



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Highbury College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Business](#)

[Computing and information technology](#)

[Hospitality, catering, sports, leisure and travel](#)

[Hair and beauty therapy](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Journalism and media](#)

[English, communication and languages](#)

[English for speakers of other languages](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age September 2002](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age group 2001/02](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

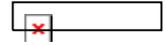
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

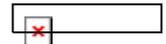


Name of college:	Highbury College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Stella Mbubaegbu
Address of college:	Highbury College Cosham Portsmouth Hampshire PO6 2SA
Telephone number:	023 9238 3131
Fax number:	023 9232 5551
Chair of governors:	Karen Woods
Unique reference number:	130697
Name of reporting inspector:	Ela Piotrowska
Dates of inspection:	17-21 February 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Highbury College is the largest general further education (FE) college in Portsmouth and the third largest in south-east England. The majority of learners study at the college's 14-acre campus in Cosham, to the north of the city. The college also runs programmes at its Compass and Unicorn centres in the heart of Portsmouth. The college offers programmes in all areas of learning. It has a broad and predominantly vocational curriculum. Courses range from entry level to higher education (HE). The college has work-based learning contracts to deliver modern apprenticeships in construction, engineering, business administration, hairdressing and catering, with some 300 students enrolled on work-based learning programmes. It also runs provision at the Apex centre in Leigh Park, the majority of which is for students under the age of 16, and provides prison education programmes and city council funded adult community learning programmes. Within a twelve-mile radius, there are two sixth form colleges, two other general FE colleges and extensive provision made by the university of Portsmouth.

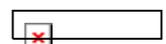
Portsmouth is one of the most densely populated cities in the country, outside of London, with approximately 192,000 residents. The college recruits some 42% of its students from Portsmouth. The local economy is characterised by developments in commerce, technology and education; employment is growing in all sectors, but particularly in construction and distribution, hotels and restaurants. The unemployment rate is low, at 2%. Portsmouth has some of the most deprived wards in England and, in 2001/02, 25% of the college's students were from wards attracting a widening participation factor.

The Portsmouth area has lower than average pass rates for students aged 16, with General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results 15% below the national average and General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) and A2 pass rates below those for Hampshire and for England as a whole. Literacy and numeracy rates are also low, with 16% of the population identified as having poor literacy skills and 36% poor numeracy skills.

In 2001/02, the college had 16,999 students. Of these, 13% studied on a full-time basis and 87% on a part-time basis. Some 4% of the college's students were under the age of 16, 12% were aged 16 to 18, 84% were aged 19 and over and 48% were female. About 6% of all students had a learning difficulty and/or disability. Some 5% of the college's students identified themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group, compared to approximately 6% of the population within Portsmouth.

The college's mission is to be the highest quality provider of vocational community education in the Solent region.

How effective is the college?



training is satisfactory in eight of the twelve areas of learning, good in one and unsatisfactory in three. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- good pass rates

- high standards of students' work in many courses

- good support for students with disabilities

- strong links with industry and the community

- good skills development and teaching in construction and catering

- good individual support for students

- accurate management information systems data to plan and monitor performance

- effective staff appraisal and training programmes

- good strategic and operational plans that give a clear direction for the college

- productive work in the community.

What should be improved

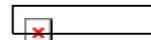
- quality of much teaching and learning

- rigour of college observation of teaching and learning

- poor retention rates on level 1 courses and trends in overall retention rates
- management of work-based learning courses and pass rates
- implementation of basic skills strategy
- management and implementation of key skills.
- some inadequate accommodation and space allocation
- some poor use of individual students' assessment data
- assessment and self-assessment procedures and practice in some areas
- integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching and learning
- lack of entry level provision
- curriculum management in some occupational areas
- use of quality assurance arrangements to ensure improvements
- sharing of good practice

subjects and courses in the full report.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are good, and there are high levels of attendance and punctuality on most courses. Teaching of science is good but, on both science and mathematics courses, there is insufficient integration of ICT. There is insufficient setting and marking of students' work, especially in mathematics. The management of mathematics is inadequate.
Construction	Good. There is an extensive range of provision. Pass rates on some programmes are good. Retention rates have declined on some programmes. Teaching is good. Practical training resources are good and meet industrial standards. Work-based learning is satisfactory.
Engineering	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates on a significant number of courses are poor. Work-based learning on motor vehicle courses has not been effectively managed. Teaching resources and support for students are good. There is insufficient engineering provision at entry and foundation levels.
Business	Satisfactory. Achievement on level 3 courses is good and has risen significantly over previous years. There is good support for all students. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. There is good use of students' work experience in lessons. Level 1 provision is insufficient, some retention rates are poor and there is little use of ICT in teaching.
Computing and information technology	Satisfactory. There are some good pass rates on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation, Internet skills and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). Pass rates on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses are consistently low. Initiatives to improve participation and progression are effective. There is good individualised teaching. Short-term target setting is poor and induction is weak on part-time flexible courses.
Hospitality, catering, sports, leisure and travel	Satisfactory. There is very good teaching in catering and students demonstrate high standards of practical industry skills. Pass rates are good on level 3 courses. There are low pass rates on some level 1 courses and some poor retention rates. There is insufficient challenge in some sport, leisure and tourism lessons and poor sharing of practice across the programme area.
Hair and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. There is a broad range of effectively managed courses. Courses reflect current trends in the industry. There are some good pass rates on part-time holistic therapy programmes. Students' attendance is poor and there is an insufficient client base for assessment. Some accommodation is inadequate.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. There is a good range of courses. Pass rates are good

	on level 2 and 3 courses for adults and standards of work are high. There is some effective teaching. Some retention rates are low. Some accommodation is inadequate. There is insufficient level 1 provision.
Journalism and media	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are good on most courses. Teaching is good at level 4 and students produce high standards in their work. There are poor pass rates on the level 4 pre-entry certificate and poor achievement of key skills. There is poor action planning in tutorials.
English, communication and languages	Satisfactory. Teaching is good on GCSE English and GCE AS English language and literature and language courses. Retention rates on GCSE English are poor. English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching lacks pace and variety. There are attractive learning areas and support for students is good.
English for speakers of other languages	Unsatisfactory. Much teaching is insufficiently demanding. Links between initial assessment and individual learning plans are underdeveloped. There is effective curriculum development in the community. There are good pass rates for a small number of students. The English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programme is insufficiently linked to the basic skills strategy.
Literacy and numeracy	Unsatisfactory. There is much ineffective teaching, although family literacy is good. Attendance rates are poor and ineffective use is made of initial assessment to inform individual learning plans. There is a lack of clarity in the management of basic skills across the college. There are some effective community partnerships.

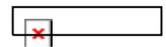
How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal inherited a difficult financial situation on appointment and has undertaken a process of significant change. This has included defining a new vision, the development of a new strategy and a restructuring programme. A clear mission and strategic direction have now been established. Governors support strongly the implementation of the strategic plan. They are knowledgeable about the college and its performance, although they do not sufficiently challenge performance reports. Communications are generally good and most staff are well informed about the changes. Although there are signs of improvements, it is too soon to judge the impact of the changes on the college's overall performance. Management information is accurate and readily available. Pass rates on many courses have improved, retention rates have remained static and declining enrolment has been arrested. There is too much mediocre teaching and learning. There are too many variations in the quality of curriculum management, in the use of quality assurance systems and in the quality of accommodation. Provision for literacy, numeracy and ESOL are insufficiently developed. Staffing difficulties have caused disruption in some areas. Self-assessment is insufficiently critical and the college's lesson observation system significantly overestimates the quality of teaching and learning. The college provides satisfactory value for money, although declining numbers, some poor retention rates and poor space allocation and usage affect cost effectiveness.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. There is a broad and developing range of programmes to meet the needs of a wide range of students. Outreach provision for adults is available in a variety of locations. Provision and support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. There are good examples of integration and good discrete provision for young, disaffected and excluded pupils. People with restricted mobility are able to use most facilities, but there are some inaccessible areas. The vocational curriculum allows many students to widen their range of options by taking additional industry-specific courses. All staff receive equality of opportunity training and recruitment and career progression are monitored by ethnic group. The college does not currently have a coherent basic skills strategy. Although the college has organised a substantial training programme to meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Disability Discrimination Act, this has yet to have an impact on teaching and learning. Students do not have the opportunity to study full time at entry and foundation levels in some parts of the curriculum. Not all sites are fully inclusive.

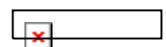
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is effective. There is high-quality publicity and information material about the college, and arrangements for pre-entry advice and guidance are generally good. The college's programme of open and 'taster' days is well developed. Students are well informed about their courses and about the full range of college support facilities. These include good career guidance, welfare, financial support and counselling. There is an effective induction programme. Initial assessment is mostly effective, though it is not used sufficiently to plan learning. Tutorial arrangements have been recently revised and tutorial support is improving, although it is inconsistent for the students on part-time courses. The monitoring of attendance across the college is inconsistent. There is good, sensitive, well-focused additional learning support. The college has recently introduced learning support staff to support students' basic skills within vocational areas.

There are good support arrangements for students with disabilities, including additional staffing and good resources.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- good teaching

- good facilities, gym, nursery, canteen and learning resource centre

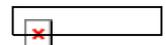
- friendly environment

- approachable and supportive teachers
- good food in the canteen
- good tutorial advice and guidance.

What they feel could be improved

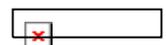
- timetabling of rooms, break times and study time
- key skills lessons
- transport to main site
- induction.

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 is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	53	37	10
19+ and WBL*	56	37	7
Learning 16-18	50	41	9
19+ and WBL*	59	37	4

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards

1. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses from entry-level to level 3 in most curriculum areas. There is a small amount of level 4 provision and a small amount of work-based learning. There are programmes in all areas of learning.
2. About 40% of the students in the college come from areas of high deprivation or from groups who traditionally have been under-represented in FE and whose vocational and learning skills have not been well developed.
3. The college sets realistic targets for retention and pass rates. The overall college retention rates vary significantly, with some good retention rates at level 3 and some poor retention rates at level 1. Retention rates at level 2 are generally satisfactory and broadly in line with national averages. All retention rates are static, with no upward or downward trends in recent years. Overall retention rates for key skills programmes are generally good at around six percentage points above national averages.
4. Pass rates on mainstream courses at all levels are generally good. However, pass rates for key skills are particularly poor. There was a marked improvement in pass rates for all courses in 2001/02. Improvements ranged from a 9% increase to a 16% increase. Students in many areas produce work of a high standard and develop advanced skills. Many students have been successful in regional and national competitions, for example, in construction, media, health, hospitality and hair and beauty. The college does not measure the value added to students' achievements or analyse their achievement against their levels of prior attainment when they start on college courses.
5. Enrolment of level 2 adult students has increased steadily over the last five years. Enrolments of all other student groups have declined significantly since 1998. The declining enrolments of level 1 adult students and level 2 students aged 16 to 18 have been arrested. The decline in enrolments of the remaining groups continues.
6. At the time of inspection, there were 264 work-based learners managed by the college's workforce and business development unit; of these, 130 were on construction programmes and 69 were

following engineering programmes. They included advanced and modern apprentices. Pass rates for modern apprenticeships are generally poor in construction and motor vehicle, with few students successfully completing all the elements of the modern apprenticeship framework. However, pass rates are improving in construction and are good on other engineering programmes. Students in construction and fabrication and welding produce practical work of a consistently high standard.

