Redcar and Cleveland College

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Basic information about the college

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Name of college:	Redcar and Cleveland College
Type of college:	Tertiary
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Chair of governors:	Graham Hillier
Unique reference number:	130573
Name of reporting inspector:	Paul Curry HMI
Dates of inspection:	4-8 October 2004

Part A: Summary

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Information about the college

Redcar and Cleveland College is a tertiary college based in the seaside town of Redcar in the borough of Redcar and Cleveland. The borough lies south of the river Tees near its estuary to the North Sea. It serves an urban area covering south-east Middlesbrough, Redcar, Guisborough, Marske and Saltburn and the rural area of East Cleveland. The college was formed in 1994 following the merger between Cleveland College of Further Education (FE) and the Sir William Turner Sixth Form College. It operates on two main sites. The principal site, incorporating the Sir William Turner (sixth form) Centre, is near to the town centre, and the Connections campus (mainly used as an adult and business centre) is 1.5 miles away. The college uses several other centres away from the two sites, most notably at South Bank, Loftus and Grangetown where unemployment is above the national average.

Redcar and district has a combined population of 134,065 inhabitants with a slightly higher proportion of females. The area originally provided extensive employment in steel manufacturing, chemical production and mining. Currently, the main occupations are metal manufacturing, fabrication, wholesale and retail distribution, chemicals and synthetic fibre production. The borough has an unemployment rate of 5.2% (2002); Grangetown and South Bank have rates of 7.7% and 6.4%, respectively. The minority ethnic population of the borough is low, at 0.7%.

The college is one of the two main providers of post-16 education located in the borough. The other is a sixth form college located 7 miles away in Guisborough. The college recruits full-time students from eleven 11 to 16 schools and from two special schools. The proportion of pupils in the borough gaining five or more grades C or above in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examinations in 2003 was 46.6% compared with the national rate of 51.8%.

The college curriculum covers 13 out of the 14 areas of learning and is delivered through two schools incorporating nine curriculum areas. About 36% of courses are run at entry and foundation level, 31% at intermediate and 20% at advanced level; the remainder are in higher education (HE). Work-based learning covers approximately 80 trainees on apprenticeship training, and a similar number on New Deal programmes. Training is also provided for employers under the New Deal employment option. The college is part of the University of Teesside partnership and also has links with the University of Huddersfield. A significant element of college delivery comes through two major local franchises. The two franchisees are training providers that have been linked with the college since 1994, one providing mainly engineering courses (TTE Management and Technical Training) and the other business administration courses (North East Chamber of Commerce). During 2002/03, a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) has been established in partnership with TTE in specialised engineering for process and manufacturing industries. All engineering provision has now been transferred to a single site at TTE's Edison House in South Bank.

- college's mission is to be a `centre of excellence in education and training and to contribute to the development of the local community'.

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged that the quality of the curriculum is good in construction, health and social care. Engineering, business, information and communication technology (ICT), hairdressing and beauty

is unsatisfactory. Contributory grades were awarded for work-based learning in construction which is satisfactory and business administration which is good. Overall pass and retention rates are satisfactory; they have improved over the last three years. Some 63% of teaching is good or better and 5% is unsatisfactory.

Key strengths

- o improving pass rates at all levels
- o good provision in construction and health and social care
- o productive external partnerships
- o successful promotion of social inclusion initiatives
- o effective support for students.

What should be improved

- o too much teaching which is only satisfactory
- o insufficiently rigorous course reviews
- o missed targets for recruitment and growth
- o unsatisfactory provision in visual and performing arts
- o slow progress in addressing some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection.

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.** Work-based learning contributory grade is **satisfactory**. High pass rates are a feature of most courses, teaching in practical sessions is good. Workplace skills are developed to industry standard; support for all students is effective. Retention rates on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) foundation and intermediate certificate programmes are unsatisfactory; there is slow progress towards completing apprenticeship frameworks and a lack of reliable data to inform planning.
Engineering	**Satisfactory.** Pass rates on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes are high; attendance and punctuality in lessons are good, as is the quality of practical training. There is a high level of progression into employment and HE. Achievements on the national certificate course and some theory teaching are unsatisfactory. There are shortcomings in accommodation; progress towards achieving some CoVE targets is slow.
Business (including leisure)	**Satisfactory.** Business administration contributory grade is **good**. High pass rates are a feature of the legal secretaries' certificate,

	advanced vocational business and the management diploma. Teaching and learning on administration courses are good; key skills are well integrated on full-time courses. Work-based learning is managed effectively. Retention rates on level 1 word processing are low, insufficient attention is given to meeting the learning needs of all students whose numbers are declining.
Information and communications technology	**Satisfactory.** There are high pass rates on most courses. Effective use is made of teaching aids; computing resources are extensive. Pass rates on the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma course are low and teaching strategies do not address the needs of all students; target setting is ineffective.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	**Satisfactory.** Pass rates on NVQ level 1 hairdressing are high; progression to higher levels of study and employment is good. Commercial skills are well developed on level 1 hairdressing and holistic programmes; tutorials are effective. The teaching of theory can be dull, key skills achievements are poor and resources are inadequate for the number of students enrolled. The management of data has been unsatisfactory.
Health and social care	**Good.** There are high pass rates on national diploma early years and NVQ level 2 care; progression to relevant employment or further study is good. Teaching on adult programmes is very good, the range of provision is wide. Retention and pass rates on public services programmes are poor, there is insufficient participation by students in large groups; course reviews lack rigour.
Visual and performing arts	**Unsatisfactory.** Pass rates on advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) art and design are high; there is good teaching in dance and digital imaging. Students with learning and physical disabilities are successfully integrated into mainstream courses. Opportunities for additional study are extensive. Retention rates on performing arts courses and GNVQ intermediate art and design are unsatisfactory and pass rates on advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) art and design are poor. Standards of free-hand sketching and drawing are unsatisfactory and the accommodation for visual and performing arts is unsatisfactory. There has been no recruitment to part-time provision.
Humanities, English and modern foreign languages	**Satisfactory.** Pass rates are high on the majority of general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses and on GCSE English. Teaching on English and communications studies, psychology, and access courses is consistently good; enrichment opportunities are extensive. Retention rates are low on too many courses as is progression from AS-level to GCE A-level courses. Insufficient attention is given to improving teaching.
Literacy and numeracy	**Satisfactory.** There is good development of personal and learning skills, pass rates on certificates in adult literacy and numeracy are high. Initial assessment is used effectively to inform planning in many lessons and learning resources are well matched to students' interests and learning goals. Pass rates in GCSE mathematics are unsatisfactory and declining; teaching is insufficiently stimulating in some lessons. There are shortcomings in the planning of additional literacy/numeracy support and a lack of rigour in course reviews.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and the principal have set a clear strategic direction for the college which is responsive to local and national priorities. The college has a clear commitment to equality and diversity and successfully works with the wider community to provide a broad range of educational and training opportunities. Over the last three years, retention and pass rates have improved and are satisfactory. Attendance rates have improved and are now high. Communications within the college are good. The principal and other managers promote an open and supportive culture. The new management structure has simplified lines of accountability and is placing greater emphasis on improving teaching and learning. There have been significant improvements in the reliability and accessibility of management information. Arrangements for appraising staff have also improved recently. Enrolments are declining. The college has failed to reach its financial targets for each of the last three years. Progress to address some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection has been slow. Actions to improve the quality of teaching have not had sufficient impact. Many course reviews lack rigour and are insufficiently evaluative.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. Widening participation and promoting equality of opportunity are key strategic priorities. Links with the voluntary sector and community organisations are productive in delivering a range of provision which meets the needs of under-represented groups in FE. Access for students with restricted mobility is generally good; the college is particularly successful in enabling students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to work in mainstream provision. The college has a detailed equal opportunities policy and a clear strategy for meeting its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Although the college monitors the implementation of the policy, the resulting audits are insufficiently evaluative.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

There is good support and guidance for students. Pre-course advice and guidance provides a range of useful information to students. Induction arrangements are well planned and prepare students well for their course. Initial assessment arrangements effectively identify particular learning needs for students and appropriate support is provided in almost all cases where additional help is required. The tutorial system is well organised and valued by students. Students receive helpful advice about progression to employment and HE. Arrangements for counselling, welfare and financial support for students work effectively. Child protection policies and procedures are satisfactory. Support for students who have disabilities is satisfactory; provision for students who require childcare is adequate.

Students' views of the college

presented below.

What students like about the college

- o   enthusiastic and caring staff
- o   good standards of teaching
- o   a friendly atmosphere
- o   helpful individual support
- o   wide range of courses
- o   good learning resource centre
- o   feeling safe in the college
- o   being treated like adults.

What they feel could be improved

- o   staggered break times to avoid overcrowding in the canteen
- o   more enrichment activities
- o   some improvements to accommodation
- o   cheaper prices in the canteen
- o   adapted doorways for wheelchair users
- o   provision of a nursery on the main campus
- o   improved transport to the college.

