course teams meet regularly and these meetings and reviews are carefully recorded, with action points being followed through. The self-assessment process is rigorous and realistic.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- the record of good pass and retention rates

- well-equipped kitchen and restaurants

- tight monitoring of students' attendance and progress

- effective links with industry

- strong leadership.

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of kitchen practical skills at NVQ levels 1 and 2

- insufficient attention by teachers to correcting poor practical skills at NVQ levels 1 and 2

- students disadvantaged by delays in receiving additional learning support

- o limited progression routes to level 3 in food preparation.

Scope of provision

68. Full-time courses include NVQs in food preparation at levels 1 and 2 and food and drink service at level 2. A full-time hotel reception and guest services course at level 2 has shown declining numbers over recent years and did not recruit sufficient students to run in September 2002. An AVCE in hospitality and catering and an NVQ in patisserie and confectionery are offered at level 3. NVQ courses in food preparation at levels 1 and 2 are offered on a part-time basis. Basic and advanced pastry cook certificates are also available at levels 1 and 2. Other part-time courses include the certificate in professional cookery at level 2 and the Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) professional certificate at level 3. There is a wide range of short courses in food hygiene, basic health and safety, wines and spirits and the national licensees certificate.

Achievement and standards

69. Attendance during inspection averaged almost 95% and registers show that students attend regularly throughout the year. There are high retention rates on most courses. The department has a strong record of success in enabling students to gain vocational qualifications. Three qualifications showed 100% pass rates for 2001/02. Some 50% of AVCE students attained high grades in 2001/02. These students show good skills in researching and investigating and produce professional and well-written assignments that contain relevant and up-to-date information. One assessment included informed discussion about the impact of foot and mouth and terrorist activity upon the hospitality industry and included up-to-date statistics.

70. The practical skills of food preparation students at NVQ levels 1 and 2 are insufficiently developed. Students frequently use the wrong tools for tasks and demonstrate poor techniques. For example, they cut vegetables before they are peeled and work in an untidy fashion. Students did not prepare fish and poultry appropriately. The scales were not removed from trout prior to cooking and wishbones were not removed from chicken and guinea fowl, resulting in excessive wastage. Asparagus soup was allowed to continue cooking whilst held for service, thus losing flavour and colour. There is insufficient reference to recipes. In contrast, students on patisserie and confectionery courses demonstrated good practical skills. The many students who complete NVQ level 2 qualifications in food preparation are unable to progress to NVQ level 3 other than in patisserie and confectionery.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality and catering, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| NVQ in food preparation | 1 | No. of starts | 72 | 69 | 63 |
| | | % retention | 79 | 72 | 84 |
| | | % pass rate | 91 | 92 | 87 |
| NVQ in food preparation | 2 | No. of starts | 53 | 46 | 48 |
| | | % retention | 79 | 80 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 95 | 100 | 98 |
| NVQ in food and drink service | 2 | No. of starts | 21 | 24 | 22 |
| | | % retention | 95 | 96 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 85 | 91 | 100 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Certificate in wines and spirits | 2 | No. of starts | 15 | 28 | 14 |
| | | % retention | 93 | 93 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 93 | 65 | 71 |
| NVQ in food preparation - patisserie and conf | 3 | No. of starts | 10 | 6 | 11 |
| | | % retention | 60 | 83 | 91 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| AVCE in hospitality and catering and GNVQ precursor | 3 | No. of starts | 14 | 16 | 17 |
| | | % retention | 57 | 88 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | 88 | 54 | 100 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

Quality of education and training

71. Students on the AVCE course are encouraged to investigate catering issues and their research is used in class as the basis for stimulating and relevant discussions. Students work as effective teams in the public restaurant and production kitchen, showing a willingness to help each other and also sharing knowledge. A student acting as a supervisor in the kitchen was able to use this experience to generate evidence for key skills assessment. In practical lessons in the kitchens, students often demonstrated unsatisfactory techniques, which were not corrected by lecturers. In some cases, teachers set a poor example.

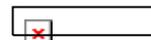
72. There are good specialist resources, including three training kitchens and a specialist pastry room. Students operate a public restaurant and production kitchen and this provides a realistic working environment for assessments. Kitchen and restaurant equipment is of a commercial standard and includes combination ovens, a bratt pan, and a recent purchase of a hand-pad electronic point-of-sales system. An interactive whiteboard has recently been installed. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and industrial experience. There is a good stock of up-to-date books, magazines and journals for hospitality and catering. However, college records indicate this is the least used section of the library.

73. Tutorial guidance is generally good. Each student attends an individual review every six weeks. Clear targets are agreed and tutors closely monitor these. However, in some instances, students are not sufficiently involved in agreeing targets because the review is dominated by the tutor's view. Diagnostic assessment is thorough. However, there have been delays in securing specialist staff to help students with poor skills in literacy and numeracy.

Leadership and management

74. Approaches to teaching, learning and student guidance accord with those recommended in the Learner Provider Handbook. These systematic approaches are used to good effect in helping students to progress. Communication is strong between the layers of senior, department and course management. The recently appointed head of department has shown strong and effective leadership in tackling issues identified in past course reviews, such as improving internal verification and developing the teaching and assessment of key skills. The departmental self-assessment report is generally thorough. However, it did not identify the weaknesses in the development of students' food preparation skills. Links with industry are effective. Local employers provide work experience for students and this frequently results in employment.