16 to 18 year olds

7. About 12% of the full-time equivalent students are aged 16 to 18. Many students enter the college with low levels of prior attainment or come from areas of high deprivation. Most are following vocational courses with a strong emphasis on the development of occupational skills. Retention rates of students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 courses are currently marginally below the national average. The pattern of retention rates for this group has been erratic, with some good and some poor rates in recent years. Retention rates of students aged 16 to 18 on level 2 and 3 courses are generally satisfactory and broadly in line with national averages.

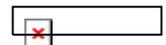
8. Pass rates for this age group at level 1 have improved significantly and are now good, at approximately 9% above national averages. Pass rates for level 2 and 3 courses are satisfactory and are broadly in line with national averages. The skills development of students in this group is generally good. The standard of practical work produced on construction courses is very good. The standard of students' work is good in other areas, including construction, health and social care, computing and information technology (IT) and hair and beauty therapy.

Adult learners

9. A large majority of the college's provision is for adults, many from wards attracting a widening participation factor. About 88% of full-time equivalent students are aged 19 and over. Retention rates for adult students are particularly good on level 3 courses, at about 7% above the national average. Retention rates on level 1 and 2 courses are satisfactory and are broadly in line with national averages.

10. Pass rates for these students are good at all levels, at about 9% above national averages. In most areas, adult students improve significantly on their levels of prior attainment and develop well their personal, learning and technical skills. For example, on computing and IT courses, students develop good skills in using a variety of software packages and students on construction courses produce work of a good industrial standard. However, teachers are not always sufficiently aware of the standard of work produced in the workplace nor do they give sufficient credit for it in the off-the-job training. Students on journalism and media courses produce a very high standard of work that often results in good work placements and progression into jobs in journalism, media and broadcasting.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 203 lessons. Of lessons observed, 55% were good or better, 37% satisfactory and 8% were unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are better for adult students. In too many lessons, standards achieved are too low. Teaching is too often dull and unimaginative and fails to engage and motivate students. Weaknesses in teaching include a narrow range of methods and resources, lack of challenge, inappropriate pace and little use of IT to enhance learning. Students in unsatisfactory lessons are often passive and make slow progress. In some lessons, there is insufficient checking of understanding and inadequate use of individual learning plans to inform teaching and learning. Teaching in science, construction, catering, English GCSE and modern foreign languages is good.

on health and safety. Teachers use industrial knowledge to develop materials that motivate and engage students. Students achieve high standards in these lessons and are able to demonstrate, explore, research and consolidate new skills and concepts. There is insufficient integration of key skills to support learning and attainment. Poor accommodation limits the effectiveness of teaching and learning in some curriculum areas.

12. Most staff are well qualified and experienced. Teachers in some areas, for example, in hospitality, catering, sports, leisure and travel, and journalism and media, have valuable recent professional and commercial experience. There is a good staff development programme. The college is concentrating on strategies to improve teaching and learning. All new teachers are expected to work towards teaching qualifications, if they do not already have one, and are supported in doing so. There is a lack of technical support in media and industrial expertise on business and motor vehicle courses.

13. Although the provision of specialist equipment and accommodation is uneven across college courses, much is of a very high standard; for example, on construction crafts, motor vehicle, general engineering, catering, media and ICT courses. The Compass centre in the city also provides good quality accommodation for students studying basic skills, English as a second language and for adult IT students. Some classrooms and specialist learning environments, however, are less than satisfactory, including those for health and social care, art and design, leisure and tourism and beauty therapy.

14. The learning centre at the Highbury campus is well organised and has an ample stock of computers, books and journals available for students' use, in most curriculum areas, during weekdays, most evenings, and on Saturdays. The open-access computers are well used by students outside of lessons. Library staff actively liaise with subject departments to improve the service offered to students, to increase usage and to ensure up-to-date stock is maintained. The on-line catalogues at the Highbury and Compass centres are integrated and students from one campus can use the other centre's resource stock catalogue. The college is starting to develop a virtual learning environment but this is yet to have an impact on students. The provision of computers for teachers and students is good. Despite the availability of equipment and software, the use of IT in lessons is limited and does little to support learning in many curriculum areas.

15. Most college buildings are attractive, clean and well maintained. Closed circuit television cameras cover all sites and help to provide a safe environment. Effective implementation of the accommodation policy has significantly improved the overall internal and external appearance of the accommodation. Most areas of the college are accessible to wheelchair users; however, access to some areas, including dining rooms, is limited and inconvenienced by locked service lifts. There are insufficient toilets for disabled students, except on the ground floor, at the main site and, in those available, a lack of emergency cord pulls. The college needs to improve its space allocation and usage. For example, there is some cramped classroom accommodation alongside spacious and often under-utilised specialist workshops.

16. The college has recently introduced rigorous procedures for assessment and monitoring of learning. Arrangements for assessment are flexible, accessible and include work based, on-line, on demand and Learndirect, as well as continuous college-based practical and theory assignments and external examinations. Initial assessment is completed at induction and the results help to identify the level of key skills and any learning support individuals may need. All full-time, access to HE, basic skills, and ESOL students and work-based learners complete the assessment. A small number of students identified as needing additional help with literacy and numeracy take up their entitlement. The speed of initial assessment for ESOL students allows them to start their course quickly at the right level. For basic skills students, initial assessment is ineffective and does not inform individual learning plans. Apart from on one or two courses, no initial assessment is undertaken by part-time students.

17. Most procedures comply with awarding body requirements. However, the assessment procedures are inconsistently applied across the college. In some curriculum areas, assessment practice is good. For example, in engineering, business, construction, journalism and media and health and social care, the quality of the assessment of work is good and procedures are rigorous.

Construction and journalism and media teachers mark students' work carefully, and it is returned promptly with a helpful commentary. By contrast, in hair and beauty therapy, there are not enough clients in the college's salons to assess all students effectively for their practical skills. There is insufficient routine setting and marking of work to help students improve their understanding in science and mathematics and hospitality, catering, sports, leisure and travel. Coursework hand-in dates are not scheduled with sufficient care to help students meet deadlines. Assessment practice is poor for work-based modern apprentices and does not occur frequently enough for the trainees to provide evidence of their competence in their day-to-day working practice. Progress reviews for construction and engineering students are poorly completed and students are not set short-term targets in computing and IT.

18. The assessment of key skills is poor. Many curriculum areas do not assess them as part of the students' normal coursework.

19. In some course teams, there are not enough internal verifiers and some poor assessment practices. For example, in motor vehicle, engineering, health and social care and hair and beauty therapy, internal verification often lacks rigour and is inconsistently applied. Individual learning plans for many students do not contain enough information and they are not linked to initial or continuing assessment outcomes to monitor students' progress effectively or set short-term and long-term learning goals. In much of the work-based learning, there are inadequate assessment arrangements in the workplace and, in the case of motor vehicle, no assessment of trainees has taken place for a considerable and unacceptable length of time. Parents and employers are kept well informed of the progress of students through termly reports and effective personal contact from teachers.

20. The college offers a good range of predominantly vocational programmes to meet the needs of the local community and employers. Construction and journalism and media courses meet national and regional, as well as local, needs. Some programmes have responded well to requests for new training provision, such as the expansion of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in health and social care and new courses in hair and beauty therapy. There have been some good initiatives to support the college's widening participation strategy, including some productive community partnerships that have led to new courses in ESOL, literacy, numeracy and ICT. The college has also developed a range of external contracts, including an adult and community learning contract with the local authority and contracts with the prison education programme. It enjoys a variety of successful international links. The large and well-established pre-16 programme provides good progression routes as well as some effective work with excluded and disadvantaged young people. Enrichment opportunities and take-up vary across the curriculum.

21. The majority of courses are part-time adult courses and, for many adult returners, they provide a valuable opportunity to prepare for employment. There are gaps in provision, particularly at entry and level 1, in some areas. These gaps limit recruitment, progression and the long-term viability of courses. The Portsmouth area has significant levels of poor literacy and numeracy skills. The college has been slow to respond to these and there is an insufficient range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision and support in vocational programmes.

22. The standard of teaching and quality of materials for key skills across the college are inconsistent. In construction, business and journalism and media, key skills are not taught alongside the subject content in lessons and many students do not attend the separate key skills lessons provided for them. In other curriculum areas, key skills materials are poor and teachers and students place less value on key skills than they do on developing their practical and vocational skills. Materials and guidance for staff, produced to support teachers in the teaching of key skills, have recently been introduced and are yet to have an impact on lessons. Key skills software and resources for students have also recently been placed in the learning centre. They are well presented and potentially easy to use. They provide students with interesting and topical tasks to develop their communication, IT and number skills. Some key skills materials adopted on hospitality, motor vehicle and IT courses are of poor quality, outdated and of little help to students. In work-based learning, a large number of trainees do not achieve key skills qualifications. There are too few examples of completed and assessed work in portfolios, preventing many learners from achieving their full framework qualifications.

23. Prospective students are well informed about college courses. There are good links with feeder schools. Good quality materials provide clear, concise and relevant information about the courses available. Publicity materials are distributed in many ways within the community. College staff attend school parents' evenings and open days and contribute to personal and social education programmes in schools. Students and parents receive good information about the college through a comprehensive programme of 'taster' days.

24. Most full-time students are screened through an initial assessment during induction. This determines their level and competence in basic skills and assesses the extent of any additional learning support needs. For applicants indicating a learning need on the application form, screening takes place before the admissions interviews to inform the advice subsequently given. The initial assessment effectively screens students for learning needs but does not adequately identify targets for individual learning plans. Induction programmes are effective and valued by students.

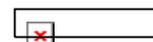
25. There is good personal support for full-time students. Students are well supported in lessons by the teachers. Individual learning support assistants work closely with teachers to provide sensitive and focused additional support for students. Learning development support teachers have started to provide basic skills support within vocational courses. All full-time students have a personal tutor who has responsibility for both their academic progress and their personal and social development. Tutorial arrangements have been revised recently. Most tutors now teach their tutees and know them well. Most tutorials are good and provide students with opportunities to meet individually with their tutor to discuss aspects of their progress. The monitoring of attendance is inconsistent. Some tutors do not keep sufficiently detailed tutor records. The action plans arising from reviews with students often lack detail and are either too undemanding or too imprecise to be of any use in helping them to progress. Tutorial support for students on part-time courses is inconsistent.

26. Good careers guidance is available and helps students find employment or make progress through the qualification framework. The college has achieved an Investor in Careers Award for information, advice and guidance. Parents and employers are kept well informed about the progress students are making and any difficulties they may be experiencing.

27. Students are well informed about the wide range of support facilities available. Many students receive financial assistance through a student support fund. A confidential counselling service is available to students and staff. Students also value the support from welfare and accommodation officers, an occupational health worker and careers guidance staff. Five nurseries are also available on the main campuses.

28. There are good support arrangements for students with disabilities. Learning support assistants support visually and hearing impaired students in lessons. Large screens, adjustable tables and laptops are provided where necessary to improve access to learning.