Other information

The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole

Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	55	38	7
19+ and WBL*	77	19	4

Learning 16-18	56	35	9
19+ and WBL*	72	26	2

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. Summary data for students' achievements for the period 2001 to 2003 demonstrate that pass rates for all students are close to national averages. They are above national rates for adult students at level 3, but slightly below at this level for students aged 16 to 18. Over this period, overall pass rates demonstrate an improving trend; provisional college data for 2003/04 show a further continuation of this improvement, particularly for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 2 and 3. Retention rates are also close to national averages with the exception of level 2 where they were significantly above in 2000/01, but below in 2001/02. The most recent retention rate data, produced by the college for 2003/04, show that retention rates have improved at levels 2 and 3, but declined at level 1. Overall attendance in the lessons observed was 84% which compares favourably with the figure of 78% recorded at the last inspection. Attendance is highest in engineering and lowest in literacy and numeracy.

2. The separate reports on areas of learning in part C provide more detail about students' pass rates and the standards reached on particular courses.

16 to 18 year olds

3. Pass rates for this group of students, although improving at all levels between 2001/03, were still slightly below the national rate at levels 1 and 3 in 2003. On short courses, pass rates are consistently good. At levels 1 and 3, pass rates for those completing NVQs have improved significantly, although with declining numbers of students. By contrast, pass rates on general vocational awards in 2002/03 at level 2 declined dramatically compared to the previous year.

4. Retention rates at level 1 are above the national rate, but static and slightly below the national average at level 3. At level 2, retention rates, although improving, are still unsatisfactory. They are particularly poor on GNVQs and for male students as a whole, at this level. At level 3, retention rates have shown a marked decline on NVQ programmes, falling from 81% in 2000/01 to 42% in 2002/03.

5. Provisional college data for 2003/04 show GCE A-level pass rates averaging 95%, although with small numbers of students in some of the subjects taken. Results in AS-level subjects have improved, but the overall pass rate of 76% is still only satisfactory. Performance in GNVQ intermediate programmes is much improved. Although retention rates at level 2 and 3 improved in 2003/04, the number of enrolments at all levels fell, most significantly at level 3.

6. The college uses a system for comparing students' performance on advanced level courses with their prior GCSE grades, based on a national scheme. On this measure, students perform significantly better than predicted in government and politics and English literature, but below expectations in physics and sociology. Key skills achievements for this group of students are low, but comparable with national averages.

Adult learners

7. Pass rates for adult students are close to national rates at level 1, slightly above at level 2, and good at level 3. They have improved at all levels, particularly level 3, during the period 2001/03. In 2002/03, for example, the overall level 3 pass rate reached 83% compared to the national average of 74%. Similarly on short courses, pass rates are well above national figures. At level 1, whilst other pass rates were slightly below national figures, those for NVQ improved dramatically from 41% in 2000/01 to 98% in 2002/03. At level 2, GCSE achievements are good, although the number of students is declining. Pass rates at level 3 are particularly good on NVQ programmes, reaching 82% in 2002/03. More generally at this level, achievements on the part of male students in 2002/03, at 84%, were significantly higher than the national rate of 69%. Retention rates of adult students are generally satisfactory, although completion rates have shown a decline over the three years 2000/03 at all levels. At level 1, retention rates are good on NVQ programmes, but unsatisfactory on general vocational programmes at levels 2 and 3. It was also significantly lower for male students compared to females in 2002/03 at both these levels.

8. Provisional college data for 2003/04 show, albeit with some very small entries, that adults perform well in advanced level subjects and general vocational programmes at level 2. Retention rates for the same year are good at levels 2 and 3, but unsatisfactory at level 1.

9. The highest proportion of work-based learners is in construction, with smaller numbers in business administration. Retention rates on foundation and advanced apprenticeships have been consistently high with, for example, 100% figures on foundation programmes during 2000/02. Progress for many trainees has, however, been slow with the result that many remain in learning beyond their expected completion date leading to lower than anticipated framework success rates.

Quality of education and training

10. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 161 lessons. Teaching is good or better in 63% of these, satisfactory in 32% and unsatisfactory in 5%. The proportion of good or better teaching is slightly below the current national average, as is the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. This resulted in a larger proportion of teaching being satisfactory than is the case nationally. There is a marked difference between the quality of teaching of adults and that of students aged 16 to 18. In the case of adults, 76% of the teaching is good or better, compared with 55% for students aged 16 to 18. The grades awarded for learning are similar to those in teaching, but for attainment only 58% of grades are good or better, with 9% unsatisfactory. The highest proportion of good or better teaching is in construction and in health and social care; the highest incidence of unsatisfactory teaching is in engineering and business studies. Only one lesson observed was judged to be outstanding. The profile of grades does, however, represent an improvement over the last inspection carried out by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) where only 52% of lessons were judged to be good or better, with 11% less than satisfactory.

11. In the best lessons, teaching is well planned with considerable thought given to the methods used to sustain the interest of students and ensure that they learn and understand the subject matter. Teachers make good use of extensive industrial or commercial experience by effectively linking theory with practice to promote or reinforce learning. In construction, students work well on realistic assignments that capture their interest and effectively promote workplace skills. Students in health and social care benefit from broad ranging teaching methods which include well-directed questioning and working effectively in small groups. In ICT and humanities, potentially difficult concepts are made easier to understand with the help of presentations using computer data projectors, sometimes including simple animation and film. Students on hairdressing level 1 programmes more quickly develop commercial skills by working in practical lessons alongside level 3 students.

12. In the weaker lessons, learning activities are unimaginative. Students work at too slow a pace on activities that are insufficiently challenging. Consequently, many become bored or distracted. In

engineering, teachers often dominate the lesson and fail to sustain students' attention. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, students are not made sufficiently aware of the learning aims and objectives in theory lessons. Large teaching groups in health and social care are not always well managed. In business studies, insufficient attention is given to meeting the needs of all students in mixed ability groups. In some lessons, teachers fail to challenge students who arrive late. In ICT, lessons often start well with a clear explanation of the topic, but the pace slows once students start to work on their own. In literacy and numeracy, questions are not sufficiently targeted at individual students.

13. Satisfactory levels of staffing support learning throughout the college. Most full-time staff have a teaching qualification, many teaching vocational subjects have relevant and recent industrial experience. The staff development policy provides a priority to ensure that all staff update their qualifications and skills. The college provides a satisfactory range of specialist accommodation in many curriculum areas. Most rooms are well decorated and furnished, providing a welcoming learning environment. The café and restaurant for students and staff are good. Following recent improvements, access for students with restricted mobility and physical disabilities is generally satisfactory. The physical condition of one of the main buildings is showing signs of deterioration where there is also some surplus capacity. The functional suitability of rooms is inadequate in some areas, most notably in visual and performing arts, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and engineering. A recently formulated college accommodation strategy identifies some of these shortcomings and contains proposals to address them.

14. The provision of learning resources is generally satisfactory. It is good in construction, literacy and numeracy, humanities, and ICT, but unsatisfactory in hairdressing and beauty therapy. The learning resource centre provides a wide range of materials including an up-to-date stock of books, networked computers, and a variety of reference materials. While the college generally has a good supply of modern computers, there is a shortage in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

15. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress is well planned and carried out effectively in most curriculum areas. Business and health and social care in particular, have thorough assessment procedures with comprehensive feedback provided to students to help them make progress. In the best practice, assignment briefs are clear and include a full explanation of what is required to achieve each grade. Students' work is usually marked promptly and returned in a timely manner. Students are well informed of their progress and action plans for further improvement are provided. Assessment practice is unsatisfactory in visual and performing arts and not sufficiently consistent in ICT.

16. Internal verification arrangements across the college, in the main, work effectively. Each curriculum area has sufficient staff to verify assessment and the quality of coursework. Emphasis is now placed upon verifying assessed work as an ongoing process throughout the year. Internal verifiers across curriculum areas meet to share good practice. The awarding body and college requirements for verification of assessment on academic and vocational courses are fully met in most curriculum areas. Identified concerns raised by external verifiers are dealt with by appropriate development plans. Assessment practice in work-based learning is not fully effective. In construction, there are examples of insufficient and late collection of work-based evidence, and some individual student action plans do not contain assessment targets. However, in business administration, the assessment of students' competences is good.

17. The college provides a wide range of courses at all levels from pre-entry to advanced in most curriculum areas. These include access to HE programmes and work-based learning in construction and business administration. There are well-planned progression routes within and across departments and good links with universities that help students to progress into HE.

18. The college responds well to meet the needs of the local community. The local learning partnership is chaired by the principal and has college managers and curriculum staff serving on many of its sub-groups. The college works effectively with the voluntary sector and community organisations to deliver provision to under-represented groups in FE and training. It has been particularly active in working with a local women's centre, groups of asylum seekers, community wardens, disaffected young people and those returning to work. Specialist qualifications in street

cleaning have been developed to recognise the skills of many long-serving workers who have never had the opportunity to achieve a formal qualification. On-site assessment and training programmes for skilled but unqualified workers in the construction industry are offered as part of the national workforce development agenda.