Travel and tourism



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism

- good retention rates on the national diploma in travel and tourism

- good standard of students' work

- well-established links with industry

- effective leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rate on GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism

- poor use of initial assessment

- uninspiring aspects of teaching in a few lessons

- assessment schedules not shared with students.

Scope of provision

75. The college offers both full-time and part-time courses at levels 1 and 2 in leisure, travel and tourism. The foundation and intermediate GNVQ courses in leisure and tourism focus on the travel and tourism aspects. The preparation for air cabin crew course was introduced in 2002. Students are offered a good range of additional qualifications including the Association of British Travel Agents Certificate (ABTAC), the certificate in resort representatives, Spanish, basic food hygiene, basic health and safety, the certificate in ground handling, and in airfares and ticketing. The provision at level 3 specialises in airline and airport operations. There are 90 full-time students, mostly aged 16

to 18, and 15 part-time students aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

76. The standard of students' work is good. National diploma travel and tourism students have developed well; they have proposed innovative ideas for niche market holidays. One of the proposals relates to golf holidays. The theme is established on the cover of a mock brochure, in the shape of a golf ball, and is continued in the research, the proposed holiday itinerary and the cost breakdown that is to be submitted to the financiers of the project. GNVQ intermediate students have designed a high-quality logo to market their proposed event.

77. Retention and pass rates are good on the GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism course and retention rates are good on the national diploma in travel and tourism course. Pass and retention rates on all other courses are close to national averages, except on the GNVQ foundation in leisure and tourism, where the retention rate is poor. The number of higher-grade passes achieved by students is above the national average. There is good progression between the levels of qualifications.

A sample of retention and pass rates in travel and tourism, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism | 1 | No. of starts | * | * | 8 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 50 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 75 |
| GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism | 2 | No. of starts | 34 | 18 | 25 |
| | | % retention | 65 | 61 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 32 | 91 | 91 |
| ABTAC primary | 2 | No. of starts | 32 | 56 | 49 |
| | | % retention | 75 | 89 | 86 |
| | | % pass rate | 75 | 91 | 69 |
| National diploma in travel and tourism | 3 | No. of starts | 20 | 41 | 31 |
| | | % retention | 80 | 59 | 81 |
| | | % pass rate | 87 | 83 | 80 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

78. Teaching is generally satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers shared the aims and objectives of the lesson with the students and used handouts effectively to reinforce learning. Students made use of ICT resources effectively, especially in their research on the travel industry. The development of students' key skills is inconsistent. Whilst learning objectives for lessons include key skills these objectives are often not followed through. A key skills co-ordinator has recently been appointed and is working closely with staff to help embed the key skills into assignments. Some aspects of the teaching are uninspiring. For example, in one lesson, students spent excessive time copying notes from overhead transparencies. In another lesson, time management was poor. Some activities went on for too long, losing the attention of weaker students and not stretching the more able.

79. Assignment briefs are well written with clear tasks, using industrial scenarios. Students receive detailed feedback from teachers, giving them the opportunity to improve their work before final

submission. All students have the option of undertaking work experience. Students gain experience in the college travel agency before undertaking work experience in the local travel industry. Visits to local and national visitor attractions and an overseas residential stay add to their knowledge of the industry. Links with industry are well established. For example, Luton airport provides a useful resource for student visits and staff and student industrial placements. There are good links with a national airport operator who delivers a ground handling qualification as enrichment for students.

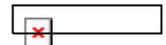
80. Students have access to a good range of books in the library, but these are not well used. There is poor access to ICT facilities for independent study by students. There are very few computers in the library and most other computers are in designated classrooms and access is not always available.

81. Pastoral support is good and students speak highly of the support received from teachers. Regular reviews are undertaken to monitor and review progress and at course team meetings teachers discuss and closely monitor students' progress and attendance. All students undertake initial assessment. The results are recorded and then shared across the teaching teams. The results of these assessments are used to inform the planning of lessons. However, some of the lessons plans did not show differentiation of teaching and learning activities to meet the individual needs of the wide range of abilities within the class.

Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are effective. The new head of department has introduced a wider range of courses to meet the needs of local industry and the interests of most students. The Learning Provider Handbook is followed and all procedures are being embedded into the curriculum area. The self-assessment report is accurate and reflects the weaknesses found in the inspection. Staff benefit from the support offered in staff development sessions on literacy and numeracy and the tutorial system.

Hairdressing



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **outstanding (grade 1)**

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on hairdressing

- the consistently high standard of teaching and learning

- the high level of students' attainments, particularly in African Caribbean courses

- well-equipped salons which reflect industry standards

- comprehensive support systems leading to good student progress

- enhancement of students' learning through good industry links

- strong management and teamwork.

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

83. There are 209 students on full-time courses and part-time courses have attracted 71 enrolments. Full- and part-time provision includes hairdressing NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3, African-Caribbean hairdressing and barbering. There are specialist short courses in advanced cutting, colouring and long hair techniques. The college offers work-based learning and there are currently 74 foundation modern apprentices and 7 advanced modern apprentices who attend college for one day a week. The section offers flexibility in attendance patterns to meet the needs of mature students.