Leadership and management



29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, governors and senior managers have provided good leadership throughout the college's period of financial recovery and change in strategic direction. Following the last inspection, the college's financial position deteriorated after major building improvements were paid from college reserves during a period of declining enrolments. Management information data were unreliable. The governors took action to address the deficit in July 2001 and requested an internal recovery plan. The principal was appointed in October 2001 and a new college leadership team was established, with responsibilities linked to the strategic objectives. The college vision and mission were redefined. A new strategic plan was agreed to deal with the major issues, with key objectives and targets based on raising success in line with the new vision. The college's strategic plan promotes improvements in life-long learning and

introduced in January 2002 to improve areas of poor performance. A range of associated strategies and policies, including arrangements for monitoring, has been produced to achieve the strategic plan. Many of these policies have been introduced recently and it is too early to judge their impact on improving provision. During 2001/02, pass rates have improved in many curriculum areas and retention rates have generally remained static. Declining enrolment has been arrested and has improved at level 2.

30. Governors have a clear understanding of the college's strategic plan and support it strongly. They monitor students' performance and progress against agreed targets but, until recently, they have not had sufficiently reliable data to challenge managers' reports or ask the right questions to test the reliability and validity of information. The quality committee has paid insufficient attention to the quality of education and training provided by the college and the standards achieved by students. There were few clear performance indicators and insufficiently reliable data to assist the board in assessing the college's progress in improving the quality of its provision and students' achievements. Governors meet with managers and teachers to discuss teaching and learning issues. They also monitor issues involving equality of opportunity in the college.

31. The college's strategic and operational plans give clear direction. The operational plans are clearly linked to the strategic objectives. However, there is inconsistency in the effectiveness of curriculum management. Weaknesses in teaching and learning in many areas have not been treated with sufficient determination to bring about rapid improvements in quality. Curriculum management is mostly satisfactory. In business and hair and beauty therapy it is good but in mathematics, engineering, ESOL, literacy and numeracy, and work-based learning provision it is unsatisfactory. The management and implementation of the arrangements to teach key skills have been poor. This has adversely affected the overall pass rates and the ability of students on work-based learning programmes to achieve the full modern apprenticeship framework. The sharing of good practice in some areas is poor.

32. Communications in the college are generally good. However, they are less effective between sites to ensure the good management of ESOL and literacy and numeracy programmes. The values and objectives of the college are understood and promoted by staff at all levels. Senior managers are open and consultative. Staff feel well informed through team meetings and briefings and informal arrangements with senior and middle managers. The principal visits each department for two days each year to meet and support staff and observe some teaching. The college leadership team comprises five directors and the principal. The principal manages this group effectively. She meets them regularly, both as a team and individually, to discuss the curriculum and cross-college issues and to review progress to achieve targets. Minutes of team meetings indicate a clear understanding of the college's intention to continue to grow and improve. A new curriculum structure comprises four heads of school and 15 heads of department to provide strategic and curriculum management. Reviews of the number and composition of schools have led to more co-operation and better teamwork in most curriculum areas, better communication and a more systematic analysis of achievement and recruitment data. However, there have been a considerable number of changes in staffing and some areas have experienced difficulties in recruiting specialist staff to key positions. This has led to some disruption for students in a few curriculum areas.

33. The college makes good use of student questionnaires to improve provision. The director of quality and standards oversees quality assurance procedures. The main roles are to monitor implementation of key processes, to identify poorly performing courses and to manage strategies to improve teaching and students' achievements. Most programme reviews include a thorough analysis of data. In 2002, the college achieved its overall pass rate targets but did not meet the majority of its retention rate targets. Targets are set and periodically reviewed by managers. Programme teams, departments and schools prepare self-assessment reports and an operating plan, which set clear targets for improvement. Self-assessments are combined into an overall report which is based on the common inspection framework. This report is complex and detailed but lacks clarity in many judgements. It identifies some of the strengths but significantly over-estimates the quality of teaching and learning. Staff throughout the college were involved in its preparation.

34. The college's well-established teaching observation programme is central to its strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning. All full-time and part-time teachers are observed

annually by their managers or nominated college observers. All observations are graded. Observers are trained in teaching observation and feedback is focused on improving teacher performance. However, quality assurance processes have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning and other key learning activities. The college's programme of lesson observations has not resulted in an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. College data indicate that 84% of observations were considered good or better, 13% satisfactory and 3% unsatisfactory. This significantly overestimates the quality of teaching and learning when compared with the 55% good or better and 8% unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. This is below the national average for colleges of a similar type and the level reported at the last inspection. Quality assurance audits have had little impact, for example, on improving the quality of individual learning plans, the setting and recording of clear objectives and action plans from tutorials and work-based learners' progress reviews. The management of internal verification is unsatisfactory in some areas.

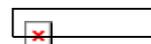
35. Appraisal and staff development arrangements are good. The chair and vice chair of governors appraise the principal and she appraises the college leadership team. Appraisals are conducted against agreed targets. All other staff are appraised by their managers and have individual action plans with targets. Teaching observation provides information for these appraisals and training opportunities are linked to college objectives and personal aspirations. Despite more staff training, actions taken to remedy weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning have been ineffective. The policies for mentoring and inducting new teachers include early teaching observation. The college achieved Investor in People status in March 1997 and was re-accredited in 2000.

36. The college has developed a range of successful partnerships and collaborations. In partnership with the local education authority (LEA), the college provides successful vocational pathway programmes for over 700 students aged 14 to 16 in a number of curriculum areas. Strong links have been developed with Connexions, the university of Portsmouth and local colleges. The college works closely with local community groups, particularly in the more deprived areas, to provide education and training in a range of venues across the city. In conjunction with Portsmouth City Council, it provides an adult education programme and family literacy activities. It also works with the Prince's Trust and runs a prison education programme. Effective and wide-ranging links with business and industry enhance students' experience.

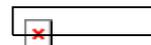
37. The college is committed to pursuing equality of opportunity. The equal opportunities committee reports to the academic board. There is a programme of staff training to promote equal opportunities. The college has policies relating to harassment and bullying. It has a thorough written policy to promote race equality and an action plan which identifies clear action points and time scales. It also monitors, by ethnic group, the admission and progress of students and the recruitment and career progress of staff. Data relating to examination results, retention rates and student surveys are analysed by gender and ethnic group.

38. Management information systems have improved significantly since the last inspection. Information is accurate and readily available. Managers have access to a range of reports and data on recruitment and students' achievements. Use of information for planning purposes is increasing and most curriculum areas use the data systematically to monitor performance. The college has not achieved its funding target for three years. The current monitoring arrangements are more robust and there is a clearer understanding of the position for 2003. Financial reporting to senior managers and governors is effective. Following clearance of the deficits, the college is expecting to secure a satisfactory level of financial health. The college is aware of the need to grow and to increase some class sizes and improve retention rates in order to be more cost effective.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates
- high levels of attendance and punctuality on most courses
- good teaching of science.

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum leadership in mathematics
- insufficient setting and marking of students' work, especially in mathematics
- insufficient integration of IT into teaching.

Scope of provision

39. The college has a range of science courses, mainly at level 3, and mathematics courses at levels 2 and 3. Within the school of community and general education, access provision includes 130 enrolments in biology, chemistry, physics and environmental and sports science, and 70 in mathematics and statistics. The school also teaches a part-time national certificate course in pharmaceutical science for 55 students. The second year of the national diploma in applied science, for 15 students, is within the science area, but the first year course, with a different syllabus, falls within hospitality, catering, sport, leisure and travel. Apart from access courses, there is a small GCE AS mathematics course with 10 enrolments and a GCSE mathematics course with around 200 enrolments; mainly daytime adult students but with some students aged 16 to 18 and evening provision. This mathematics provision is part of the languages department.

Achievement and standards

40. Pass and retention rates are above national averages for all courses, with consistently well-above-average results for access and most vocational sciences. Progression of access students to science, mathematics or paramedical courses in HE is high. Pass rates for GCSE mathematics are slightly above the national average, which is itself low. In GCE AS mathematics, just under half of

the students achieved a pass grade. No value added data are available for mathematics students, nor are the results for students aged 16 to 18 and adult students reported separately.

41. Attendance and punctuality are generally good; for most access science students and for pharmaceutical science students they are well above average. Attendance of students aged 16 to 18 at GCSE mathematics and national diploma sports science classes is well below average. Poor attendance and punctuality disrupt teaching in these classes and in GCSE mathematics evening provision. Science students enjoy their lessons and their practical skills are good. In access chemistry, students carry out thermo-chemistry experiments confidently and can calculate enthalpy changes from their results. Pharmaceutical science students use commercially produced spectacles to simulate a range of types of visual impairment. This experience not only helps them to identify the effects of various eye disorders but to understand the importance of their attitude to patients for whom they dispense eye preparations.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	248	204	198
		% retention	71	75	73
		% pass rate	41	53	44
First diploma in applied science	2	No. of starts	15	27	12
		% retention	60	74	92
		% pass rate	78	85	100
National diploma in applied science	3	No. of starts	20	29	21
		% retention	75	86	76
		% pass rate	93	92	87
National certificate in pharmaceutical science	3	No. of starts	32	32	27
		% retention	75	75	89
		% pass rate	88	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

42. Standards of teaching and learning in science and mathematics are satisfactory. However, whilst much science teaching is good, and sometimes very good, with only a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, in mathematics it is never better than satisfactory. Experienced science teachers use a wide range of teaching aids and strategies, including models, demonstrations, videos and literature or equipment used in pharmaceutical practice, to inspire students. For example, a lesson on immune systems made good use of a range of overhead projector transparency diagrams, a video and students' own work experience to generate enthusiasm and support learning. Simple models were used effectively to introduce access students to complex biological molecules such as carbohydrates and proteins prior to practical testing for these groups. Frequent use of practical science sessions supports learning, and the level of students' skills is good.

43. Mathematics teaching is generally unimaginative, with careful coverage of content and good individual student support but no use of teaching aids other than a whiteboard. In some cases, there is inadequate planning of mathematics teaching to ensure that students are appropriately challenged. This tends to be a feature also of less successful science teaching. Where science teaching is unsatisfactory, there is no clear identification of aims, insufficient explanation, too few checks on learning or insufficient lesson material; in these lessons, the pace of learning is poorly adapted to students' learning needs. In both science and mathematics, students' absence or

lateness disrupts a small proportion of lessons. Little use is made of IT to support teaching, but students' assignments frequently make good use of it and there is workshop support for students who wish to use it for GCSE mathematics assignments. Access students value these workshops, provided during the spring term. Presentation of schemes of work is variable; whilst some lack detail, others make very good reference to teaching strategies.

44. Science and mathematics teachers are well qualified and experienced, and many have had recent professional development, both subject specific and related to examination courses. In chemistry, use of spectroscopic equipment such as infrared spectrometers and gas chromatograms supports learning, whilst part-time teachers of pharmaceutical science bring considerable professional expertise, as do occasional visiting lecturers, for topics such as osteopathy and diabetes. Equipment for other sciences is generally satisfactory but with some glassware shortages when there are large pharmaceutical science groups. There are no computers in mathematics classrooms or biology laboratories; these latter have little equipment that makes use of modern technology such as projection microscopes. Although the range of library books is satisfactory, there are insufficient multiple copies of some standard texts.