19. The college has energetically developed its links with local schools through the increased flexibility (IF) programme. This involves over 700 pupils from local schools working across 8 curriculum areas. Other school-link projects include use of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) funded construction curriculum centre by both primary and secondary pupils and, `education other than at schools' pupils joining 16 to 19 programmes of study. Links with industry are generally satisfactory. There is, for example, a good partnership with a local National Health Service (NHS) trust. Most links with local business, however, rely on informal contact between individuals in curriculum areas and their counterparts in industry or commerce. There are no formal industrial liaison panels in the college, but the appointment of a business development manager is resulting in a more structured and planned approach to links with industry.

20. Support and guidance for students are good. Pre-course advice and guidance provides useful information to students. Pupils from local schools attend taster days to experience college life and develop an insight into their proposed course of study. Induction arrangements are effective and ensure that students are able to settle into college and their course quickly. A good range of support, welfare and guidance help is available to students throughout their time at the college.

21. Initial assessment arrangements effectively identify particular learning needs for students and appropriate support is provided in almost all cases where additional help is required. There is satisfactory help for students who require language support. Support for students who have learning or physical disabilities is effective and the college ensures all students with disabilities are fully integrated. The needs of full-time students for additional learning support are assessed at the start of their courses. Almost all students identified as needing support are receiving it. Action plans for improvement are agreed with subject teachers and personal tutors, who monitor students' progress and agree targets for improvement. Not all part-time students undertake an initial assessment.

22. The tutorial system is well organised, and valued by students. Full-time students receive relevant and effective support on both personal and academic issues from tutors. Tutorials are arranged on a group and individual basis and all students have at least one individual progress review each term. Part-time students refer to their subject teachers for general or specific support and guidance. The full range of support provision is available to part-time students, but this is not always taken up. Advice and guidance on progression to employment and procedures for applying to HE are well established and effective. Arrangements and provision for counselling, welfare and financial support for students are in place and work well. Financial support for students is provided through the availability of Educational Maintenance Allowances; students who do not qualify for this allowance can access the student support fund.

23. Child protection policies and procedures are satisfactory. There is a designated member of staff responsible for child protection issues. Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out for all new members of staff and retrospective checks have been undertaken for staff involved in advising or teaching young people aged 14 to 16 or vulnerable adults. Provision for students who require childcare is adequate, although there is no nursery provision at the main campus. The two private nurseries attached to other college sites are used to maximum effect and some students make alternative arrangements for childcare in the community.

Leadership and management

24. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Over the last three years, retention and pass rates

rates have improved and are good. However, enrolments of both full-time and part-time students have declined. The college has also failed to reach its financial targets for each of the last three years. Progress to address some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection has been slow, for example, retention rates are still unsatisfactory on a significant number of courses, particularly at level 2. Actions to improve the quality of teaching have not had sufficient impact; however, there has been some progress in improving the reliability and availability of management information.

25. Governors and the principal have set a clear strategic direction for the college which responds to local and national priorities. All staff are involved in the annual review and updating of the plan, which reflects the commitment to working in collaboration with a wide range of partners. However, the links between strategic and curriculum operating plans are not always clear and many of the targets to support actions for improvement are not sufficiently challenging or measurable. Governors are committed to the success of the college and they work hard to ensure its success. They have a good understanding and knowledge of the social and economic environment in which the college works. The principal ensures that governors are well informed about issues which relate to the implementation of the strategic plan. Governors have assessed their own performance and an action plan has been produced to address identified weakness. Good use is made of governors' skills in the composition and membership of the board and its sub-committees. The full corporation and the sub-committees receive reports on financial and academic performance. However, reports on academic performance do not clearly identify curriculum areas where achievements are unsatisfactory.

26. Communications within the college are good. The principal and other managers promote an open and supportive culture. Twice yearly staff briefings are held, there are regular newsletters, electronic communications and team meetings which effectively ensure that staff across the organisation have access to information and can present their views. Informal communications between the senior management team and other staff are frequent. Staff regard the senior management team as approachable and friendly. A new management structure has simplified lines of accountability and is placing greater emphasis on improving teaching and learning and on achieving the objectives set out in the strategic plan.

27. Curriculum management is satisfactory in most areas; it is unsatisfactory in visual and performing arts. The management of the CoVE in engineering is underdeveloped: steering group meetings are infrequent and progress in achieving some targets has been slow. Most course teams have an established cycle of meetings with standing agenda items relating to actions to secure improvements in standards. Good practice is generally shared within curriculum areas, but there is not an effective whole college approach to promote and disseminate good practice.

28. Quality assurance arrangements have not been reviewed or strengthened effectively since the last inspection. Insufficient use is made of centrally held data on attendance, retention and pass rates in reviewing the quality of provision or in setting targets for the following year. Although the views of students are collected and used to inform self-assessment, there is insufficient use made of employer feedback. Many course reviews lack rigour and are insufficiently evaluative. All staff are involved in producing an annual self-assessment of the curriculum. Many reports are not sufficiently self-critical and do not identify key weaknesses such as declining provision, failure to hit enrolment targets or the need to improve retention and pass rates. Self-assessment reports and associated development plans do not place sufficient emphasis on teaching and learning. Progress against targets set in course action plans is not monitored on a regular basis. Although the college has established arrangements for the observation of teaching, the internal grades awarded are higher than those of inspectors. In addition, inspectors do not agree with four of the nine self-assessed grades for curriculum areas. Strategies to improve standards of teaching have not had sufficient impact and actions by senior and other managers are not sufficiently swift or decisive to bring about improvements.

29. There have been significant improvements in the reliability and accessibility of management information in the last six months. Comprehensive and current reports on enrolments, attendance, retention and pass rates are now available; most are on the college intranet. These are not as yet used effectively to set targets, to plan the curriculum portfolio, or to improve standards.

Arrangements for appraising staff have recently improved. The system contributes appropriately to the identification of individual staff development which itself is satisfactory.

30. The college has a clear commitment to equality and diversity and successfully works with the wider community to provide a broad range of educational and training opportunities. The principal and other members of the senior management team are actively involved in attending and developing partnerships to widen participation and to meet the needs of the community. Statutory obligations in relation to the SENDA and the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 have been met. Data on the performance of different groups of students are not routinely reported to the board or used by managers to inform curriculum planning.

31. Student numbers have declined for the last three years, although there are early signs that recruitment of full-time students in 2004/05 has improved. Curriculum plans do not take into account trends in retention and pass rates. Curriculum managers are not sufficiently accountable for their income and expenditure. However, in the context of consistently improving pass and retention rates, the college is offering satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

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Construction

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

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

Strengths

- o high pass rates on nearly all courses
- o good teaching in practical sessions
- o high standards of industry-related skills from workplace training
- o effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- o unsatisfactory retention rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate certificate programmes
- o slow progress towards completing apprenticeship frameworks
- o lack of reliable data to inform planning.

Scope of provision

32. The college provides a broad range of programmes in brickwork, wood occupations, painting and decorating, plumbing, plastering, wall and floor tiling up to level 3, as well as technician courses. These include GNVQ foundation and intermediate and BTEC national certificate and diploma programmes which enable good opportunities for progression. Over half the enrolments are students aged 16 to 18; in addition, a large number of pupils from local schools participate in construction courses making use of a purpose-built curriculum centre. Course provision meets workplace needs and includes plastering and wall and floor tiling which are not normally available at most colleges.

Non-employed students undertake the foundation or intermediate construction award which can be converted to an NVQ with appropriate work-based evidence. Work-based learning is provided for 67 apprentices and a number of courses are organised for employers, including gas safety and NVQ training in insulation installation and energy efficiency.

Achievement and standards

33. During 2002/03, pass rates on most programmes were high. For example, on the national certificate and diploma programmes, pass rates were 100%; they were also significantly above national averages on NVQ carpentry and joinery and plumbing courses as well as the intermediate construction certificate. Retention rates are similarly good on the majority of programmes, with the exception of the GNVQ foundation award and intermediate construction certificate. Achievements have improved on most courses over the last three years, although inspectors found it difficult to reconcile some centrally held and local data. Those trainees on apprenticeship programmes receive good workplace training, despite making slow progress towards completing their frameworks. Many fail to finish within their target completion date mainly as a result of incomplete key skills achievements. Portfolios are generally of a high standard containing additional information sourced from the Internet and photographic evidence of completed work. Attendance is good, at 81%.

34. In recent years, students have represented the northeast in the national finals of `Skillbuild'. In 2003/04, three carpentry and joinery students represented the college in the regional stage of the competition, one of whom won the event and will now compete in the national final.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation construction	1	No. of starts	21	10	17
		% retention	48	70	59
		% pass rate	90	71	80
Intermediate construction award	1	No. of starts	27	25	41
		% retention	*	*	51
		% pass rate	*	*	81
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	13	18	18
		% retention	77	89	67
		% pass rate	20	62	83
BTEC national certificate building studies	3	No. of starts	11	12	15
		% retention	55	92	87
		% pass rate	100	91	100
BTEC national diploma construction	3	No. of starts	13	13	6
		% retention	54	85	100
		% pass rate	86	100	100

Source: individual learning records (ILR)

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

35. Teaching and learning are good: nearly all lessons are satisfactory or better; over two thirds are good or very good. In the best lessons, students actively participate and are closely supported by

well-qualified tutors, who use their industrial experience to add realism and relevance to practical activities. Most teaching is carefully planned; realistic assignments engage and motivate students. For example, in a brickwork lesson, students entered into an enthusiastic discussion involving the use of different types of thermal blocks and cavity wall insulation. In a minority of lessons, teaching is unimaginative and fails to sustain students' attention. For example, in the first hour of one graphical communication lesson, students were substantially copying notes from the board.