Achievement and standards

84. Standards of students' work are excellent. Vocational skills are extended by participation in external activities such as manufacturer product training. Students work well in practical lessons and demonstrate a high level of professionalism. They are eager to increase their occupational skills and are competitive. For example, level 1 students started work on clients at an early stage in their course and were cutting and colouring clients' hair with confidence and skills above this level. Students specialising in African Caribbean styles produce good work on chemical straightening, weaving and dread-locks. External clients, attracted by the good reputation of the college salons, come in regularly for hair cutting and styling. There is active participation and achievement in competition work, both locally and nationally. Students take pride in their work, their portfolios are well organised and ICT is used to enhance presentation. For example, using digital cameras, students photograph their clients in the salons and use the downloaded pictures to enliven their written work.

85. As the table below illustrates, there are good retention and pass rates on most courses in hairdressing. Results for advanced modern apprenticeships show an upward trend with good achievements on the NVQ programmes and on key skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ hairdressing full-time 1 year | 1 | No. of starts | 99 | 61 | 44 |
| | | % retention | 67 | 84 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 98 | 65 | 92 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|----|----|-----|
| NVQ hairdressing | 2 | No. of starts | 98 | 92 | 113 |
| | | % retention | 79 | 83 | 76 |
| | | % pass rate | 74 | 68 | 75 |
| NVQ hairdressing African Caribbean full-time 2 year | 2 | No. of starts | 82 | 74 | 82 |
| | | % retention | 82 | 74 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 59 | 82 | 74 |
| NVQ hairdressing full-time 2 year | 3 | No. of starts | 37 | 24 | 23 |
| | | % retention | 57 | 96 | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | 65 | 77 | 100 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

Quality of education and training

86. There is a consistently high standard of teaching and learning. Classes are well managed with clear aims and are taught with clarity and enthusiasm, generating good student participation. Students benefit from internationally recognised stylists who provide demonstrations and local salon employers who participate in team-teaching in the salon sessions. Students are aware of the expectations of industry. In theory sessions, a range of teaching methods are used to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. In one lesson, the teacher used coloured plastic coils to demonstrate the links and elasticity of the hair. Key skills are well embedded into the curriculum. Written work has constructive comments showing how students can improve their vocational standard by attending to weaknesses in key skills.

87. Employers keep good records of the on-the-job training of modern apprentices. One employer has created question-and-answer cards to test the knowledge of the learner at work. There is a team of full-time work-based learning assessors who attend regular meetings at the college. There is a seamless transition between students' experience at work and college. Systems and procedures used in the college curriculum area are also used in work-based learning to ensure a common approach, which benefits all learners. Employers have formed the 'EST' Elite Salon Training group, with a dedicated commitment to the college. Examples of employer-led events include involvement in the organisation of the awards ceremonies, external visits and competitions.

88. The excellent, specially designed hairdressing suite has four salons situated on the ground floor, providing good access for people with restricted mobility. They are attractively decorated and well designed with good equipment and quality products. The environment is busy and exciting. Throughout the section, there are good wall displays of students' activities and attainments. There is a good supply of technical support to ensure the efficient running of the salons. Health and safety and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) requirements are rigorously adhered to. Teachers are highly qualified, regularly updating their products and skill knowledge.

89. Learning support for students is highly effective. For example, most lessons observed had additional support provided for students with basic skills needs. Students have a clear understanding about course requirements and the stage they are at with assessments. Teachers use the Learning Provider Handbook. The tracking system involves meticulous reviews of students' progress. The system is rigorous; students hand in their assessments in good time. Students at risk of dropping out are carefully monitored. There is a student focus group of course representatives from whose meetings students have devised a 'study buddy system' as a form of peer-group support.

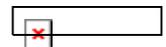
Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff work as a highly motivated and cohesive team. They have expanded provision and are assiduous in tackling weaknesses identified in the self-

assessment report. There is meticulous attention to detail in the organising of the curriculum. Staff are well supported in their roles with good personal development opportunities. All course and management documentation is of a high standard. Teachers are fully aware of their responsibilities and have a good understanding of college-wide issues. Prospective new teachers are required to shadow colleagues to share good practices and ensure effective standardisation across the section. Part-time staff are well supported.

91. The management of work-based learning is outstanding. Employers speak positively about their relationship with the college. Liaison officers have specialist knowledge of hairdressing and have a good working relationship with employers, who are involved in the review process and target setting of their students. The college support manual provides a comprehensive guide for employers to NVQ training and assessment.

Beauty, holistics and sports therapy



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates
- a wide and growing range of courses
- excellent students' work
- teaching which focuses strongly on developing high professional standards
- excellent facilities for developing occupational skills
- very good enrichment activities
- outstanding leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- missed opportunities for enhancing learning and attainment in a few lessons.

Scope of provision

92. Courses are offered in beauty therapy, holistics, sports therapy and health and fitness studies. NVQs are offered in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. Full-time beauty courses include a foundation beauty therapy programme, a make-up artist's diploma, an international beauty therapy diploma and a combined hairdressing and beauty therapy programme. Other full-time programmes are available in holistic therapy and stress management. There is a full-time foundation certificate in health and fitness studies, diplomas in sports therapy, advanced sports therapy, the personal trainer award and a national diploma in sports science. There is a wide range of part-time and evening courses. They include body massage, Indian head massage, reflexology, aromatherapy, facials, advanced nail techniques, sports event massage and gym instruction. There are 363 students aged 16 to 18 and 145 adults on full-time courses. Of the 846 part-time students, 94% are aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

93. Students' practical work is of a high standard and often outstanding. For example, beauty therapy students excel at theatrical make-up skills such as creating animal themes, fantasy make-up, injuries, stage-show themes, false hair and the addition of prosthetics. Their understanding of background theory is very good and they apply it well to practical activities. Research skills are displayed in project work, for example, on period make-up and the use of levers and movement in sports science. Students participate well in discussions and demonstrate good reasoning skills when evaluating complex case studies. Most students' written work is good or very good and portfolios are well presented.