45. Vocational and access science course assessment procedures are well established, with appropriate internal verification. Although marking is particularly thorough for pharmaceutical science, students on most science courses receive helpful advice on how they might improve their work. Science teachers vary considerably in the amount of homework or routine exercises they set: some set and mark work regularly, others set tests at the start of lessons, usually marked by students, whilst others do not mark any work other than formal assignments. The absence of formal checks on work between assignments results, on occasion, to disruption of teaching in sports science. In GCSE mathematics, no homework is set for students aged 16 to 18 and teachers mark very little work, frequently giving students both examination papers and worked answers at the same time. The amount of homework set and marked by teachers for GCE AS mathematics is inadequate. In the absence of any analysis of achievement in mathematics, it is impossible to assess whether the current level 2 provision meets students' needs. Appropriate reports are provided for parents or employers of students studying national certificate or diploma courses.

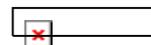
46. Access courses cover a good range of mathematics and science subjects, with considerable flexibility in course length and between day and evening provision. The day-release pharmaceutical science course meets the needs of staff working in pharmacies and hospitals over a wide geographical area. Progression to a pharmacy degree course locally is possible. GCSE mathematics is available for students on access and for those on other vocational courses. There is no mathematics provision below level 2, for example, through freestanding units, nor progression routes from GCE AS mathematics.

47. All students who attend college during the day have regular tutorials. The access tutorial programme is well planned; tutors know students well and give good individual guidance on college work and preparation for the next stage of study. Optional tutorial support is available for evening access students, but take up is low. However, these students expressed concern that other college guidance and support staff are not available when they are at the college. Tutorial support is not provided for pharmaceutical science students. Attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures are ineffective for some mathematics and sports science classes and for access physics students.

Leadership and management

48. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Pharmaceutical science and access courses are well led. There is inadequate management of mathematics. The inclusion of science and mathematics in several college areas of learning has meant that self-assessment does not refer to these subjects in sufficient detail; some weaknesses, especially in mathematics, have not been identified. Pharmaceutical science teachers work well together within a clear management framework; there are effective quality assurance procedures and strategies to resolve problems such as the current changes in assessment requirements for part of the externally assessed work. The absence of an effective management structure for mathematics has resulted in insufficiently detailed course and lesson planning, a very narrow range of teaching and learning strategies, no value added analysis and very weak quality assurance.

Construction



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

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

Strengths

- good pass rates on NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery, plastering and GNVQ precursors

- good teaching

- good practical training resources

- extensive range of provision.

Weaknesses

- declining retention rates on electrical installation and National Open College Network (NOCN) construction skills

- lack of integration of key skills within the occupational training

- poor review practices for work-based learning.

Scope of provision

49. The college provides an extensive range of construction programmes from entry level to level 4. These include traditional programmes in bricklaying, painting and decorating, plastering, general construction operatives, plumbing, gas and electrical installation and wood occupations, including furniture. Specialist provision is also provided in flooring and plant operations. Technician and Chartered Institute of Building programmes are also offered. There are extensive programmes for school links, including for excluded pupils. On-site training and assessment are provided to enable experienced construction workers to become qualified. Students attend full time, block release, day release or evening only. Short courses for industry in electrical installation, plumbing and gas testing

are also offered for professional updating and certification. At the time of inspection, there was a total of 2,217 students, including 130 on the college's own work-based learning programmes, managed by the workforce and business development unit. Some 23% of students are aged 16 to 18 and 86% are part time. About 81% of students are on level 2 programmes. The college provides sub-contracted off-the-job training and assessment in construction crafts for 115 students from national and local training providers.

Achievement and standards

50. Pass rates on some programmes have been consistently above the national averages for the past three years, particularly on NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery, NVQ level 2 plastering and GNVQ precursors. The achievements in plastering have been recognised nationally. The Crombie Trophy was awarded to the college in 2002 by the Plaisterers Company. Achievements for modern apprenticeships are generally satisfactory. On advanced modern apprenticeship in carpentry and joinery, achievements are good, whereas in gas they are poor. In 2001/02, retention rates declined considerably on the City and Guilds 2360 part 1 electrical installation and on the NOCN construction skills programmes. In September 2002, the college put in place strategies to remedy this weakness and first award vocational education short duration programmes were introduced across the craft areas. Students enrol on these courses before they decide to pursue a trade in their chosen discipline. Although still at an early stage, there is evidence that retention rates are improving. Students' written work is good. Construction craft portfolios are, in the main, well organised and supported with photographic evidence. For example, one portfolio on NVQ bricklaying contained photographs at different stages of construction for angled walls and panelled walling. There is good practical skills development and students progress to further courses within and outside the college.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 2360-5 electrical installation part 1 theory	1	No. of starts	66	15	52
		% retention	67	93	69
		% pass rate	36	86	78
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	36	68	26
		% retention	58	74	69
		% pass rate	81	90	88
NVQ plastering	2	No. of starts	29	37	48
		% retention	62	57	58
		% pass rate	71	88	74
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	16	32	26
		% retention	44	66	73
		% pass rate	80	22	75
NOCN construction skills	2	No. of starts	*	54	128
		% retention	*	98	70
		% pass rate	*	19	65
GNVQ precursors	3	No. of starts	19	18	16
		% retention	74	67	88
		% pass rate	71	92	79

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

** course did not run*

Quality of education and training

51. The quality of teaching is good. Some 79% of lessons observed were good or better. In the best lessons, there are comprehensive schemes of work, lesson plans are well designed, with clear aims, and learning outcomes are identified. In many theory lessons, reference is made to realistic practical examples. Good use is made of students' industrial experience to illustrate key points. Teachers check students' understanding regularly. Most theory lessons are effectively linked to practical activities. For example, in one bricklaying theory lesson, the tutor explained, with the aid of suitable diagrams, the purpose of attached piers to half-brick walling and the stages in the construction process. These principles were then immediately practised in the workshop. Training is undertaken in well-resourced, industry standard workshops. There is a good emphasis on health and safety.

52. Students work well both individually and in groups. Teachers provide continuous support in the form of guidance and instructions. Practical activities are well organised and relate closely to situations found in the work place. For example, in one gas lesson, the teacher directed students to service warm air heaters and to install and commission freestanding cookers.

53. Initial assessment is used to identify an appropriate programme based on students' key skills potential and their vocational aptitude. It is also used to identify any additional support needs. All students have an induction programme that incorporates health and safety. The progress of full-time students is monitored closely through one-to-one tutorials. During tutorials, students agree learning goals, but the targets set for them are unchallenging. Key skills are poorly developed and not fully integrated within the vocational programme. Teachers' and students' understanding of the importance of key skills is low. There is a lack of use of information learning technology (ILT) by students and teachers.

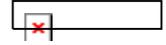
54. Assessment and recording systems within courses are consistent with the objectives of the course and methods of learning. On technician programmes, assignments are well written, relevant and of an appropriate level. All students are aware of assessment methods and timing of assignments. Assessors' feedback to students is helpful and gives them sufficient direction and guidance on how to improve their work. There is insufficient use of assessment in the workplace. Some students have had to repeat practical tasks in the workshops when they have already displayed their competence in the workplace. Students find this frustrating and it slows their progress. There are good tracking and recording of students' achievements. Internal verification is satisfactory.

55. For work-based learners, individual learning plans show the same completion date for all aspects of the framework. There is no effective target setting in reviews and employers are not directly involved in the setting of these targets. Individual learning plans are not updated as a result of reviews. Teachers and work-place supervisors are well qualified and experienced. There are extensive practical training resources and a dedicated resource centre. A new purpose-designed building to house the construction provision is currently under construction.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management of construction training within the college are good. Staff are committed to continuous improvement. Teachers are unable to have access to management information directly to monitor their courses. The college has recently gained acceptance for the development of Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for gas. There are effective formal and informal communications within the construction provision, with regular and minuted team meetings. There are clear, well-understood and documented roles and responsibilities of managers and teachers. There is good liaison with local schools and the construction industry. The school takes the initiative in developing new programmes to meet local and regional needs. Course teams contribute to the self-assessment report, following programme reviews, which in turn informs the school's development plan. The self-assessment report for construction was accurate, rigorous and identified most of the key strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- good teaching resources

- good support for students

- good framework completion rates for advanced modern apprenticeship general engineering.

Weaknesses

- poor management of programmes

- poor achievement and slow progress on many programmes

- poor framework completion on motor vehicle courses

- very poor attendance on motor vehicle courses

- insufficient assessment in the workplace for motor vehicle NVQ students

- lack of provision at entry and foundation level in engineering.

Scope of provision

57. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time provision in engineering from level 1 to level 3. Courses are available in general engineering and motor vehicle at the Cosham site and fabrication

and welding at the Unicorn site. The specific areas of general engineering are electronics, electrical, mechanical, production, manufacturing, maintenance and fabrication and welding. There are 69 modern apprentices; 39 of these are on general engineering programmes, 19 on motor vehicle and the remaining 11 are fabrication and welding apprentices. Some of the motor vehicle apprentices have completed their college courses but remain on the programme whilst they continue to gather work-based evidence towards their NVQ. The college has a contract with a major regional company to deliver its modern apprenticeship training in engineering. Students following this programme attend college full time in their first year and many are residential students who live on campus. During their second and third years, they attend college on a block release basis. At the Cosham site, there are 333 students, 118 of whom are full time.

58. There are 75 full-time students and 16 part-time students following a range of motor vehicle programmes at level 1, 2 or 3. These include Institute of the Motor Industry awards in vehicle maintenance and repair, Business Technology and Education Council (BTEC) first and national diploma, City and Guilds 3992 vehicle maintenance and Awarding Body Consortium (ABC) foundation certificate and diploma. All students planning to follow a full-time motor vehicle programme initially complete a six-week basic maintenance course. After this, they are interviewed and guided on to the most appropriate main programme.

59. Some 43 full-time and 199 part-time students study a range of engineering programmes that include national certificate and first and national diplomas in mechanical, electronics and telecommunications. Students also follow City and Guilds courses in mechanical, electrical and electronic and NVQs at levels 2 and 3. There are 40 students following a range of fabrication and welding skills programmes. Programmes include City and Guilds 229, welding skills, progression awards and NVQ options. Approximately 140 students, mainly adults, attend a range of evening courses across the provision.