36. Teaching areas are well equipped; additional workshops for plastering, painting and decorating, and plumbing are nearing completion. There are sufficient materials and tools except in plastering, where some resources needed to meet a threefold increase in enrolments have not yet arrived. The layout of the plastering, and wall and floor tiling workshop is appropriate for small groups, but not for large classes and there is insufficient provision for students' personal clothing and belongings. Students are allowed to cut tiles using power saws without using ear protectors. Students value the modern computing facilities. For example, a group of plumbers used wireless laptops, installed in the construction wing, to access Internet references for health and safety data.

37. Assessment is fair and rigorous and students receive comprehensive written feedback. Key skills assignments are well planned. Students are clear about assessment requirements and the roles of assessors and verifiers, although they are sometimes uncertain about completion dates. Progress towards unit achievement is carefully monitored and displayed in workshops. In plumbing, this is available on the college's virtual learning environment. Digital photography is used extensively to record the outcomes from project work. Many on-site reviews lack detailed target setting. Comments recorded tend to be bland and repetitive. The review format does not permit in-depth identification and analysis of progression issues. Health and safety, and equal opportunities are not routinely covered and the tutor/employer grading of apprentice performance is unreliable and does not lead to specific action planning.

38. In work-based training, enthusiastic and committed employers, who range from sole practitioners to large multi-disciplinary organisations and site supervisors, provide good training and support for apprentices. Many employers are past students of the college and tutors have worked hard to develop good working relationships with them to create further employment opportunities. Apprentices demonstrate good on-the-job skills, achieving high levels of performance in demanding conditions, and which meet industry standards across a wide range of activities.

39. Vocational support is good with students undertaking initial diagnostic assessment. A significant proportion of apprentices are identified as requiring additional support and their needs are well catered for by the college. Initial assessment results are distributed to programme teams, although there is little differentiation within teaching strategies. Learning support staff provide help for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities during classroom-based sessions. Basic skills and vocational tutors work together in key skills lessons. Induction is well organised, using trade-specific handbooks. There is good practice in tutorials, with tutors helping students plan the effective collection of work-based evidence. Adult students are complimentary about the cross-college support they receive. A dedicated college work-based learning unit, open during and outside normal college hours, accommodates employer and apprentice queries.

Leadership and management

40. Staff are deployed effectively; most are engaged in a wide range of relevant technical, professional and academic development. An annual planning event is held and teachers value this as part of their continuous professional development. The central systems used for collecting and processing data have failed to produce data which can be readily verified by the department. The unreliable nature of this data has meant that teachers have been unable to undertake evaluation, planning and target setting with confidence. Course reviews are variable in quality. For example, not all courses include student questionnaire results; comments are often duplicated for different courses and appear in consecutive reports. There is no evidence of the effective promotion of equal opportunities on site for apprentices and no routine questioning and checking of understanding during reviews. Whilst the self-assessment report is a fairly accurate representation of the provision, inspectors discovered some additional key strengths as well as other weaknesses.

Engineering

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

Strengths

- o high pass rates on NVQ programmes
- o good attendance and punctuality
- o high level of progression into employment and HE
- o good practical training.

Weaknesses

- o unsatisfactory achievement on national certificate course
- o some unsatisfactory teaching in theory lessons
- o shortcomings in accommodation
- o slow progress in achieving some CoVE targets.

Scope of provision

41. The college operates a CoVE for the process and manufacturing industries, in partnership with TTE. In total, the CoVE provides engineering training at four different sites in the area, two of which are located within large industrial complexes. The scope of the CoVE also includes training for pupils aged 14 to 16, part-time and full-time vocational courses in mechanical engineering, production engineering, electrical installation, electrical maintenance, and instrumentation. Additional operations include work-based learning and a wide range of income generating courses. The inspection covered all learners on the full-time student engineering programme, and part-time learners attending day-release classes. Over two years, students complete an NVQ in performing engineering operations, together with a level 2 or level 3 vocational qualification. The majority then progress into employment and complete an advanced apprenticeship. Most of the 470 students are full time and aged 16 to 18. Part-time enrolments mainly comprise adults.

Achievement and standards

42. Achievements are variable across engineering. Pass rates on NVQ programmes are well above national averages. For example, in the three years up to 2003, pass rates on the NVQ level 2 course were at least 20 percentage points above national figures; those on the NVQ level 3 in engineering maintenance were 30 percentage points above. Achievements on the BTEC national certificate are poor and have been falling over the same three-year period. Following poor retention rates on the BTEC national diploma, the course has been relocated to the college main site for 2004/05. Progression into employment and HE is good. In 2003/04, 94% of learners on the student engineering programme progressed into employment and are now taking advanced apprenticeships. At least 75% of learners in process and electrical engineering progress to the higher national certificate (HNC). Attendance and punctuality in engineering are very good. Average attendance for the lessons observed was well above the national average, at nearly 90%. Staff have introduced an incentive scheme to encourage punctuality and learners arrive at their classes in good time. The standard of practical work completed by learners is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
City and Guilds 0601	1	No. of starts	280	73	60

process plan operations part 1		% retention	99	59	93
		% pass rate	95	53	93
GNVQ intermediate in engineering	2	No. of starts	**	103	76
		% retention	**	94	89
		% pass rate	**	59	87
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	110*	101*	110
		% retention	75	71	32
		% pass rate	96	82	100
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	30	30	50
		% retention	73	53	34
		% pass rate	73	69	59
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	14	12	18
		% retention	64	50	56
		% pass rate	67	50	80
NVQ engineering maintenance	3	No. of starts	73	66	40
		% retention	82	59	48
		% pass rate	83	77	89

Source:ILR

* NVQ in engineering foundation

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

43. Most of the teaching in practical lessons is good, however, there is some unsatisfactory teaching in theory lessons. The practical elements of training are good. Teachers often encourage trainees to learn from each other; they give close individual support to students and make frequent checks on learning. Proper attention is given to health and safety issues and safe working practices in all engineering workshops. By contrast, some of the theory teaching is unsatisfactory. Here, there is too much teacher exposition and any questioning of students is insufficiently directed at specific individuals. Little use is made of information and learning technology (ILT). Some of the classrooms in the CoVE area are unsuitable for large groups and broken external shutters restrict daylight. The library is small offering a narrow range of vocationally related texts and journals. All college lecturers are vocationally qualified and the training instructors employed by TTE have recent industrial experience in the specialist areas in which they work.

44. Learners' progress is thoroughly monitored, with individual targets set at review meetings. The tutorial system for full-time students is good: personal interviews are effectively used to review performance, update individual learning plans and agree future targets. Parents' evenings are provided for all full-time students, supported by an annual awards ceremony.

45. An IF programme for pupils aged 14 to 16 has been developed in partnership with local schools and is now in its second year of operation. Links with local employers provide a significant number of sponsored apprenticeship placements following students' completion of their training programme. Enrichment opportunities include a visit by national diploma students to the United States of America in February 2005 to sample robotics training. All potential students, including those who are unemployed, are invited for an interview which includes initial guidance and counselling to determine the most appropriate learning programme. Following enrolment, all students undertake a planned

induction programme and initial assessment that provides an appropriate basis for the development of individual learning plans.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There has been slow progress in achieving some of the CoVE targets, and learners currently on programme have yet to see many of the benefits anticipated within the CoVE development. For example, college and TTE contributions to the student engineering programme are not effectively integrated or co-ordinated. Some learners find that work they have undertaken with TTE staff is duplicated in their day-release classes. Integrated timetabling has not been realised and TTE staff are not involved in the college self-assessment process. Although the joint senior management team for the CoVE meet regularly, the steering group do not meet frequently enough. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory, but some course teams do not meet on a sufficiently regular basis and the schedule for team meetings does not allow individual teachers to attend all teams in which they are involved. All learners are introduced to equal opportunities issues at induction; they are also reinforced at learners' progress reviews. Those on the student engineering programme complete a half-day equal opportunities awareness raising programmes and health and safety training during their first year.

Business (including leisure)

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

Contributory grade for business administration is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- o   high pass rates on legal secretaries' certificate, advanced vocational business and the management diploma
- o   good teaching and learning on administration courses
- o   integration of key skills within full-time courses
- o   effective management of work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- o   low retention rates on level 1 word processing programme
- o   insufficient attention to meeting the learning needs of all students
- o   declining student numbers.

Scope of provision

47. A wide range of full-time and part-time courses is provided, from level 1 to level 5. These include courses in administration, management, accounting, legal, medical and leisure and tourism. There are 150 full-time students and 418 part-time students currently enrolled. Many course notes are now available online to provide more flexible access to students who are not able to come to college. Apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships to around 20 trainees are offered in administration. In both business and leisure, courses are provided for pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools.