94. Students choose to take additional qualifications from a large number of options such as Indian head massage, gym instruction, body art and reflexology. Additionally, students are actively involved in many enrichment activities. These include taking part in national and local competitions in sport, make-up and permanent hair removal. They work with local theatre groups on pantomimes and other productions. Students create make-up designs for fashion shows and they participate in events for charities and schools. They visit specialist museums, exhibitions, professional football clubs, leading salons and universities. These external activities broaden students' understanding of their vocational area and allow them to develop their skills in a range of different settings.

95. As the table below illustrates, the retention and pass rates on most programmes are good and above the national average.

A sample of retention and pass rates in beauty, holistics and sports therapy, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Beauty therapy NVQ* | 2 | No. of starts | 25 | 75 | 57 |
| | | % retention | 84 | 87 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | 86 | 85 | 80 |
| Beauty therapy NVQ* 1 year | 3 | No. of starts | 28 | 32 | 37 |
| | | % retention | 89 | 84 | 92 |
| | | % pass rate | 76 | 78 | 82 |
| Beauty specialist diploma* | 3 | No. of starts | 50 | 8 | 27 |
| | | % retention | 84 | 88 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | 83 | 57 | 88 |
| Body massage certificate* | 3 | No. of starts | 64 | 28 | 127 |
| | | % retention | 80 | 93 | 85 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------|----|-----|----|
| | | % pass rate | 94 | 100 | 81 |
| Diploma in reflexology* | 3 | No. of starts | 87 | 50 | 51 |
| | | % retention | 84 | 92 | 96 |
| | | % pass rate | 92 | 84 | 88 |
| Advanced diploma in sports therapy* | 3 | No. of starts | 33 | 24 | 29 |
| | | % retention | 88 | 100 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | 90 | 96 | 63 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* Vocational Training Charitable Trust

Quality of education and training

96. Teaching focuses strongly on the development of high professional standards. Very good practical skills are learnt through lively and interactive demonstrations. Teachers are very good role models for students. They focus sharply on developing students' abilities and students demonstrate good professional conduct, high levels of client care and interpersonal skills and meticulous hygiene practices. Students are aware of the importance of working to tight deadlines. They generally have high standards of personal appearance and the professional attributes required by industry.

97. Each student's training is designed to meet his or her particular needs. Students receive helpful verbal feedback from teachers after each practical activity. Formal progress reviews are undertaken every six weeks and action plans are updated frequently. Additional support is provided for students to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Assessments are well planned and carried out effectively. Internal verification is thorough and assessors are observed frequently.

98. The college has excellent facilities for developing occupational skills. All practical areas have high-quality furnishings and equipment. Specialist accommodation is extensive and includes well-designed and professionally fitted clinics and salons. Access is good for disabled students. One student was easily able to manoeuvre her wheelchair when working in a beauty clinic. There is a stylish nail studio, a make-up studio, and two spa areas with steam, sauna and Jacuzzi. The fitness centre has a large, very well-equipped gymnasium, spa area, shower and changing rooms, a clinic, a large exercise studio and a reception area. There is a large and busy reception area where beauty and holistics students develop very effective receptionist skills. It contains extensive displays of retail products and students' work. Students are used to working in good-quality, industry-standard accommodation and can comfortably transfer their skills to the real workplace.

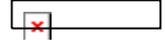
99. There are missed opportunities for enhancing learning and attainment in some lessons. In a small number of sessions, there were insufficient numbers of clients for students to practise and develop their skills. In one lesson, most of the black and white students sat in separate groups away from each other. The teacher's time was not evenly spent between the two groups of students. A high number of visual images of people were used in another lesson but they did not reflect the ethnic diversity of Luton.

Leadership and management

100. Leadership and management are outstanding. Planning and monitoring procedures are very thorough. Targets are set for improvements at the beginning of each college year and progress towards meeting those targets is monitored on a termly basis. All staff make good use of the management information system. Staff meet frequently to discuss a range of curriculum issues. Course review documentation is well designed and captures all of the key information required for managers to make effective decisions. Staff receive training on how to use the review documentation so that course reviews are clear and effective. All members of staff have their

individual performance appraised on an annual basis. Targets are set for personal development and most staff have their progress towards meeting their targets effectively reviewed after six months.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- very good teaching

- outstanding pass rates

- very good retention rates on many courses

- exemplary support for students

- excellent, effective community links

- good resources to support learning.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on the diploma in nursery nursing

- inappropriate accommodation for some learning activities.

Scope of provision

101. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in child, health, and social care and counselling. Students are able to work towards NVQ, GNVQ, AVCE and the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) awards, and units accredited by the National Open College Network. The department offers part-time courses during the day and in the evening.