Achievement and standards

60. Over the last three years, there has been a decrease in enrolments on both full-time and part-time provision. There are very good modern apprentice achievements in engineering. Of those who began training in 1999/2000, 70% achieved the full apprenticeship framework. Many of these students have now progressed on to higher national certificate programmes. Practical work produced by fabrication and welding students was of a high standard. The quality of assignment work produced by some part-time engineering students was also of a high standard and was well presented. Coursework files of some motor vehicle students were not well presented. Pass rates for level 1 short courses in motor vehicle repair and maintenance are equal to or slightly below national averages. Attendance by motor vehicle students is poor. Class registers show repeated absences for many students. Of the motor vehicle classes observed, the average attendance rate was 53%. There is poor and declining achievement on the two-year national certificate programmes across engineering. Achievements rates have fallen from 69% in 1999/2000 to 56% in 2001/02. In 2000/01, the pass rate on the national diploma in engineering was very poor, at 14%, when compared to the national average of 73%. There is generally poor achievement and slow progress across many motor vehicle programmes. Many students do not achieve their qualification within the allocated time. Motor vehicle modern apprentice achievements are particularly poor. There have been no full framework achievements for the last three years.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance (short)	1	No. of starts	98	74	66
		% retention	88	95	47
		% pass rate	95	94	91
City and Guilds 2280	2	No. of starts	20	11	18

competences		% pass rate	65	88	40
NVQ engineering manufacture	2	No. of starts	37	32	13
		% retention	68	75	100
		% pass rate	67	50	89
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems (two year)	2	No. of starts	33	27	*
		% retention	42	44	*
		% pass rate	50	100	*
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems (two year)	3	No. of starts	15	19	8
		% retention	73	89	88
		% pass rate	55	54	38
National certificate in engineering (two year)	3	No. of starts	99	63	61
		% retention	79	71	75
		% pass rate	69	64	56
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	49	28	13
		% retention	49	44	36
		% pass rate	32	14	33

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

61. A high proportion of the teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers used a range of visual aids effectively to add interest, promote discussion and reinforce learning. In one lesson, the teacher used a crossword puzzle with the students as a method of reinforcing learning on health and safety issues. In another lesson, students were asked to bring in the results of their independent research into quality costing models that they had obtained from web site searches. They were then asked to explain their findings to the rest of the class. Those lessons that were less than satisfactory failed to involve students fully and often lacked depth and appropriate pace. Course schemes of motor vehicle often lacked detail. Staff in this area of work are generally well qualified and have appropriate industrial experience. There has been recent investment by the college to provide an up-to-date microprocessor teaching laboratory. Students develop software programmes that allow them to monitor and control a range of external equipment. This is an effective method of simulating industrial applications. Students' soldering skills are developed in an area that has equipment meeting modern industrial standards. The motor vehicle section has well-equipped vehicle repair workshops and a very well-equipped computer simulation laboratory. There are computer simulation panels that represent a full range of modern vehicle systems. Students have the facilities to fault find and interrogate systems in a controlled environment. Although the system has extensive teaching potential, the current staff are not adequately trained to use the resources to their full potential. Fabrication and welding facilities at the Unicorn site are of a good standard and reflect those found in industry. There is insufficient assessment in the workplace for motor vehicle NVQ students. Without these assessments, students are unable to complete their NVQ. Motor vehicle practical classes lack effective progress tracking systems and training vehicles are outdated.

62. There is good support for students. Staff are available to provide support for students outside of normal teaching times. Additional teaching sessions are arranged to help students when they are experiencing difficulties. For example, extra teaching sessions have been arranged for students experiencing difficulties with mathematics. Initial assessment identifies those students requiring learning support, which is then made available. For example, some students assessed as dyslexic receive one-to-one assistance during lessons. Additional classes are provided in the evening to

develop students' numeracy skills.

63. There is an extensive school links programme. The college works with 14 local secondary schools. School pupils attend the college and are taught practical engineering skills. On one course, they use computer numerical control machines to manufacture a plastic clock, which they keep at the end of the course. In motor vehicle, school link students have access to their own vehicle workshop, where they learn a variety of vehicle maintenance techniques. Provision at entry and foundation level is poor in engineering. The college has recognized this as an issue.

64. Challenging assignments are set on engineering courses. There are clear marking schemes and assessment is rigorous. Written feedback to students is good. Students' spelling is corrected when necessary. Some NVQ assessment lacks detail. There are some effective links with employers and material supply companies.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There has been poor management of programmes over a considerable period. The present head of department has only been in post for 10 weeks. A new head of department for motor vehicle has been appointed but has yet to start. The application of internal verification processes is underdeveloped across engineering courses. Some courses do not have effective sampling plans. The college has recognized this weakness and has recently introduced new procedures. It is too early to assess the impact these are having. There are clearly documented internal verification systems for motor vehicle programmes. However, there is only one internal verifier, who is unable to verify his own activities. Changes to staffing and availability of suitable accommodation have had an adverse impact on students' learning. Students on a mechanical engineering course were sent to the library for four successive weeks because of accommodation issues. This is unacceptable. Some teaching takes place in unsuitable accommodation. Over-reliance is placed on informal team meetings where decisions are not recorded. The college is addressing these issues and has produced targeted actions plans to help bring about improvements. The college self-assessment report accurately identified many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Business



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on level 3 courses

- good support for students

- good use of students' current work experience in lessons.

Weaknesses

- insufficient provision of level 1 courses

- little use of ILT by students

- poor retention rate on NVQ level 2 accounting in 2002.

Scope of provision

66. The college offers full-time and part-time NVQ courses at levels 1 to 4 in administration, part-time NVQ courses at levels 2 to 4 in accounting, professional and management courses, teacher training courses and NVQ courses at levels 3 and 4 in training and development. Management courses include the certificate in management, certificate in administrative management and certificate in personnel practice. There is a GCE AS course in business studies. There is also a range of word and text processing courses, but only a small provision at level 1. There are good progression routes for students through the various levels of these courses and to the Higher National Diploma (HND) in business or the Sunderland University business studies degree by distance learning.

Achievement and standards

67. The retention rate on the NVQ level 2 course in accounting fell to 68% in 2002, 12 percentage points below the average. Retention rates on the NVQ level 3 administration course, NEBS management certificate, certificate in management studies and the further and adult education teachers certificate (FAETC) also fell, but remain above average. The retention rate for the certificate in personnel practice course improved from 83% to 90%. Retention rates on GCE AS business studies courses, offered for the first time in 2001/02, were only 33%. Pass rates for the NEBS management certificate, certificate in personnel practice, certificate in management studies, FAETC and NVQ course in administration at level 3 improved significantly in 2002. All are well above the national average. The pass rate on the NVQ level 2 accounting course has improved each year since 2000 and is now around the national average. The standard of work and assignments set for students are appropriate for each level of study. Students' work is satisfactory at all levels and there is some assignment work of a high standard on the management courses. Many students progress from the full-time NVQ administration course into employment, and return as part-time students. Students' attendance rate in lessons observed by inspectors was satisfactory, at 82%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	25	23	28
		% retention	76	83	68
		% pass rate	26	53	68
NVQ administration	3	No. of starts	27	36	*
		% retention	74	77	88
		% pass rate	80	57	80
NEBS management certificate	3	No. of starts	41	40	36
		% retention	88	90	89

		% pass rate	100	100	97
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	67	80	80
		% retention	87	87	90
		% pass rate	95	91	97
Certificate in management studies	3	No. of starts	20	22	31
		% retention	100	95	84
		% pass rate	89	90	100
City and Guilds 7307-02 FAETC	3	No. of starts	67	41	59
		% retention	94	100	95
		% pass rate	75	90	96

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

* data unavailable

Quality of education and training

68. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Lessons are detailed, well planned and well structured, and involve students in a number of activities. Students were attentive and involved in the lessons observed. There is good use of suitable handouts and case studies. In a teacher training class, students were required to consider 12 criteria for effective handouts and then to change handouts into activity sheets. In the better lessons, teachers directed questions to individual students to check understanding constantly and to extend students' learning. In one particularly effective finance lesson, the tutor showed how to calculate various ratios but required the students to interpret the results. This led to very lively discussions involving the whole group and allowed the original concepts to be extended. Teachers make regular and extensive use of students' prior knowledge from their workplace to develop material in case studies or engage students' interest and participation. In weaker lessons, a minority of students did not contribute to class discussions. In these lessons, there were insufficient checks on students' learning and understanding. The pace of some lessons was inappropriately slow. There was little use of ILT by students, apart from during specialist ICT lessons.

69. There is good support for students. Students receive good induction and assessment of their needs and they are well guided on to appropriate courses. There is effective tutorial support for full-time students. It includes regular review of their academic performance. There is also timetabled provision of tutorials for all significant part-time courses. Personal development reviews have been developed for part-time students to improve retention rates and achievement. All full-time students are screened before they enrol, or on entry to the college, in order to assess if additional learning support is required. The attendance of students at extra support classes is monitored. This ensures that students continue to receive necessary support. Subject tutors may also refer students for additional support. The department provides appropriate support for students with mobility or other physical impairments.

70. Students' work is returned promptly. Work in lessons reinforces learning and homework activities. Teachers give students detailed comments on the larger assignments that are set and indications of how to improve or develop the topic. However, students' errors in spelling and grammar are not always corrected. Course leaders maintain records of students' progress and attainment in all subjects. However, it is unclear where responsibility lies for students on GCE AS courses who study subjects in more than one curriculum area.

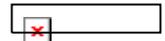
71. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable in their subjects. The majority of teachers have appropriate teaching qualifications or are undertaking appropriate training. There is insufficient industrial or commercial updating of current staff. A number of staff with recent commercial

experience have recently been appointed. Accommodation is suitable for the courses. Computing facilities are appropriate for all programmes.

Leadership and management

72. Management of the curriculum area is good. Course teams meet each term, other teams meet fortnightly, and all meetings are minuted. Course teams have set challenging targets for achievement and for retention rates. Progress against the latter are monitored each month by the teams and the head of department. Improvements have been made since the same time in 2002. All management courses seek employer feedback on levels of satisfaction; the response rate is high and the level of satisfaction is good. The department has established links with local schools to improve future recruitment.

Computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on GNVQ foundation, Internet skills and ECDL courses

- good retention rates on GNVQ foundation and Internet skills courses

- high level of technical competence of full-time students

- good individualised coaching

- effective initiatives to improve participation and progression of students.

Weaknesses

- consistently low pass rates on CLAIT

- poor short-term target setting

- weak induction on part-time flexible courses.

Scope of provision

73. The college offers a wide range of programmes in ICT and computing organised on four main sites in and around Portsmouth. Computer programmes include GCE AS computing, the diploma and certificates in computing, network and computer support and web design. Key skills are also included in IT. A variety of computing courses is offered for adults at two flexible learning centres, from beginner to level 3 qualifications. A large number of part-time courses are based on self-paced, flexi-learning workshops supported by tutors. Courses include CLAIT at foundation and intermediate levels, using the Internet, desktop publishing, digital imagery and common desktop programs such as the ECDL. At the time of the inspection, 12% of the students were full time.

Achievement and standards

74. Pass rates on GNVQ foundation courses are very good. In two of the last three years, pass rates were 23 and 33 percentage points above the national average. Pass rates on the Internet skills course are very good and have improved over the last three years. There are poor pass rates on CLAIT courses. Over the last three years, almost half the students on this course have failed to achieve a qualification. Retention and attendance rates on GNVQ intermediate are poor. Full-time students demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of their subject and are able to show their levels of competence in individual assignments. For example, instead of merely importing clip art images in a graphics session, students were developing their own three-dimensional imagery.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	897	797	862
		% retention	93	91	88
		% pass rate	55	56	56
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	26	24	19
		% retention	84	88	84
		% pass rate	90	67	100
ECDL (one year)	2	No. of starts	178	251	226
		% retention	93	87	78
		% pass rate	71	84	86
Internet skills intermediate (short)	2	No. of starts	91	449	385
		% retention	64	94	96
		% pass rate	64	45	72
GNVQ Intermediate	2	No. of starts	44	47	49
		% retention	79	62	73
		% pass rate	59	52	72
National diploma IT (two year)	3	No. of starts	69	51	58
		% retention	67	71	67
		% pass rate	95	84	82

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

Quality of education and training

75. Most teaching is satisfactory; some 48% of teaching was good or better, 47% was satisfactory and 5% was unsatisfactory. There is good individual coaching for students. Many sessions take place in a flexible learning centre, where students attend on a drop-in basis. Teachers work with students one-to-one and successfully overcome the difficulties associated with students in the same group having different knowledge and skills. Teachers check students' understanding well in some lessons. However, some more able students, who complete their work ahead of time, are left to their own devices and are not encouraged or challenged to progress further and realise their full potential. In some lessons, discipline is poor. This has a direct impact on learning, as some students lose interest and fail to pay attention.