Achievement and standards

48. Pass rates are high on the legal secretaries' certificate: in 2003, all students who completed were successful. Pass rates on the AVCE business programme have been above national averages for the last two years. Similarly, success on the management diploma has been consistently above

the national average for the last three years and was 100% in 2003. The GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism and AVCE in travel and tourism also performed well in 2003; pass rates on work-based learning programmes are consistently good. On some part-time courses, performance is unsatisfactory. For example, in 2003, the pass rate on the management certificate course was only 22%; retention rates on the legal secretaries' certificate and AVCE in travel and tourism were low in 2003.

49. For students aged 16 to 18, the standard of their work demonstrates a good development of application and analysis, although more limited use of evaluation. This is reflected in the relatively small proportion of high grades on business and leisure courses. For adult students, their work is of a good standard and meets awarding body requirements. Although attendance in lessons is high, at 85%, some students arriving late to lessons are not challenged.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business (including leisure), 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Word processing stage 1	1	No. of starts	65	51	46
		% retention	74	76	76
		% pass rate	83	77	74
Legal secretaries certificate	2	No. of starts	16	15	26
		% retention	100	67	50
		% pass rate	69	60	100
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	16	12	10
		% retention	56	75	90
		% pass rate	56	100	89
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	18	18	12
		% retention	89	83	75
		% pass rate	44	67	78
AVCE business and precursor	3	No. of starts	24	15	10
		% retention	62	100	100
		% pass rate	40	80	80
Diploma in management studies	4	No. of starts	17	28	20
		% retention	94	100	95
		% pass rate	100	96	100

Source:ILR

Quality of education and training

50. Teaching and learning in administration are good. For example, in a lesson for private secretaries on business report writing, a range of purposeful tasks was provided enabling students to appreciate the importance of layout, chronology, and the effective integration of data. On the legal secretaries' diploma, students were gaining confidence in their use of legal terminology as part of the production of a range of legal documents. On other business and leisure courses, teaching is satisfactory. Classroom activities provide variety and challenge; good use is made of students' experience and work roles on professional courses. However, in a number of lessons, there is insufficient attention given to meeting the needs of all students, with the result that some are not sufficiently challenged and others struggle to understand the elements of theory teaching. Training for work-based learners is effective with clear targets negotiated with students and appropriate

emphasis placed on them taking responsibility for their own learning.

51. Resources are satisfactory. Teachers are highly qualified with wide vocational experience including some staff who act as advisers on national awarding bodies. Learning resources for business students are up to date; the library contains a good selection of books, journals, newspapers, videos and CD-ROMs. The virtual learning environment, however, has only a small amount of material and few web links to enable students to work independently and develop their research skills. Classrooms are clean and tidy, but generally have no displays of students' work. Teachers do not have sufficient computers in staff rooms to prepare for lessons: in one room, for example, 17 teachers share 2 workstations.

52. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Assignments and homework are marked promptly and constructive feedback provided. Regular tutorials support the detailed monitoring of students' progress. An appropriate range of assessment methods is used in work-based learning including witness statements. Assessment records are satisfactory with regular feedback provided to students. Rigorous internal verification of assessment across courses is maintained; students clearly understand assessment criteria and awarding body requirements. Tracking sheets are used effectively in word processing classes which map students' progress and are updated regularly. The individual tracking in class on computerised accounting programmes is less effective.

53. Courses and the curriculum satisfactorily meet local requirements in business, leisure and management and professional programmes. However, student numbers have been declining recently. The curriculum is responsive to employer needs. For example, the college is used by a regional NHS trust for the training of medical secretaries; management courses are provided for the local council and a large steel manufacturer. Work experience is offered to all full-time vocational business students, although there are insufficient opportunities for leisure and tourism students. Key skills are effectively integrated within programmes, and the literacy and numeracy needs of all students are assessed with appropriate support provided.

54. Support for students is effective. Comprehensive advice is offered before enrolment; careers guidance is included as part of the tutorial scheme of work. Students' surveys confirm that staff are helpful and supportive. Individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and students have access to additional support throughout their programme. Management students receive effective individual coaching and guidance sessions.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Both, formal and informal communications are effective. Team meetings are held regularly and minuted; the action subsequently taken is monitored. Staff are kept well informed about examination requirements through their links with awarding bodies. Data, using students' entry qualifications, are used to set target minimum grades. The self-assessment report does not address the key weakness of declining provision within the programme area. Action plans do not identify those courses with low retention and pass rates. There is good promotion of equality of opportunity through the diversity of teaching materials. Work-based learning is managed effectively resulting in relatively high completion rates. The continuing overall decline in student numbers has resulted in some very low average class sizes.

Information and communications technology

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

Strengths

o high pass rates on most courses
o effective use of teaching aids
o extensive computing resources.

Weaknesses

o low pass rates on BTEC first diploma course
o teaching strategies which do not address the needs of all students
o ineffective target setting.

Scope of provision

56. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses, including a BTEC introductory award, first and national diplomas for information technology (IT) practitioners, AVCE ICT, programming awards, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), European computer driving licence (ECDL) and ECDL advanced courses. Flexible opportunities for study are available at Loftus and Middlesbrough, allowing learning opportunities promoting greater social inclusion. At the time of inspection, there were over 50 full-time and nearly 250 part-time students. Of the full-time students, nearly all are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

57. Most courses have high pass and retention rates that are close to, or above, the national average. An exception is the BTEC first diploma for IT practitioners where retention rates are unsatisfactory and the pass rate is poor. Students with little recent education experience quickly gain good skills in basic IT applications resulting in a very high pass rate on the CLAIT course that comprises mainly adult returners. Similarly, although with fewer students, the City and Guilds diploma for IT users demonstrates improved pass rates and, in 2004, all of those who completed were successful. Apart from students on the AVCE course, where project work has been insufficiently researched, the standard of students' work in lessons and in students' files is at least satisfactory and often good. BTEC first diploma students show a good understanding of simple programming structures in visual basic, whilst CLAIT plus students are able to integrate text, spreadsheet and data files into a composite document. In general, students have a good attitude to work. They usually arrive on time, and attendance at lessons is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	14	16	18
		% retention	71	63	72
		% pass rate	60	60	77
New CLAIT and precursor	1	No. of starts	375	317	131
		% retention	76	82	79
		% pass rate	69	73	83
BTEC first diploma for IT practitioners and precursor	2	No. of starts	12	17	18
		% retention	67	59	78
		% pass rate	63	70	29
City and Guilds diploma for IT practitioners and precursor	2	No. of starts	**	27	29
		% retention	**	56	41
		% pass rate	**	67	58

BTEC national diploma IT practitioners and precursor	3	No. of starts	20	26	25
		% retention	65	50	56
		% pass rate	90	100	93
City and Guilds 7261 advanced diploma in IT	3	No. of starts	69	60	42
		% retention	99	78	76
		% pass rate	99	78	76

Source:ILR

** course not running

Quality of education and training

58. Overall, teaching is satisfactory; much is good and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Most teaching is well planned to match the requirements of each course, although planning is often insufficiently responsive to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers make excellent use of presentation software and data projectors for demonstrations and exposition of material. Such presentations, which often include simple animation and film, enhance teaching and learning by communicating potentially difficult concepts in a way that makes them easier to understand. For example, one teacher used simple animation to demonstrate how a queue of data could be reversed by `pushing' items on to a stack and then retrieving them. In many lessons, a variety of teaching methods is used which maintains students' interest and motivation. For example, in one class of 12 adult students on a computer maintenance course, a good mix of theory and practical activities ensured that all students were appropriately challenged. After a good introduction from the teacher, students worked with a variety of computer components to learn about the development of computer memory modules. The teacher used his good relationship with the group to build their confidence and develop students' maintenance skills.

59. Some lessons do not sufficiently challenge students, particularly when students are working individually. These lessons often start well with a clear explanation of the topic, but the rate of learning slows once students start to work on their own. In these lessons, the teacher allows too much time to complete an activity, thus compromising learning and attainment. In one lesson, students used the virtual learning environment appropriately to print out a programming code table, but then spent too much time decoding the message retrieved.

60. Computing resources are of a high standard and used well to enhance students' learning. Students benefit from good accommodation and technical resources; areas for teaching and learning are well appointed with a strong subject identity, but the large number of computers in some rooms leads to insufficient space for students' course materials. During lessons, students work with current, commercial standard software. Students have ready access to computers during their private study time. Internet access is readily available and well used by students. The use of the college virtual learning environment as a learning resource is developing, with students making increasing use of this remote access facility. High-quality resource materials including handouts, PowerPoint presentations and assignment briefs are used effectively to promote learning. Assessment practice is sound. There are instances of helpful feedback on marked work, although some comments do not focus sufficiently on improvement.

61. In general, programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of students. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time computing and IT courses and creates good opportunities for internal progression. The outreach centres are particularly effective at meeting the needs of adult students new to IT. These students value the provision of a crèche which makes it easier for them to attend. However, there are low enrolments of female students on full-time courses. Opportunities for work experience are too limited; no full-time course has work experience built in and few other opportunities exist for students to learn about life outside the college.