Provision is developed in response to requests from employers. The department also provides courses in community locations that encourage students from under-represented groups to enrol. Students are able to progress from foundation-level to HE courses, employment or professional training. There are currently 218 students aged 16 to 18 and 74 adults enrolled on full-time courses. Of the 642 part-time students, 81% are aged over 19. The inspection covered full-time courses and a sample of part-time provision.

Achievement and standards

102. Students' pass rates are outstanding. Since 2001, most students who have enrolled on courses have completed them and achieved their qualifications. In 2001/02, all the students who completed the CACHE diploma in nursery nursing, the NVQ 3 in early years care and education and the intermediate GNVQ in health and social care courses achieved their qualifications. Student retention rates are very good on all courses except the nursery nurse diploma, where, in 2001/02, they declined to 14% below national average. However, following action to address this weakness, the current retention rate for the second year nursery nursing course is 83%. On the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma course retention rates have improved from 50% in 2000 to 88% in 2002.

103. In lessons, written work and in the workplace, most students demonstrated vocational knowledge and skills at a level above the normal standards expected for the stage of their courses. Mature childcare students were able to reflect on their experience of storytelling and identify criteria to evaluate the suitability of children's books. A student in a nursery effectively planned and managed a game to teach pre-school children to recognise coins. Nursing studies students demonstrated good skills in feeding patients who required specialised support.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and public services, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| GNVQ foundation in health and social care | 1 | No. of starts | 29 | 17 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 97 | 94 | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 94 | 80 |
| BTEC first diploma in public services | 2 | No. of starts | 12 | 10 | 17 |
| | | % retention | 50 | 70 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 83 | 71 | 93 |
| GNVQ intermediate in health and social care | 2 | No. of starts | 14 | 19 | 14 |
| | | % retention | 86 | 84 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | 92 | 81 | 100 |
| AVCE health and social care | 3 | No. of starts | 15 | 12 | 13 |
| | | % retention | 67 | 58 | 85 |
| | | % pass rate | 70 | 100 | 91 |
| CACHE diploma in nursery nursing | 3 | No. of starts | 34 | 25 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 59 | 60 | 61 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 93 | 100 |
| NVQ early years care and education | 3 | No. of starts | 35 | 6 | 37 |
| | | % retention | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 71 | 100 | 100 |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

Quality of education and training

104. The quality of teaching is very good. Effective lessons were carefully planned. Increasingly complex tasks enabled students to build on and extend their vocational skills. Students related theory to current work practices. Public service course students increased their awareness of the need to promote equality through producing an imaginative wall display on human rights. They compared human rights with students' rights and those of clients using public services. Key skills are successfully integrated into vocational lessons and assessed through vocational assignments. In the few less effective lessons, teachers spent too much time recounting anecdotes and insufficient focus was placed on identifying key learning points.

105. Support for students is exemplary. All students on full-time and most part-time courses undertake initial assessment. Teachers use the results of initial assessment to plan lessons and support for individual students. Study support is available to students of all ability levels and it is highly valued by them. There is effective liaison between course teams and learning support tutors. The progress students make as a result of support is carefully monitored. Mature students on access courses reported the benefits of study support in helping them with essay writing and note taking. Their confidence increased when weaknesses overlooked at school were identified and addressed through support sessions.

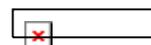
106. Personal tutors rigorously review each student's progress towards their learning goals every six weeks. As a result of the review, clear targets are set to help students improve their work and move on to the next stage of learning. Assignments are internally verified before students receive them. Assignment briefs are detailed and clearly identify tasks and assessment criteria. Students receive constructive feedback on the quality of their work, which helps them to make improvements.

107. There are good resources to support learning. Most lessons are located in bright, well-decorated classrooms supplied with audiovisual aids. Many rooms have computers. Good displays of students' work celebrate their achievements and provide a lively learning environment. There is a good range of specialised resources to help students develop vocational skills. Teachers use clear handouts and overhead transparencies containing summaries of the key learning points. The library provides useful resources for teachers and students. Students have good access to computers. However, some accommodation is inappropriate for the type of learning activity. A few classrooms are too small for practical and group work. The room used in a community centre was too small for the group of students and tutorials were observed in corridors.

Leadership and management

108. Courses are generally well managed. Work schemes and lesson plans are carefully constructed and of a consistently high standard. Course handbooks provide useful information on course content, learning and assessment strategies and assignment schedules in addition to information about the college's expectations of student behaviour. Course teams meet regularly to review their courses and the progress students make. Lesson observations and students' views are used to inform the judgements teachers make about the quality of their provision. Improvements resulting from student feedback include introducing a homework diary, rescheduling courses for mature students and introducing additional practical activities to lessons.

Art, design and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- good-quality practical work

- good teaching and assessment practice

- good resources and accommodation

- strong leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on some courses.