76. IT resources are satisfactory. Computers are of an industrial standard and there are sufficient numbers of them for the students. Most machines provide fast Internet access, which allows the students to use the Internet as a matter of course to support their studies. The flexible learning centre in the centre of town provides a good learning environment. Students are comfortable, have ample space and are confident that their machines are reliable. The flexible learning centre at the main college is in an unsatisfactory location. Students have to walk through the centre to gain access to a number of classrooms. This disrupts classes in the centre. A few of the rooms used by full-time students are poorly laid out and students have difficulty viewing whiteboards while sitting at their workstations.

77. Assessments are fair, accurate and reliable. Records are well kept and quality is assured by the internal verification system. Assessments take place throughout the course and students are given regular feedback that helps them to progress. Progress tracking is satisfactory. Internal verification is satisfactory, with appropriate sample sizes and coverage of assessors, students and courses. Feedback from internal verifiers to assessors is helpful.

78. Support for students with disabilities is good, especially for the visually impaired. Specialist software, such as supernova, JAWS screen reading application and zoom text, is available. There is a dedicated support worker exclusively for visually impaired students. A hearing-impaired student has a signer with him. There are large screens and adjustable tables for wheelchair users. Induction on part-time flexible courses is weak. Students can read the college handbook that explains their rights in terms of bullying and harassment. Not all students do this, however. Points made in the handbook are not reinforced as part of the induction. The induction does not adequately cover certain health and safety issues such as correct posture when sitting at a workstation, use of foot rests and wrist supports and the danger of hot drinks near machinery. These are serious omissions, as many part-time students are new to computing and are not aware of these issues at the very start of their course.

79. There is poor short-term target setting. Short-term targets in individual learning plans for all students are vague; they are difficult to measure and do not set timescales.

80. There are effective initiatives to widen participation and establish good links with community groups. The college has set up flexible learning centres, strategically placed to encourage the students in the community to attend. The centres are open five days and two evenings a week, and one centre is open on Saturday mornings. These opening hours encourage the community to make use of the provision. A wide range of courses is offered full and part time, which is very well subscribed. Taster courses are offered in community centres and are specifically aimed at minority groups who do not normally take up such provision: for example, people suffering from mental illness. Laptops are taken into hospitals to include patients in learning. There are links with JobCentre Plus and extra help for single parents. A series of subsidised and free taster courses enable a large number of people to experience working with computers in a non-threatening environment. There are good, productive links with business that have resulted in the Cisco and Microsoft centres. These benefit students by providing wider teaching expertise and additional

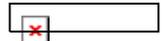
courses and resources.

81. There is good progression for both full-time and part-time students. Full-time students progress from GNVQ on to national diploma and HND courses. The majority of students from the national diploma went on to HE in 2001/02. Part-time students progress from taster courses to formal IT qualifications.

Leadership and management

82. Management is satisfactory. Internal communications within centres are good. There is a range of meetings, which are well recorded with appropriate agendas. There is good planning of the curriculum and the Cisco centre is used as an integral part of the full-time curriculum. There are poor communications between centres offering ICT and little sharing of good practice. Managers have recognised weaknesses such as high rates of absenteeism and low student achievement and progress. They have put in place strategies to rectify the situation. It is too early to judge their impact.

Hospitality, catering, sports, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on level 3 courses and first diploma in sport
- very good teaching on hospitality and catering courses
- high standards of practical industry skills demonstrated
- good links with industry and schools.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on level 1 hospitality and catering courses
- consistently poor retention rate on GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course
- insufficient challenge in some sports and travel lessons

- poor sharing of practice.

Scope of provision

83. At the time of inspection, there were 450 full-time students and 365 part-time students in this area. Hospitality and catering represent approximately 75% of provision. The college offers extensive provision, including GNVQ foundation and intermediate, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), NVQ levels 1 to 3 and first and national diplomas. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Full-time students are able to gain other qualifications in addition to those offered by their main programme of study. There is good provision of short vocational courses available in community venues and a small work-based learning provision. The college works closely with local employers providing good work experience and developing a high standard of industry skills. A range of trips and visits enhances learning. Arrangements are made to use the catering and sports facilities at the college to teach a number of students aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

84. There are good pass rates on level 3 programmes across all areas. NVQ qualifications at level 3 in food preparation and cooking and AVCE travel and tourism are significantly above the national average. Pass rates for the first diploma in sport show an improving trend and, in 2001/02, retention and pass rates were very good. There have been low pass rates over the past three years on NVQ level 1 hospitality and catering courses. There are good retention rates for hospitality and catering. The retention rates for the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism have been persistently below the national average. Students' work is of a high standard. Sport and catering students demonstrate considerable proficiency in practical skills. Innovative warm-up drills and games practices are demonstrated well by sports students when leading games sessions. Catering students are competent in all aspects of food preparation and food service; they work quickly and effectively to prepare meals. The quality of the dishes produced is extremely high. Travel students demonstrate confident use of travel timetables, journey details and accommodation standard brochures, which are similar to those used in industry. Regular exposure to work in the travel centre prepares students well for employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ food preparation and cooking	1	No. of starts	37	78	63
		% retention	81	86	81
		% pass rate	13	64	61
NVQ food and drink service	1	No. of starts	12	72	76
		% retention	75	88	74
		% pass rate	67	60	63
Resort representatives (short)	2	No. of starts	**	30	9
		% retention	**	90	100
		% pass rate	**	30	100
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	15	30	10
		% retention	67	59	60

		% pass rate	100	56	100
First diploma sport	2	No. of starts	15	27	13
		% retention	60	74	92
		% pass rate	78	85	100
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	77	63	87
		% retention	68	90	77
		% pass rate	79	63	81
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism / AVCE travel and tourism double award *	3	No. of starts	25	11	38
		% retention	68	73	82
		% pass rate	65	88	94
NVQ food preparation and cooking	3	No. of starts	9	35	27
		% retention	56	83	96
		% pass rate	100	97	92

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

* course changed from GNVQ advanced to AVCE double award in 2002

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

85. Teaching and learning are very good in hospitality and catering. Lesson planning is thorough and provides students with interesting and varied activities. Tutors are enthusiastic, well qualified and have much industry experience. Innovative learning materials are used in some lessons and booklets have been designed to guide the students through their programme at their own pace. In a good practical catering lesson, students were each assigned roles that would be found in a professional kitchen, to add realism and encourage students to develop and demonstrate a high level of organisational skills. There were more unsatisfactory lessons in sports, leisure and tourism than in other subject areas. In weak lessons, there was insufficient activity to engage students fully for the duration of the lesson. The lesson content did not challenge the students and no account was taken of different levels of ability. There was not enough checking of learning, and there was insufficient evaluation by students.

86. College resources are good and representative of good industry standards, including a restaurant and travel centre, which are open to the public, and well-equipped modern training kitchens. The college sports centre is an excellent resource, providing a dance studio, multi-purpose sports hall and gymnasium. The learning centre is well stocked and used frequently by students. Classroom accommodation, in many cases, is dull, with no displays of student work. Some are of an inadequate size to cater for larger classes and, in addition, external noise and poor ventilation impact on the quality of students' learning.

87. There is inconsistency across the area in terms of assessment. On some courses, continuing assessment of learning and achievement is used effectively to monitor students' progress and set them individual learning goals. In others, procedures are less effective. Constructive feedback following the assessment of practical skills is valued and improves students' performance. In many cases, completed assignments are assessed and returned promptly, with written feedback indicating areas for improvement. Students on the AVCE hospitality and catering and GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism courses are disadvantaged by the late return of marked work. Internal verification processes follow college procedures, are well documented and are used by management as an effective quality assurance tool.

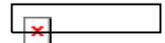
88. Good advice and guidance ensure that students are placed on the correct course and the

induction period supports students who are unsure of their choice. Students are clear about progression routes available to them and possible career opportunities. Support for students in class is good, and learning support staff are available to help both weaker and stronger students. Support for students who have difficulty with English is effective in lessons. Early diagnostic testing of the students takes place and determines the appropriate level of support required. Attendance is good and tutorials provide good individual support. Individual learning plans lack detail in short-term target setting.

Leadership and management

89. Curriculum management is satisfactory. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the inspection. However, the internal lesson observation system was over-generous in its grading. Good practice observed in teaching and learning is not shared across the programme area. There are some disruptions to the timetable and delays in assessing students' work. There are good links with industry and schools.

Hair and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on part-time courses in holistic therapies

- good support for students

- broad and flexible range of provision

- good teaching for adults returning to learning.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on level 2 full-time courses

- poor levels of attendance

- inadequate accommodation in beauty salons

- insufficient client base for assessment of vocational skills

- weak internal verification.

Scope of provision

90. Full-time courses are offered in NVQ beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3 and there is a full-time national diploma course. Hairdressing is offered at levels 1 and 2. There are currently no hairdressing students studying at level 3. There is also a full-time course in holistic therapies. Part-time programmes include aromatherapy, reflexology, Indian head massage, advanced nail techniques, body massage, manicure and pedicure and cosmetic make-up. There are currently 155 students aged between 16 to 18 and 50 adults on full-time courses, and 29 students aged 16 to 18 and 276 adults on part-time programmes. There are 20 trainees studying on a foundation modern apprenticeship programme. Provision in this area of learning is both broad and flexible and meets the students' needs.

Achievement and standards

91. Pass rates are good on part-time programmes in holistic therapies, which include the diplomas in aromatherapy and body massage and the certificate in sports massage. Retention rates are poor on full-time two-year programmes in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Often, there are insufficient clients for all students in practical sessions, which limits assessment opportunities. The standard of portfolio work at level 3 demonstrates that students are able to explore, research and consolidate theoretical concepts. Many full-time students gain additional qualifications through an enrichment programme in subjects such as cosmetic make-up and manicure and pedicure. Adult returners in both the body massage and evening hairdressing group have a positive attitude to their studies; they have acquired the skills necessary for them to work independently. The department is also involved in a number of projects for disaffected and excluded school pupils, many of whom progress successfully to college courses. All students in the department are actively encouraged to participate in end-of-term competitions and level 3 students are responsible for organising and managing an end-of-year show. Students' attendance in many lessons is consistently low. During the inspection, average attendance was poor, at 63%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	1	No. of starts	33	41	44
		% retention	73	76	81
		% pass rate	50	55	89
NVQ beauty therapy (two year)	2	No. of starts	*	68	37
		% retention	*	56	46
		% pass rate	*	90	75
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	74	58	50
		% retention	60	64	56
		% pass rate	35	73	89
VCTC diploma in Indian	2	No. of starts	*	17	29

head massage (one year)		% retention	*	76	76
		% pass rate	*	77	95
diploma in body massage	3	No. of starts	41	50	52
		% retention	83	76	62
		% pass rate	100	92	100
diploma in aromatherapy massage	3	No. of starts	22	36	47
		% retention	68	82	79
		% pass rate	100	100	97

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

92. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of very good practice in NVQ level 2 units for hairdressing, diploma in body massage and the national diploma in beauty therapy. In the best lessons, teachers link theory to practical activities and use their industry knowledge effectively in their teaching. Teachers are aware of their students' individual abilities, learning styles and prior experience. The department has recently recruited new staff. Experienced members of staff mentor and support new members of staff and share good practice. There are often insufficient models to enable students to achieve a full range of both practice and assessment opportunities. Level 3 students are often timetabled alongside other students studying at levels 1 and 2, which provides them with an opportunity to gain experience and confidence in their supervisory and communication skills. This arrangement also provides some good role models for the less experienced students. There is a positive and consistent approach to the planning and development of learning materials. Teachers give constructive oral and written feedback following assessment, which helps the student to improve their performance.