62. Students receive good support and guidance. Student tracking and support in the outreach centres is good, and they are well supported in lessons. Appropriate advice, guidance and support are provided to enable the selection of relevant courses. The planned tutorial support for full-time students is very good; tutors use individual interviews to set and monitor targets for students' learning. However, the group sessions can be less effective with insufficient open-ended discussion of important strategies designed to improve learning skills.

Leadership and management

63. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Part-time courses, both in college and at the outreach centres, are well run and well supported. Full-time courses are well organised. These strengths are reflected in the sound teaching and high pass rates. Quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. Little rigorous self-assessment takes place and therefore cannot lead to identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement. Although carried out to meet college requirements, course reviews are poor and rarely contain well-argued targets for improving retention and pass rates. Management information is available, but is not used effectively to the benefit of students. A simple value added analysis of students' progress over time has been introduced on the BTEC national diploma course, but it has yet to impact on provision. Staff know their roles and responsibilities well and there is a programme of teaching observations. These are detailed and give a clear indication of strengths and weaknesses; staff development needs arising from lesson observations are recorded clearly. Lesson grades are subject to moderation, but the moderation process does not always lead to improvement. There is insufficient sharing of good practice, resources and expertise between staff.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

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

Strengths

- o consistently high pass rate on NVQ level 1 hairdressing
- o effective tutorials that support learning
- o good progression routes
- o well-developed commercial skills on level 1 hairdressing and holistic programmes.

Weaknesses

- o dull and uninspiring teaching in the majority of theory lessons
- o inadequate resources
- o poor achievement rate of key skills
- o unsatisfactory management of data.

Scope of provision

64. Hairdressing, holistic and beauty therapy provision is located at the Connexions and Loftus centres. A broad range of full-time and part-time programmes is offered from levels 1 to 3. Many students are able to successfully progress between these different levels and ultimately gain employment. There are also programmes in health and fitness and sports therapy at levels 2 and 3. Over 160 students are enrolled on beauty therapy programmes and about half this number are on hairdressing courses. In addition, over 100 local school pupils attend the college as part of an IF programme. Only three learners are enrolled on work-based provision.

Achievement and standards

65. Consistently high pass rates over the last three years are a feature of the NVQ level 1 hairdressing programme. In beauty therapy, pass rates at level 2 have improved over the last three years, with nearly all NVQ completers succeeding in 2002 and 2003. On the majority of part-time programmes, pass and retention rates are good. Provisional data for 2004 show that achievements are high or improving on most courses. By contrast, pass rates in all key skills subjects are poor. In addition, students at the Loftus centre have not received any key skills teaching since the start of their programme. Portfolios of students' work are of a good standard; they are encouraged to word process their written work. Practical skills are well developed, especially on level 1 hairdressing and holistic therapy courses. Attendance is good at 83%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	1	No. of starts	47	64	39
		% retention	77	84	82
		% pass rate	92	93	100
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	2	No. of starts	3	27	37
		% retention	100	78	86
		% pass rate	100	71	91
NVQ beauty therapy 1 year	2	No. of starts	18	42	36
		% retention	61	79	69
		% pass rate	45	91	100
NVQ beauty therapy 2 year	2	No. of starts	10	32	29
		% retention	60	50	62
		% pass rate	100	88	100

Source: ILR

Quality of education and training

66. Teaching and learning in the majority of lessons are satisfactory. In the best lessons, a wide range of learning activities is deployed with theory and practice interrelated. For example, in one holistic therapy lesson on body massage, the teacher made good use of probing questioning techniques to check the students' understanding of links between theory and practice. Role-play techniques were used to simulate the therapist-client relationship: communication skills were effectively developed as well as the sharing of knowledge about different techniques of body massage. Students on hairdressing level 1 programmes are well supported in their development of commercial skills by working in practical lessons alongside level 3 students. They are able to complete activities to a standard reached by apprentices in hairdressing salons. In too many theory lessons, teaching is dull and uninspiring. For example, in hairdressing, a theory lesson was conducted in a practice salon with poor resources. Students had no desks or tables to work on and found it difficult to write while trying to balance books and paper on their laps. The lesson was three hours long; the students became bored and disengaged in the learning process. In practical lessons, there is a lack of clients to enable students to develop the broad range of skills required to satisfy the different assessment criteria.

67. Teaching staff are well qualified with the majority of staff having up-to-date vocational skills. Two members of staff are additionally qualified to teach and assess key skills. Regular staff workshops enable teachers and assessors to update their practical skills in hairdressing using a range of outside clients. Resources in hairdressing and beauty therapy are inadequate. Towels for both areas are washed and dried in the same machine and there is a shortage of towels on some programmes. The beauty salons have insufficient capacity to support the growing numbers of students, being able

to accommodate only six students at a time. There is no provision in the two reception areas for students to use and sell retail products to clients. Technician cover is inadequate: only one part-time member of staff is available at the Connexions centre and there is no cover at Loftus. In the majority of classrooms there are insufficient computers for students to develop ICT skills and no data projectors for teachers to use.

68. All students are informed about the requirements for assessment at induction. They are assessed on their practical skills on an individual basis. There is a regular internal verification process in place: lecturers and assessors meet to share good practice and standardise provision. The marking of students' written work does not always provide sufficient pointers for improvement; grammar and spelling are not sufficiently corrected. The tracking of students' progress in practical lessons is not systematically undertaken. Full-time students have the opportunity to attend visits to hairdressing and beauty shows and exhibitions. There is a good range of additional qualifications available. The section is pro-active in widening participation through, for example, its flexible study routes at the Loftus centre.

69. Students have access to a regular one-to-one tutorial with their course tutors. Group tutorials are well structured and have detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. All students aged 16 to 18 are offered diagnostic assessment at induction. Students aged over 19 receive initial assessment at induction, but are not required to receive literacy and numeracy support. Individual students are offered one-to-one support outside of the classroom. Students do not always receive the support they need due to the lack of learning assistants.

Leadership and management

70. All staff are involved in the process of course reviews which contribute to the self-assessment report. These are not, however, sufficiently self-critical. For example, most reviews indicate that teaching and learning are good, but without any actions for improvement. In the self-assessment report, resources are judged to have improved, but without reference to the current deficiencies. The shortage of clients is having an adverse effect on the progress and assessment of individual students. Due to the shortcomings in the computerised management information system of the college, staff have been unable to rely on central data to analyse pass and retention rates, including those who continue beyond their expected completion date. Opportunities for teachers to undertake professional development are good and links with commercial salons are well developed.

Health and social care

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

Strengths

- o   high pass rates on national diploma early years and NVQ level 2 care
- o   good progression to relevant employment or further study
- o   very good teaching on adult programmes
- o   wide range of provision.

Weaknesses

- o   poor retention and pass rates on public services programmes
- o   insufficient participation by students in large groups
- o   lack of rigour in course reviews.

Scope of provision

71. The college has over 700 students enrolled on a wide range of programmes from level 1 to 4. The majority of students are adults studying part time; most of the 215 full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Full-time programmes in early years result in Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) foundation childcare and BTEC first and national awards. Part-time and short courses include NVQ levels 2 and 3 early years and teaching assistants. Introduction to childminding is also offered. Close to 20 students, aged 16 to 18, are enrolled on public services programmes at BTEC first and certificate level. Full-time care programmes for mainly students aged 16 to 18 include the BTEC introductory diploma, first and national diploma in care and AVCE double award. Currently, large numbers of adult students are studying an access to nursing programme. Counselling programmes are offered to large numbers of students at basic, certificate and diploma level; NVQ guidance programmes are also available. A vocational GCSE is offered to over 100 pupils attending local schools.

Achievement and standards

72. High pass rates are a feature of the BTEC national diploma in early years and NVQ level 2 in care; many other courses have pass rates above the national average. There are poor pass and retention rates on public services courses, although these show an improvement in provisional data produced for 2004. Students on all programmes gain in confidence and develop good team working skills, progressing to vocationally relevant employment or further study. They successfully work towards additional qualifications which enhance employment opportunities. The standards of written work and those reached in lessons are generally good. The contributions of adult students are often insightful and perceptive; they willingly use their personal experiences to illustrate the theory being taught. The teaching of key skills is linked to students' vocational study, although opportunities to develop these skills in a vocational context are sometimes missed.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	22	22	24
		% retention	64	64	75
		% pass rate	100	86	83
Basic counselling skills (short course)	2	No. of starts	115	70	40
		% retention	93	59	88
		% pass rate	78	86	100
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	27	22	22
		% retention	81	82	76
		% pass rate	86	100	94
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	37	38	15
		% retention	95	95	80
		% pass rate	89	92	100
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	26	27	34
		% retention	74	70	68
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Access to nursing and health science	3	No. of starts	35	45	39
		% retention	74	87	61
		% pass rate	100	79	79

Source: ILR

Quality of education and training

73. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good; that for adult students is very good. For example, in one counselling lesson for adults, a carousel exercise was used to effectively assist students to identify barriers to acceptance. By rotating in conversation with others, students developed active listening and communication skills. Schemes of work and lesson plans are well written and follow an agreed format. In the main, a good range of teaching methods is used to engage and maintain students' interest. For example, in a lesson to identify the importance of strong leadership, students on a public service first diploma programme worked well in small groups to analyse and evaluate an outdoor activity from the previous day. Each group identified the factors leading to their success or failure noting action for the future. Teachers use small group work effectively to develop learning. The skilled use of questioning in many lessons increases the depth of understanding and ensures the contribution of all students. Professionally experienced teachers link theory to current work practices effectively. Work experience is fully integrated into early years courses, but is less well developed on health and social care courses. Where teaching groups are particularly large, many students do not sufficiently participate in oral discussion or question-and-answer sessions. In other less effective lessons, teachers provide students with activities that are insufficiently challenging, resulting in some of them becoming bored and distracted.