Scope of provision

109. The college offers an extensive range of full-time and part-time courses in art, design and media. The majority of students within art, design and media are full time. There are eleven full-time courses: three at level 2, seven at level 3 and one at level 4. Additional subjects in GCE AS media, fashion, fine art and photography are offered to enrich the experience of students at advanced level. The diploma in art and design foundation recruits post-GCE A-level and mature students. Within creative studies, there are four full-time courses and 26 part-time courses offered across a range of subjects including fashion, clothing and textiles. There are currently 258 full-time students and 284 part-time students. At the time of inspection, 48% of students were aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

110. The standard of students' practical work is good. They demonstrate knowledge and skills in a range of work including exploratory work, research, design and finished artwork. Theory is effectively linked to practice. Students have a good range of vocational skills. They develop good skills in visual research and critical analysis. They are confident in presenting and discussing their own ideas and developing individual styles. This is particularly evident in visual and design studies. Students on media courses are working to the high standards expected by industry. Positive evaluations about the students' knowledge and abilities were received from employers who offer placements for students. Students are often successful in competitions. In creative studies, a student on the foundation course won a national prize for her achievements from an awarding body and won a place at a London fashion school. This student's work was considered to be of such a high standard that she was invited to go straight into the second year of a degree course.

111. Pass rates are high on most full-time and part-time courses. In 2001/02, there was a 100% pass rate on GNVQ intermediate art and design, national diploma in fine art, and art and design foundation studies. The retention rates for media courses, the national diploma in general art and design and fine art for 2001/02 were significantly below the national averages.

A sample of retention and pass rates in art, design and media, 2000 to 2002

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| GNVQ intermediate art and design | 2 | No. of starts | 23 | 24 | 22 |
| | | % retention | 74 | 75 | 77 |
| | | % pass rate | 76 | 56 | 100 |
| GNVQ intermediate media | 2 | No. of starts | 21 | 21 | 24 |
| | | % retention | 81 | 67 | 71 |
| | | % pass rate | 94 | 100 | 81 |
| Art and design foundation | 3 | No. of starts | 26 | 28 | 29 |
| | | % retention | 100 | 96 | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | 96 | 89 | 100 |
| National diploma media | 3 | No. of starts | 45 | 41 | 24 |
| | | % retention | 67 | 63 | 58 |
| | | % pass rate | 87 | 100 | 91 |
| National diploma in fine art | 3 | No. of starts | * | * | 15 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 67 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 100 |
| National diploma in general art and design | 3 | No. of starts | 20 | 16 | ** |
| | | % retention | 50 | 63 | ** |
| | | % pass rate | 92 | 75 | ** |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* course did not run

* course ceased to exist

Quality of education and training

112. The teaching observed was mostly good, with no sessions less than satisfactory. Lesson planning is thorough and supported by comprehensive schemes of work. Learning is primarily achieved through the completion of well-designed, challenging projects and assignments. All projects have clear aims and objectives, assessment criteria and deadlines for completion. Feedback from teachers is constructive and clearly identifies what students need to do in order to improve their work. In many lessons, teachers ensured that students had a secure basic understanding of the topic and the opportunity to develop skills before giving students the freedom to interpret their ideas creatively. For example, one group of part-time students were given a theme for a multi-media project, which they then interpreted and translated into a short film. Media students developed their skills in magazine layout by taking an article headline from their favourite magazine and then replicating it using layout software.

113. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Many teachers are also practitioners within their own specialist fields and make effective use of their experience in their teaching. This experience also provides a clear link between theory and practice. For example, a photography teacher brought in some of the equipment he used for underwater photography to a class, which enlivened the session.

114. Challenging targets for learning are regularly set by teachers. For example, fashion students were required to produce garments in terms of 21st Century baroque. The project stimulated and challenged the students and required them to research new areas of knowledge. Students enjoy being challenged in their learning and demonstrate good understanding and good recall when questioned. In one creative studies session, when a tutor was asked a question, she asked the student a question in response, to allow her to work out the answer for herself, which she did. In the less effective lessons, the teachers failed to check sufficiently that the students had understood the topics covered in class. Assessment is thorough. Teachers provide regular, detailed written feedback and use tutorials to help students improve the quality of their work.

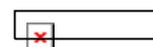
115. There is good and effective support for students. Students value the respect and support they receive from the staff. Teachers are aware of the students' individual needs and will set tasks to match ability. Additional support with literacy, numeracy and ICT is offered to students where appropriate. Students understand the purpose of initial assessment and are aware of the facilities for support offered by the department and the college as a whole.

116. Resources are particularly good. Classrooms provide a positive context for teaching and learning and students' achievement is celebrated through the display of their work on corridors and classroom walls. Students have good access to resources and can borrow cameras and other equipment for private study.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management are good. Staff are enthusiastic about their teaching and work very well together. The advanced learner practitioner supports newer members of staff with their professional development as teachers. Roles and responsibilities are clear and there is a common approach to quality assurance across the department and compliance with departmental procedures and systems. Strategies for improving retention rates across all provision have been devised and successfully implemented.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good attention to students' individual needs

- effective initial assessment and monitoring of learning

- good range of provision to meet community needs

- well-planned and managed courses.

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of progression to non-ESOL courses

- unskilled teaching in a few lessons

- lack of resources in outreach centres.

Scope of provision

118. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in ESOL in Luton and Bedford. In Luton, the provision is based in the Charles Street Centre and in 21 locations in the Luton and South Bedfordshire area. In Bedford, most of the courses are held at the Westbourne Centre. Courses are offered from pre-entry through to level 2. Full-time courses offer basic ICT training as part of the course and some courses offer sewing. The college has successfully developed and built up its links with the local community and students come from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds, and age groups. Women from minority ethnic groups, who would not normally attend college, are able to attend courses run only for women, which are available at all levels. In addition, there are groups run only for men.