93. Students receive good individual support from their tutors, both informally and as part of the tutorial process. All full-time students have weekly tutorial sessions, which include both individual and group work. Topics covered throughout the academic year include career planning, interview skills, health issues, equal opportunities and stress and money management. In the sessions observed, students were able to discuss, review and evaluate their performance with their tutor and set themselves new, achievable goals. A parents evening is held for all full-time students aged 16 to 18. Reports on progress are also sent out to parents, guardians and employers. Adult students on part-time holistic courses, where many of the mandatory units can be cross-referenced, are guided and supported through the accreditation of prior learning process by their tutors.

94. All students are screened for any additional support needs before the start of their course. Students with a learning difficulty and/or disability are well supported. Two students in one group were being helped by a learning support assistant to take down notes in a hairdressing theory session. In another session, a student with dyslexia had been provided with a laptop to support his studies; he also received specialist support each week. Many of the students receive financial assistance to help them to purchase the necessary uniform and equipment required for this type of vocational programme. All students have an induction period, which includes a number of team building activities. Staff also organise a 'fun week' each academic year where students are able to participate in extra-curricular activities such as henna body painting, ear piercing and eyelash perming.

95. The department makes flexible timetable arrangements to meet the needs of the students. Where low numbers enrol, classes are combined to ensure that the course can still run. This process is well managed and works effectively. The introduction of a number of part-time courses in body massage, reflexology and aromatherapy has helped to reduce the gender imbalance often

associated with this area of work. There are, however, very few male students studying on full-time programmes.

96. Some progress is being made in developing key skills. IT and application of number are taught as stand-alone subjects in order to ensure that students have the appropriate knowledge and skills for the external tests. Communication skills, however, are integrated into the core curriculum. A number of vocationally relevant assignments have been produced which cross all three key skills for levels 1 and 2.

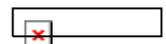
97. There is some inadequate accommodation. Beauty salons are in need of some refurbishment to reflect industry standards. Accommodation for hairdressing is good. Both areas are well equipped with a good range of appropriate equipment. There are also dedicated theory rooms, some of which are equipped with ILT facilities. The Department introduces students to a selection of commercially available products. The library stock is good, with a comprehensive range of trade magazines and journals. Students studying in this subject area have access to ILT and the Internet, through both the learning resource centre and the library. Staff are appropriately qualified.

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management are good. Staff teams work well together and there is effective internal communication. Cover arrangements for staff are poor. Courses are well managed and they are reviewed and evaluated regularly by the course teams. Particular attention is paid to offering a curriculum which reflects the needs of the both the industry and the students. Students complete regular questionnaires and student representatives are invited to attend some course team meetings. Their responses and views often influence developments. Course team meetings are held frequently, and part-time staff are involved in the planning and monitoring of the provision. The head of department is set an income target for the salons, which was exceeded in 2001/02. The additional revenue was used to purchase substantial pieces of new capital equipment in order to enhance the curriculum resources. There are insufficient numbers of staff qualified to undertake internal verification, which is weak. External reports identify issues that are outstanding.

99.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- good achievement on level 2 and level 3 NVQ courses for students over 19

- much well-planned and effective teaching

- good standard of work in full-time level 3 students' portfolios.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on full-time level 2 childcare course for students aged 16 to 18

- insufficient level 1 provision

- inadequate teaching accommodation

- poor integration of key skills into vocational assignments in care and early years courses.

Scope of provision

100. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in the areas of health and social care, early years, public services and occupational health from part-time level 1 courses to level 4 foundation degree programmes. There are currently 319 full-time and 1,137 part-time students studying in this area. The full-time students are largely aged 16 to 18 and the part-time students are mostly adults. In health and social care, 627 students are on NVQ courses. This is an area of significant growth, with the recent development of partnerships with local employers, such as the Portsmouth NHS Trust, to provide courses at levels 2 and 3 for their staff. The college also offers NVQ courses in early years care and education at levels 2 and 3, the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma in childcare and education, AVCE in health and social care and a national diploma in early years. The care provision also includes a GNVQ foundation level course in health and social care. Progression routes are in place from level 1 to level 4 in care. The early years team is developing links with local schools and providing short level 1 courses in community centres. Counselling provision also allows progression from introductory programmes to higher certificate or diploma level. Other courses offering good progression routes for students include the first diploma in public services at level 2, with progression opportunities to the national diploma in public services. However, full-time level 1 provision is limited. The occupational health section works closely with local employers to provide professional training in health and safety. Courses include first aid for children and the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) occupational health and safety diploma and certificate. A significant number of full-time students take first aid training as part of their enrichment programme.

Achievement and standards

101. Retention and pass rates have been variable on most courses. Retention and pass rates on part-time level 2 and 3 and NVQ courses are above the national average for adult students. Pass rates on the industrial health courses and the public services first diploma are well above the national average. On level 2 and 3 courses in early years and on public services first diploma for students aged 16 to 18, retention rates are below the national average, but pass rates are above it. There are indications that retention is improving in these areas in 2003 when compared with the same time in 2002. Pass rates are high on counselling and first aid courses.

102. Students' portfolios and working files are well organised and their notes are clear and accurate, reflecting the requirements of the qualifications. In some cases, where teaching and learning have been affected by tutors' absence, the quality of the work is below that expected for the level of the

course. Teaching is shared between college teachers and staff from the hospital trust. Contributions to class discussion reflect a commitment to the vocational area and an understanding of issues appropriate to the level of the award. Students' successes include a NEBOSH student, who received an international award for best examination results overall, and students on the second year public services course, who won the Southern Area Army Challenge award in a regional competition.

103. Students contribute thoughtfully to class discussions. Some good displays in classrooms show that the students clearly take pride in their work. The attendance rate was poor, at only 74%, but punctuality was good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First aid at work	1	No. of starts	276	286	246
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	95	98	100
Certificate in basic counselling	2	No. of starts	47	34	25
		% retention	100	91	83
		% pass rate	83	94	83
NVQ early years care and education	2	No. of starts	34	39	58
		% retention	79	87	72
		% pass rate	81	65	88
First diploma public services	2	No. of starts	*	8	13
		% retention	*	88	69
		% pass rate	*	71	100
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	10	50	52
		% retention	100	74	90
		% pass rate	80	86	97
Certificate in counselling	3	No. of starts	16	24	17
		% retention	81	92	100
		% pass rate	100	91	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

104. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned. Schemes of work are detailed and cross-referenced to the awarding body requirements. Lesson plans are informative, identifying the specific needs of individual students in the group. However, there is no reference to key skills in any vocational lessons and no indication of key skills on assignments. IT is used as a teaching and assessment aid in only a minority of lessons. Assignments are well structured and well matched to the awarding body requirements. They clearly link theory to practice. Teachers' written feedback on students' work varies in quality and detail. In good lessons, teachers used a variety of methods, including IT, to involve students actively in the lesson. Lessons were lively and purposeful. In poorer lessons, the teaching was dull, lacked variety and was inappropriately paced. Students' achievements are clearly tracked, but target setting introduced at induction is not sustained throughout their course. Work placement is thoroughly embedded into the

courses. There is a good range of placements and students are monitored effectively.

105. Students' specific learning needs are identified during induction through the basic skills screening process. Sensitive and focused support is provided according to the students' needs. Individual learning assistants provide individual support to students in lessons and, where appropriate, laptops are provided for students' use.

106. Some teaching accommodation is poor and limits the range of teaching and learning activities that can be used. Some classrooms are drab and too small to be used for group work. There is only one room dedicated to practical care activities and art and craft work. The library is stocked with appropriate journals and texts for students.

107. Teachers are well qualified and many have appropriate academic and professional experience. Teachers relate their professional knowledge and experience well to the needs of the courses, enriching students' learning. Students on the public services course are able to use local public services facilities to enhance their studies. There are suitable staff development opportunities for the professional development of teachers. Students receive good support from their tutors. Teachers know their students well and take care to meet their pastoral and academic needs. All full-time and some part-time students benefit from regular group tutorials.

Leadership and management

108. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course team roles and responsibilities are clear and understood by teachers. The team works well together and has managed some necessary changes in provision well. Records of team meetings are detailed and show regular review of students' issues. The development plan arising from the self-assessment process is detailed; clear priorities have been established to meet identified weaknesses and actions are monitored. However, the quality of internal verification varies across the programmes.

Journalism and media



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

Strengths

- very good retention rates on most courses

- good pass rates on most courses

- good specialist equipment and accommodation

- high standards of students' work

- good teaching at level 4.

Weaknesses

- consistently poor pass rates on level 4 pre-entry certificate in newspaper journalism
- poor achievement of key skills
- poor action planning in tutorials
- insufficient technician support for media students.

Scope of provision

109. There are only a very small number of visual arts courses. These courses are located within the department of media and journalism. The inspection focused on media and journalism courses. Programmes offer students the possibility of progressing from level 2 courses to professional standard courses in journalism at level 4. Courses include GCSE media, GNVQ intermediate media, a part-time City and Guilds class in media techniques at level 2, a national diploma in media production at level 3 and a variety of journalism courses at level 4. These latter courses include a one-year diploma in magazine journalism, a twelve-week course in newspaper journalism, a one-year broadcast journalism course, and a twenty-week pre-entry certificate in newspaper journalism.

Achievement and standards

110. There are good pass rates on many courses. The pass rate on the national diploma in media production is 93%, 13% above the national average. The pass rate on the GCSE media course last year was 100%. The level 4 journalism courses at the college have a well-established reputation and attract students from the locality and from further afield. The 100% retention rates on these courses for the last two years reflect the positive attitude the students have towards their training. Achievement is satisfactory on these courses. In 2001/02 the pass rate on the majority of courses was at 75%. The exception, however, has been the poor achievement on the twenty-week pre-entry certificate in newspaper journalism. One reason for this is the awarding body's demands for high speeds in short hand. This has proved a stumbling block for some students on the course, given the relatively short and intense nature of the training. The pass rate on this course has never been above 30%, and in 1999/2000 was at 11%.

111. Pass rates for key skills are unsatisfactory, and pass and retention rates are poor on significant elements of level 2 media provision.