74. Resources to support learning are good. Staff are well qualified and experienced, accessing opportunities to update their knowledge and skills. There is a wide range of resources to support practical and creative activities, particularly in early years. Wireless laptop computers are provided for public services students. Video equipment and rooms for triads are available for counselling programmes. Equipment for first aid is brought in by outside agencies teaching specialist subjects. Rooms are generally well decorated, although their size constrains group work and practical activities where classes are large. There are few computers available in staff rooms.

75. Initial assessment includes consideration of individual preferred learning styles and support needs. Key skills are jointly taught by specialist and vocational teachers. Assessment practice is good. Assessment schedules are well structured and given early to students. Assessment criteria are clear and marking is fair and accurate. Students receive constructive written feedback providing guidance on how to improve further. Internal verification is good on all courses as confirmed by external verifiers. The college is responsive to the needs of the local community and to national occupational priorities in health and care. There are effective links with a range of community organisations, schools, HE institutions, and the health service. `Family friendly' timetables enable parents and carers to access learning opportunities.

76. Students receive effective pre-course guidance. Induction is good on full-time and part-time programmes. Regular group and individual tutorials are scheduled which are well attended. Students value the support provided by tutors; those who are identified as needing additional support receive it individually or through workshops. Careers education and guidance are effective.

Leadership and management

77. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good formal and informal communication between staff, but good practice is not routinely shared between curriculum areas. The use of value added data to inform target setting with students is underdeveloped. Management information is not routinely used in course reviews. Course reviews lack rigour and are insufficiently self-critical. Actions identified are not always monitored and as a result are sometimes carried through to the following year. The internal teaching observation profile is higher than the national average and that resulting from inspection.

Visual and performing arts

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AVCE art and design
- good teaching in dance and digital imaging
- successful integration of students with learning and physical disabilities into mainstream courses
- extensive opportunities for additional study.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on performing arts courses and GNVQ intermediate art and design
- poor pass rate on AS-level art and design
- unsatisfactory standards of free-hand sketching and drawing
- inflexible accommodation for visual and performing arts
- absence of part-time provision.

Scope of provision

78. There are a total of nearly 250 enrolments in visual and performing arts. Two full-time courses, the first diploma in performing arts and GNVQ intermediate in art and design, run at level 2 with small numbers. Recruitment at level 3, on the AVCE in art and design and national diploma in performing arts, is better. An extensive range of open college network (OCN) courses is offered to full-time students which act as additional study. These include, digital imaging, digital photography, singing, acting, guitar, keyboard and music technology awards. A vocational GCSE course is run for pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools as part of an IF programme initiative. Adult students with learning difficulties attend a range of art and design workshops which are also provided in Cheshire Homes in the local community. Although part-time courses are offered in the prospectus, none have subscribed.

Achievement and standards

79. Achievements across the curriculum area are unsatisfactory. Retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate art and design and the first diploma in performing arts courses were below national averages in 2003, although there has been an apparent improvement in 2004. Retention rates are also unsatisfactory on the national diploma in performing arts. Pass rates on the AS-level art and design course have been poor, with less than half of those students completing becoming successful. By contrast, the pass rate on the AVCE art and design has been consistently high, although with more than a third of students failing to complete in 2003. Progression from level 3 programmes is good with 85% of students continuing to HE establishments in 2004. The standard of work produced by students is variable. Drawing from observation is not sufficiently practised and the free-hand sketching for design development is weak.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	3	7	8
		% retention	100	86	63
		% pass rate	67	83	60
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	4	6	11
		% retention	50	33	36

		% pass rate	50	100	75
AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	24	20	28
		% retention	75	90	64
		% pass rate	94	100	94
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	12	14	14
		% retention	33	50	43
		% pass rate	100	57	100
AS-level fine art	3	No. of starts	32	61	33
		% retention	78	82	70
		% pass rate	36	48	48

Source: ILR

Quality of education and training

80. In two thirds of lessons, teaching is good with a slightly lower proportion of learning that is good. The more successful lessons are student centred and promote individual interpretation and direction. They fully utilise a range of teaching and learning strategies and take account of the needs and interests of different students. These strengths apply particularly to the teaching of digital imaging and dance, with enthusiastic and lively approaches adopted. In dance, there was good integration of a student with a physical disability who completed most of the activities and movements offered to the whole class. Some of the teaching is dull and uninspiring: students merely complete the tasks set with little interaction by the teacher. The tasks set in some art and design lessons are not sufficiently challenging students and do not encourage personal interpretation. There is an over reliance on the use of secondary sources and photocopied imagery for stimulus material.

81. The accommodation for visual and performing arts is unsatisfactory. The gym, which has been the main accommodation for art and design courses for the last two years, is not suitable for the delivery of the curriculum. The three large open-plan studios are noisy, cold and under resourced. The space restricts the range of activities possible with no access to wood, plastics or metal materials. The hall, which is used for performing arts courses, provides an inflexible space and does not easily support the full range of teaching and learning activities such as group work, discussion and seminar activities. For example, a demonstration on the use of CD-ROMs, as a source of information for students researching the work of William Shakespeare, was not successful due to the large, open space used and students being unable to easily read the computer screen. The room temperature in the hall is cold and not appropriate for dance and movement. Staff are well qualified and experienced; they are able to integrate their specialist practitioner areas into teaching programmes. Modern computers and good photography resources are available for students' use.

82. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are unsatisfactory. Assessment lacks rigour on some courses and students are uncertain about assessment criteria. The use of targets and action planning is inconsistent across the curriculum area. Support and guidance received by students are satisfactory. All art and design students are offered taster experiences in college in order to enable them to find out more about courses and meet staff. Students are given individual interviews with a portfolio review. They undergo initial assessment; additional learning support is available in communications and numeracy, however, only a small proportion take this up. Tutorial support is available to all full-time students and all those interviewed agreed that the help they receive from staff is satisfactory or better. Effective support is available to students with physical disabilities.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pass rates have started to improve in 2004. Some action has been taken to address the consistently poor achievements on the AS-level art and design

course: this has now been replaced, as a form of additionality, with OCN courses in digital imaging and photography. Teachers have limited knowledge of the college strategic plan and the implications for them in meeting its objectives. There has been a reorganisation of the department which is still at an early stage in terms of effecting improvements. There is little evidence of sharing of good practice across the curriculum. Insufficient attention is given to data analysis and the actions required to improve retention and pass rates.

Humanities, English and modern foreign languages

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

Strengths

- o high pass rates on the majority of GCE A-level courses and in GCSE English
- o consistently good teaching in English and communications studies, psychology and access courses
- o extensive enrichment opportunities.

Weaknesses

- o low retention rates on too many courses
- o low progression from AS-level to GCE A-level courses
- o insufficient attention given to improving teaching.

Scope of provision

84. The range of provision is broad: AS-level and GCE A-level courses are available in English language and literature, English literature, history, geography, law, psychology, religious studies and sociology. There is an AS-level French course and GCSE courses in English and Spanish; an OCN course at level 1 in Spanish was introduced in 2004. A one-year access into HE programme is also provided in humanities. Although the range is broad, many teaching groups have low numbers, particularly those leading to GCE A level.

Achievement and standards

85. Retention rates on a wide range of courses are below national averages: they have been particularly low on a number of AS-level courses and this weakness is also evident in the 2004 examination results. Pass rates at AS level are generally at or near national averages; they are much higher at GCE A level with 100% success in seven subjects in 2004. Progression from AS level to GCE A level is low: only about half of AS-level students continued to a second year in 2004. Pass rates on the access programme are close to national averages; those for GCSE English were well above in 2004, although with modest retention rates. Students' oral work is good. They participate readily in class discussions and clearly enjoy debate and argument. For example, in an AS-level religious studies lesson, students considered the strengths and weaknesses of utilitarianism and made mature judgements, successfully using modern moral dilemmas as the basis of their evaluation. Students in a GCE A-level English literature lesson on *Othello* effectively analysed Iago's motivation by close and lively reading of the text. Written work at AS level is satisfactory, but a minority of students do not yet express their ideas well and find much of the work difficult. In French, students had difficulty speaking their target language with any degree of fluency. There are examples of good course and project work where effective research, analysis, and evaluation are evident. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, English and modern foreign languages,

2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	56	39	23
		% retention	68	77	74
		% pass rate	71	50	47
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	21	21	15
		% retention	86	15	76
		% pass rate	56	87	77
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	16	29	19
		% retention	81	83	74
		% pass rate	92	79	71
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	56	48	38
		% retention	64	75	76
		% pass rate	81	67	76
AS-level communications studies	3	No. of starts	17	19	19
		% retention	88	89	63
		% pass rate	80	82	92
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	22	22	59
		% retention	59	64	59
		% pass rate	85	71	85