Achievement and standards

119. On most courses, retention and pass rates are satisfactory. Students' attendance is good. They contribute confidently in lessons and develop good language skills. In one lesson, students were able to ask and answer questions about their life experiences. In another lesson, students were able to read a simplified version of Yellow Pages to find relevant information that would help them solve a number of problems, such as the need to repair a broken washing machine. They later practised making a telephone call to express their needs and make arrangements for someone to call.

120. On all courses, there is a daily focus on individual achievement of lesson objectives, which enables all students to evaluate progress made and track their own improvement over time. This is particularly effective for students whose progress is slow, such as those who have been in Britain for some considerable time without having learnt English and for those who have poor literacy skills in their own language. However, there was low attainment in some classes where students arrived late for the class and missed crucial information, or in others where the needs of weaker students were not catered for sufficiently well.

Quality of education and training

121. In lessons, there is strong attention to students' individual needs. All teachers demonstrate good personal knowledge of their students and in some lessons this was put to good use in the form of personalised teaching materials. In one lesson, the teacher projected a group photograph of the students on to a smart board to practise prepositions of place. In a subsequent activity, stronger students used an additional photograph for comparison so that they could construct more complex sentences. In contrast, in many lessons, there was an over-reliance on photocopied exercises from course books, which did not always provide appropriate contexts for language practice. In less effective lessons, students spent long periods copying information that in some cases they were unable to understand, or hurried through a number of tasks which were not adapted to the ability of the group.

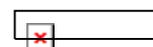
122. There is effective initial assessment and monitoring of learning. An initial diagnostic assessment ensures that students are placed on a course at the correct level and at a venue of their choice. These sessions are held weekly and students are able to join courses throughout the year. Teachers provide effective pastoral support. They assess students' individual learning needs and if necessary arrange for extra staff to support them in lessons. Every six weeks, tutors meet with students individually for a review of their progress. Opportunities for progression within the ESOL provision are good. However, despite many students' English language being at an appropriate level for progression to other courses, there are insufficient links with vocational areas and little formal support to enable students to access the wider provision of the college. There is no systematic monitoring of progression beyond ESOL.

123. There is a good range of provision to meet community needs. Teaching accommodation is located within local community centres, schools and religious organisations. Students comment on the importance for them of attending a course close to their home. Timetables are organised to suit the needs of those with children or in employment. There are classes that cater for the needs of those who would rather study in single-sex groups. In women-only groups, teachers commented on the increasing confidence of women who had previously not attended classes. Many of the community venues provide a welcoming atmosphere but, in some venues, rooms are cold and drab. Others are cramped because of too much furniture and this prevents effective group work for speaking activities. At many venues, there were few resources, such as cassette recorders or reference materials for teachers, and there were no resources to support students' independent study. Whilst students expressed their satisfaction with the teaching they received, they said they would like to be able to use computers for independent study and to be able to borrow books to read at home.

Leadership and management

124. The courses are well planned and managed. Schemes of work are comprehensive and shared with students. An experienced team member supports new staff in their role. Teachers speak highly of the college's commitment to training. Good practice in teaching is shared informally in the staff room and in meetings, but there is little formal training to support and improve the teaching skills of staff. Many staff have initial ESOL training but little experience in developing resources that are relevant to the students they teach, and as yet there are few ESOL-specific resources available for use by staff. Many of these staff work in outreach centres and support for them working in the community is not always sufficient for their needs.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- well-managed provision

- high pass rates

- effective monitoring of students' progress

- good practical application of skills
- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- delays in providing literacy and numeracy support in a few areas
- poor retention in basic literacy programme.

Scope of provision

125. Basic skills provision is available as discrete programmes of literacy and numeracy and to support students on vocational courses. The discrete provision is based at a site in Luton and a site in Bedford. Students can also attend off-site locations. More than 60% of the Luton provision and 30% of the Bedford provision is based in community locations. Examples include a weekly literacy session offered as part of a computer course at a hostel for the homeless and literacy and numeracy sessions held in a day centre for adults with mental health problems, a library and a church. Full-time, part-time and evening provision is available. Basic literacy and numeracy support is offered on all the main college sites. At the time of inspection, there were 18 full-time enrolments and 520 part-time enrolments for discrete literacy and numeracy courses and 904 students on college courses receiving additional literacy or numeracy support.

Achievement and standards

126. Pass rates on all courses are high and consistently exceed national averages. Three-year trends show that all courses have consistently had pass rates of between 78% and 100%. Retention rates are at or above national averages on most courses. In literacy lessons, adult students made good progress in applying newly developed skills to practical situations, for example, reading aloud the books they wanted to teach to their children. Many were able to read sections from newspapers and could find information available in the library.

Quality of education and training

127. Most teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a good knowledge of the skills development needs of students. In the better lessons, teachers prepared learning materials and activities to reflect the range of interests and abilities of students. They used a variety of activities to enable students to develop and apply their skills to new situations. One group of students produced a magazine containing topics reflecting their personal interests. These included Christmas, sub-aqua diving and sari making. Another group of students in a day-care centre produced a guide to their centre's services.

128. In numeracy sessions, teachers use everyday activities for students to develop and apply their number skills. One group estimated the size of everyday objects and then measured them to check the accuracy of their estimations. In a few lessons, teachers relied too much on worksheets and students lost interest in the task.

129. Teachers monitor students' progress effectively. They regularly review students' work and record progress. Additional learning support needs for students are identified through initial assessment at the start of their courses. Additional support offered varies from individual support sessions or lessons in small groups to support delivered in a vocational context in class. There are close links between basic skills teachers and vocational teachers, and the effectiveness of the additional support is carefully monitored. However, the teaching of basic skills in a few of the learning support sessions was not related to the vocational context with the result that students could not relate the concepts to their subject interest.

130. Students on discrete courses are well supported. Basic skills teachers have a good understanding of barriers to learning and provide effective support for students needing financial advice, help with solicitors' letters or to open bank accounts, or personal counselling. Students with disabilities are effectively supported. One student with mobility problems spoke warmly about the speedy help he had received over a parking problem. Students with hearing impairment have the services of a communicator.

131. Resources to support learning are satisfactory. In one centre, resources include assignments relating to everyday topics such as home energy and job search as well as the written section of the driving test. In another site, resources are located in the library and are only available during opening hours. Laptops in the main sites and outreach centres are used extensively. There is insufficient use of radio or audiotapes as teaching or learning aids.

Leadership and management

132. The management of basic skills provision is effective. Each college site has a co-ordinator. Staff are knowledgeable about the new national curriculum for adult basic skills. Communications within and across sites are effective. Staff development is well planned and reflects the Skills for Life initiative. Additional support for basic literacy and numeracy is coherently planned and implemented in the majority of vocational areas. However, not all students identified as needing support in basic skills were receiving it because of staff shortages in a few curriculum areas. Teachers from several curriculum areas have attended training in the new adult literacy and numeracy curricula.

133. Quality-assurance arrangements are sound. They include regular meetings at which internal verification is a standard item. Lesson observations are used to provide feedback to teachers on how to make improvements and to provide evidence for judgements on the quality of basic skills provision. The college's self-assessment report for this area is a comprehensive document. It accurately identifies the strengths of the provision and the majority of the weaknesses.

Part D: College data

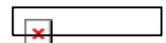
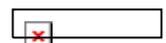


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



| Level | 16-18 | 19+ |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1 | 33 | 31 |
| 2 | 38 | 17 |
| 3 | 18 | 11 |
| 4/5 | 0 | 1 |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Other | 11 | 40 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

| Curriculum area | 16-18 | 19+ | Total |
|--|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | No. | No. | Enrolments % |
| Science and mathematics | 536 | 2,065 | 7 |
| Land-based provision | 12 | 144 | 0 |
| Construction | 493 | 933 | 4 |
| Engineering, technology and manufacture | 756 | 1,151 | 5 |
| Business administration, management and professional | 535 | 3,535 | 11 |
| Information and communication technology | 853 | 2,725 | 10 |
| Retailing, customer service and transportation | 37 | 28 | 0 |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel | 595 | 822 | 4 |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | 886 | 1,432 | 6 |
| Health, social care and public services | 509 | 8,645 | 25 |
| Visual and performing arts and media | 286 | 725 | 3 |
| Humanities | 60 | 365 | 1 |
| English, languages and communication | 455 | 924 | 4 |
| Foundation programmes | 2,108 | 5,470 | 20 |
| Total | 8,121 | 28,964 | 100 |

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

| Level (Long Courses) | Retention and pass rate | Completion year | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| | | 16-18 | 19+ |
| | | | |

| | | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Starters excluding transfers | 804 | 1,062 | 573 | 1,216 | 1,384 | 1,025 |
| | Retention rate (%) | 80 | 73 | 75 | 69 | 71 | 71 |
| | National average (%) | 80 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 78 | 78 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 70 | 69 | 69 | 63 | 76 | 86 |
| | National average (%) | 59 | 65 | 68 | 60 | 66 | 68 |
| 2 | Starters excluding transfers | 1,780 | 1,819 | 1,663 | 1,785 | 1,817 | 1,766 |
| | Retention rate (%) | 73 | 76 | 79 | 78 | 73 | 76 |
| | National average (%) | 76 | 76 | 76 | 79 | 79 | 78 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 64 | 73 | 70 | 69 | 76 | 72 |
| | National average (%) | 65 | 66 | 69 | 62 | 65 | 69 |
| 3 | Starters excluding transfers | 1,095 | 872 | 901 | 1,623 | 1,655 | 1,712 |
| | Retention rate (%) | 86 | 75 | 76 | 84 | 81 | 85 |
| | National average (%) | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 78 | 78 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 74 | 78 | 76 | 70 | 65 | 72 |
| | National average (%) | 72 | 74 | 76 | 62 | 66 | 69 |
| 4/5 | Starters excluding transfers | 12 | 6 | 22 | 227 | 229 | 228 |
| | Retention rate (%) | 75 | 83 | 91 | 85 | 78 | 86 |
| | National average (%) | 83 | 79 | 82 | 84 | 81 | 84 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 40 | 60 | 85 | 62 | 51 | 51 |
| | National average (%) | 64 | 66 | 55 | 56 | 56 | 53 |

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1999 to 2002: 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) | 71 | 28 | 1 | 84 |
| Level 2 (intermediate) | 69 | 26 | 5 | 79 |
| Level 1 (foundation) | 81 | 14 | 5 | 36 |
| Other sessions | 58 | 29 | 11 | 34 |
| Totals | 70 | 25 | 5 | 233 |

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