Source: ILR

Quality of education and training

86. Teaching is good in English and communications, psychology, access and most other GCE A-level lessons. There are no unsatisfactory and no outstanding lessons. The majority of lessons are well prepared and resourced, supported by well-developed schemes of work. In the most successful lessons, a variety of teaching strategies are effectively used. Group and pair work is often well deployed with clear and focused aims and realistic time scales for completion. In a geography lesson on atmospheric hazards, a computer presentation was used successfully to extend students' understanding through a series of well-chosen images. Psychology lessons used simple experiments to clarify memory theory and the teacher's enthusiasm in finding examples from students' own experiences led to some productive learning. An AS-level English language lesson on `style' involved effective analysis of the travel writing genre; students rapidly acquired the language of linguistic analysis. In a GCSE English lesson, the sustained effort of the teacher was clearly improving the spelling of the weaker students. Efforts are made in lessons with small numbers of students to operate with high levels of student involvement. This was particularly successful in a communications lesson dealing with indoctrination: individual students were given time to express their ideas at length. In the less effective lessons, teachers tend to dominate and fail to involve students sufficiently. At times, group and pair work lasts too long resulting in students losing interest. One or two lessons are worthy, but rather dull. Three weeks into courses, teachers were already giving appropriate emphasis to examination preparation.

87. Resources are good. Teachers possess relevant degrees and qualified teacher status. Classrooms are fit for purpose being well furnished with appropriate displays of students' work and study aids. Most have video and data projector facilities; other ICT equipment is readily available to staff and students. The staff work room is spacious and well equipped. The college learning centre

provides effective specialist support in all humanities, English and modern foreign languages subjects.

88. Students regularly meet personal tutors for individual discussions on their progress. These meetings take place regularly throughout the year. Students, in the main, are thoroughly prepared for examinations and coursework requirements. Essays and assignments are marked carefully and in a timely fashion, although there is no overall marking policy. The recently introduced target minimum grade system is in its early stages of development and is only used effectively in one or two subject areas. Extensive enrichment opportunities are available to students, for example, visits to theatres and museums, conferences and talks feature in the range of activities. Links with local schools and HE are productive. Students receive effective pre-entry advice and guidance; both formal and informal on-course support are good with teachers giving their free time readily to help students with their work or personal issues. The diagnosis of the need for additional learning support takes place at induction and help with dyslexia is available.

Leadership and management

89. Leadership and management are satisfactory. At course level, management is effective. Substantial and well-designed schemes of work have been developed. Lesson planning is systematic and thorough, and backed with effective course material. A well-established cycle of team meetings is used to discuss improvements in course delivery. There is evidence of the sharing of good practice in English courses, but this is done only informally in humanities. Humanities teachers work in isolation within their individual subject areas and set their own standards and teaching policies. While arrangements for self-assessment are well established, they lack critical rigour. The teaching observation system is too generous in its award of grades and weaknesses in teaching are not identified to support improvement. A focused and dynamic teaching improvement programme is not developed through the appraisal system. This curriculum area sustains a large number of small or very small teaching groups. These are offset by large teaching groups in other subjects, although the deployment of teachers is at times inefficient.

Literacy and numeracy

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

Strengths

- o   good development of personal and learning skills
- o   high pass rates on certificates in adult literacy and numeracy
- o   effective use of initial assessment to inform planning in many lessons
- o   learning resources well matched to students' interests and learning goals.

Weaknesses

- o   unsatisfactory and declining pass rates in GCSE mathematics
- o   insufficiently stimulating teaching in some lessons
- o   shortcomings in planning of additional literacy/numeracy support
- o   lack of rigour in course reviews.

Scope of provision

90. Literacy and numeracy are delivered on the college's main sites and in some outreach locations, such as the South Bank Women's Centre. Courses range from pre-entry through to level 2 within the national qualifications framework, together with key skills awards. Level 2 courses are also provided

in GCSE English and mathematics, the latter falling within the scope of this inspection. There is a literacy/numeracy workshop on the main site. In addition, literacy and numeracy support takes place in vocational areas, particularly through key skills lessons. There is a small amount of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision which was introduced two years ago to cater for people temporarily resident in the area. Programmes for students with learning difficulties have literacy and numeracy integrated within their courses.

Achievement and standards

91. Students are making good progress in developing personal and learning skills. They are developing confidence in their ability to learn and apply themselves well to the tasks in hand. Most students who attend the workshop are progressing effectively from entry level through to levels 1 and 2. Achievements on the certificate for adult literacy and the certificate for adult numeracy are above national averages. However, pass rates are unsatisfactory on the GCSE mathematics course. Key skills achievements are low but in line with national averages. Retention rates in ESOL are below the national average due to the transient nature of the client group. Standards of work are generally satisfactory for the level of the course; the oral contributions in some groups are of a higher standard than written work.

Quality of education and training

92. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers plan for individual needs, based on the outcomes of initial and diagnostic assessment and the personal goals of students. There is constant checking of learning. Classroom activities sustain students' interest and they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, stimulating and lucid visual aids helped students with a learning difficulty to understand the vocabulary used in a lesson on food hygiene. In the majority of lessons, learning resources are well matched to students' interests or goals. Computer programmes are used effectively to support the development of ICT skills. In weaker lessons, students can spend too much time waiting for help from the teacher. Teachers sometimes ask undirected questions and struggle to get a response from students. In these lessons, there is a lack of stimulating teaching and learning techniques to engage all students in the group. For example, in one key skills lesson, students had to wait for each task to be marked before they could move on and the younger students spent too much time chatting rather than focusing on the work in hand.

93. Resources for learning are generally good. Computers are readily available for most students and are often effectively used. Specialist staff have, or are working towards, appropriate professional qualifications. Some vocational staff have taken up opportunities for staff development in literacy and numeracy but many still lack sufficient training. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Students complete an initial assessment which determines their baseline level of literacy and numeracy. In the better lessons this is well used to plan appropriate teaching and learning programmes. Further diagnostic assessment takes place for students in specialist literacy/numeracy classes. For others in vocational areas, further assessments do not always take place sufficiently early in the course. Students' progress is checked against an individual learning plan but some targets in the plans are over generalised. Written work is marked regularly and constructive feedback given to help students improve.

94. Personal support for students is good. Students are given advice and support to help them progress into the different vocational areas of the college. Students on the GCSE mathematics programme are not given sufficient guidance about other, sometimes more appropriate, study options available to them. Additional help with literacy and numeracy for students on mainstream courses is not always well targeted or monitored. Students receive help through key skills lessons which are often double staffed for part of the year. However, the support provided is for the whole class and is not sufficiently targeted at individuals with greatest need. Individual support is organised within the vocational area, but this is not always in place early enough in the course.

Leadership and management

95. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is effective organisation of the workshops and the ESOL courses. Co-ordinators are in place for literacy and numeracy and for key skills. Communication between teams is generally satisfactory. There are good opportunities for staff development and national priorities in skills for life literacy/numeracy training are being promoted. A culture of inclusion and respect for individual students has been established. Some course reviews are inadequate: weaknesses identified in the GCSE mathematics review in previous years have not been addressed. There is insufficient analysis of data on students' achievements to inform future planning. In some classes, group sizes are small.

Part D: College data

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

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	39	34
2	34	23
3	22	22
4/5	0	2
Other	5	19
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

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

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	367	254	5
Land-based provision	16	62	0
Construction	443	857	10
Engineering, technology and manufacture	671	1,005	13
Business administration, management and professional	391	1,780	17
Information and communication technology	347	980	10
Retailing, customer service and transportation	95	282	3

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	381	470	7
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	200	426	5
Health, social care and public services	757	1,767	20
Visual and performing arts and media	160	43	2
Humanities	156	149	2
English, languages and communication	76	53	1
Foundation programmes	190	440	5
Other	0	35	0
Total	**4,250**	**8,603**	**100**

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	962	753	635	1,146	982	889
	Retention rate %	76	67	80	66	69	65
	National average %	75	76	76	70	71	72
	Pass rate %	59	73	69	66	73	75
	National average %	67	69	73	68	70	77
2	Starters excluding transfers	975	1,201	795	1,297	1,531	1,096
	Retention rate %	71	58	66	75	62	67
	National average %	70	71	71	68	68	67
	Pass rate %	68	74	73	67	77	76
	National average %	68	70	73	67	71	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,061	965	844	1,090	1,119	960
	Retention rate %	74	74	73	78	69	71
	National average %	70	77	77	68	70	69
	Pass rate %	71	75	76	72	80	83
	National average %	75	77	80	68	71	74
4/5	Starters excluding	21	37	36	162	169	141

transfers						
Retention rate %	95	81	75	77	55	66
National average %	73	71	74	67	68	69
Pass rate %	100	80	85	59	71	80
National average %	54	57	68	54	54	58

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.

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)	65	29	6	71
Level 2 (intermediate)	65	30	5	43
Level 1 (foundation)	50	38	12	24
Other sessions	65	35	0	23
Totals	**63**	**32**	**6**	**161**

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