112. Attainment and standards of most students' work are high. On level 4 courses there has been very good attainment and students have been successful in national competitions. There has also been some success in local competitions by level 3 students from the national diploma in media. Work of a high standard was observed in a number of lessons. In media production, students were

set a highly realistic advertising assignment; the planning, research and execution of the brief were of a high order. IT skills were used to good effect. A group of students attending the 20-week journalism course were achieving high standards at an early stage in their course. This was seen in a variety of written responses, but especially in a live interview with college counsellors which required copy to be written to a very tight deadline.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE media	2	No. of starts	*	18	11
		% retention	*	72	82
		% pass rate	*	92	100
Periodicals Training Council diploma of magazine journalism	4	No. of starts	44	12	12
		% retention	93	100	100
		% pass rate	71	67	75
National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) pre-entry certificate of newspaper journalism	4	No. of starts	35	22	20
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	11	27	30
NCTJ newspaper journalism (12 weeks)	4	No. of starts	14	11	12
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	14	64	75
Broadcast Journalism Training Council post-graduate diploma of broadcast journalism	4	No. of starts	12	16	9
		% retention	92	100	100
		% pass rate	91	69	75

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

* data not available

Quality of education and training

113. Teaching and learning are satisfactory; in some cases they are good. Lessons are well planned with detailed schemes of work, many of which take account of the individual learning styles and backgrounds of students within the class.

114. Many assignments clearly reflect the demands of industry. This was a feature of much of the better teaching observed. For example, for an assignment on the magazine journalism course, students were required to produce a magazine for a niche audience. The quality of the final product was of a high order, both in the choice of the language register and in the use of industry standard software used to produce final copy. Students from a journalism course performed well in a local competition for their coverage of a local election and made good contributions to Solent News and Photo Agency.

115. Action planning is poor in tutorials. There is insufficient feedback to support students' progress and agreed plans are not adequately followed up. Internal verification is inconsistently applied on some courses.

116. The general quality of the accommodation and specialist equipment is good throughout the media area, as is the resourcing of specialist equipment. There are 53 iMac computers and 18

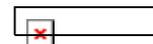
Performa 400s. The television and radio areas are well equipped with digital editing facilities that allow students to produce interesting and challenging work. Students receive good practical training on courses within the media area. Difficulties in replacing a technician within the media area are having a negative impact on the efficient running of the area and the quality of students' learning. Students experienced difficulties in transferring work from the PC-based learning centre to the Apple Mac-based media area. Teachers are appropriately qualified and many possess recent industrial experience that helps lend assignments a vocationally realistic content.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams meet regularly. The quality of students' learning is central to discussions. Full-time staff are well informed about college and course targets. Communication with part-time staff is less effective. Individual teachers are allocated action points, but there is no effective follow-up to check that the actions are achieved. There are systems to allow student representatives to air their views in departmental meetings, and for these to be fed back to course teams for action. These have resulted some in changes to resources and departmental practice. However, this information is not effectively communicated back to the student body by course team leaders or student representatives. Students were sceptical about the likelihood of these meetings bringing about meaningful change.

118. There is some poor timekeeping and late submission of work. This was identified in the self-assessment report and a new monitoring system has been put into place.

English, communication and languages



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

Strengths

- good pass rates

- good teaching and learning on GCSE English, GCE AS English language and literature and modern foreign languages courses

- attractive, well-resourced and well-equipped learning areas

- high levels and good quality of support for students.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rate on the GCSE English course

- inappropriate pace and insufficient variety in EFL classes

- insufficient provision to fully meet the needs of students and potential students.

Scope of provision

119. English and modern foreign languages are taught within the department of languages. English is offered at GCSE and English language and literature at GCE AS. EFL is a large area of work and includes some ESOL students. EFL courses are offered from entry to level 3, with a wide range of accreditation options. Modern foreign languages include the major European languages, the most popular of which are French and Spanish.

Achievement and standards

120. Pass rates are good. Over 100 students take the GCSE English examination each year. In 2001, 68% achieved grades A* to C and in 2002, 79% achieved these grades. Students studying English as a foreign language and modern foreign languages were similarly successful in examinations where pass rates were above national averages in all areas. An English language testing scheme is used to measure progress towards standards necessary for progression to further study, employment or HE. An analysis of score improvements indicates that students are making appropriate progress and reaching the required standard in English. A full 100% of the students on the International University Foundation Programme progressed to HE last year.

121. Retention rates for GCSE and GCE AS students are poor. Only 60% of those students who started the GCSE course in 2001/02 completed it, and current registers show retention of this year's cohort to be similar. Retention rates for most other courses are in line with national averages. The standard of students' work is appropriate to their level of study.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, communication and languages, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Spanish	1	No. of starts	68	48	91
		% retention	59	68	71
		% pass rate	66	90	90
French	1	No. of starts	35	15	21
		% retention	80	64	67
		% pass rate	75	100	100
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	211	127	131
		% retention	59	71	60
		% pass rate	50	68	79
University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) first certificate in English	2	No. of starts	14	12	15
		% retention	93	91	87
		% pass rate	61	80	85
Pitman spoken English	2	No. of starts	51	21	37

intermediate		% retention	88	100	68
		% pass rate	71	86	88
GCE AS language and literature	3	No. of starts	*	7	6
		% retention	*	57	33
		% pass rate	*	100	100
French advanced (internally accredited)	3	No. of starts	*	44	62
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

122. Teaching and learning in English GCSE and GCE AS and modern foreign languages lessons are good. Lessons are conducted at a lively pace and students work hard. Teachers use a range of teaching methods and lessons are stimulating and productive. In a GCE AS English language and literature class, the teacher used a board game to test students' knowledge of the Chaucer text and identify areas for further revision. Students enjoyed the exercise and demonstrated good knowledge of the subject. A well-written, comprehensive handbook for GCSE English supports the teaching of the subject and includes effective teaching materials. In modern foreign language lessons, the pace was appropriately lively. Students enjoy their studies, confidently using the target language. There is a range of stimulating material which is used effectively to develop the students' language skills. Most teachers are native speakers who tailor their questions and responses to the individual linguistic levels within the group.

123. The teaching of English as a foreign language is satisfactory. Lessons are thorough and well structured. The schemes are very closely aligned to a range of appropriate textbooks. Much of the learning is teacher-centred. In some cases, opportunities to use English are limited by this approach. Little use was made of ILT in English sessions. However, since January, the department has offered fortnightly ILT sessions for EFL students where they use English language learning web sites and software to develop language skills. Initially, these sessions are being provided jointly by English and ILT specialists to prepare English staff to incorporate ILT more effectively into their teaching. A programme of additional language options is offered each afternoon where students can have extra practice with spelling, writing, oral skills and literature. Attendance at these sessions is low.

124. English is taught in recently refurbished accommodation, which provides a comfortable, attractive, well-decorated learning environment. All English rooms are well equipped and many have video players. Other accommodation is cramped, overheated and cluttered. The language centre in the learning centre is well stocked with appropriate texts and audio and video material. Students have easy access to computers which have software enabling international students to use alternative scripts to write documents and send e-mail. Teachers are well qualified. Recent staff development has focused on the use of ILT in teaching and work to accommodate the new core curriculum.

125. Assessment procedures in English are thorough. Students' work is marked thoroughly on the majority of courses. Assessment arrangements meet awarding body requirements. Initial assessment tests determine an appropriate level course for each EFL student and mock examinations are used to determine which examination the student should take. Screening and assessment are thorough and effectively conducted. The details of the students' performance in this initial screening are available to teachers, but are not systematically used to create a learning plan for each student. Students have regular progress reviews with their tutors where targets are set and performance against them is monitored. Many of these targets are too general. Students' progress is

well tracked, and a recent initiative to improve communication between teachers about students' attendance and performance is effectively used. The college is piloting the use of learning goals to recognise provision which is not externally accredited. Where this is being used, tracking of progress against the aims is appropriate.

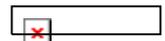
126. The college has a limited curriculum, providing GCSE and GCE AS English language and literature to full-time students. The college has realised that this arrangement does not fully meet the needs of many students. The college plans to offer GCE AS and A2 courses in English subjects next September to fill this gap in its curriculum. The range of modern foreign language subjects does not include any of the languages spoken by the college's international community. English, EFL and modern foreign languages are currently only taught on the main college sites. The department has plans to develop more dispersed provision in the region. The department has extensive international links providing English courses to support college contracts with Chinese, Kuwaiti and Swiss agencies and government departments, but no links with local employers.

127. Students are well supported. Welfare officers are available to support students studying away from home. EFL students have a comprehensive welcome pack when they begin their course. There is a thorough induction process. All full-time students have a personal tutor. Reviews of progress are conducted throughout the year. Students find them useful. Attendance is tracked weekly and those students who attend all their sessions are entered into a draw where they can win a prize. This has yet to have an impact on attendance.

Leadership and management

128. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff work closely with each other. The head of department meets regularly with programme leaders. However, there is no formal meetings schedule for programme teams. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process. Inspectors agree with many judgements in the self-assessment report. However, the fact that self-assessment significantly over-estimates the quality of teaching and learning inhibits action for improvement. Full-time managers have only recently been appointed. Many initiatives to standardise approaches and improve communication have yet to have an impact on practice. Although the student group is culturally diverse, opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity and promote equality of opportunity are missed. In particular, the texts being used to teach EFL are monocultural.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- effective curriculum development in the community

- good pass rates on intermediate programmes

- good support for personal development of students.

Weaknesses

- insufficiently demanding teaching in many lessons
- underdeveloped links between initial assessment and individual learning plans
- underdeveloped ESOL strategy and management.

Scope of provision

129. The college offers full-time and part-time ESOL classes at the main site and part-time provision in the community. Most of the college's community provision is provided at the college's Compass centre. At the time of the inspection, there were a total of 186 students in ESOL classes and 25 young asylum seekers participating in the ESOL in the communities project. Courses range from entry level to level 1. Out of a 100 students attending classes on the main site, 61 adult ESOL students attend full-time classes within EFL provision. These are timetabled for three hours every morning. There are some ESOL students ages 16 to 18, but numbers were not available. Some students take Pitmans and UCLES qualifications with additional qualifications such as CLAIT. Part-time students can attend day or evening classes. In the community, most of the classes are entry levels 1 to 3, with one group of level 1 students. The majority of the 81 students study at the compass centre. There are two classes at other venues. Classes are run as short 14-hour modules, which are topic-based for entry levels 1 and 2, but skills-based for entry level 3. A partnership with Portsmouth College provides short, four-week language and sport modules for young asylum seekers. At present, there are 25 students who attend sessions at 2 venues. Language support is provided for ESOL students studying on vocational courses at the college. Some 18 students have been identified as needing support.

Achievement and standards

130. The majority of ESOL students in the community provision work towards the Highbury College certificate. Small numbers of students are entered for external awards. Retention and pass rates are improving for the small number of students who are entered for the key English test and the preliminary English test and some programmes exceed national averages. Pass rates for Pitmans are erratic, but are 100% for intermediate level students. Most students make satisfactory progress towards achieving language proficiency and feel they are successful. Two ESOL students from last year, one from Burundi and another from the Democratic Republic of the Congo are now on the university foundation course at college and have applied for university places. However, some students are not sufficiently challenged and for some students progress is slow. The attendance rate during inspection was 67%, and it was also low in the preceding weeks.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English for speakers of other languages, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Pitmans basic spoken ESOL	entry	No. of starts	16	6	9
		% retention	94	100	100
		% pass rate	93	50	89
Pitmans elementary	entry	No. of starts	2	7	8

spoken ESOL		% retention	0	43	50
		% pass rate	N/a	67	75
Pitmans intermediate spoken ESOL	entry	No. of starts	9	14	10
		% retention	44	86	80
		% pass rate	100	83	100
Pitmans intermediate ESOL	entry	No. of starts	9	14	10
		% retention	44	86	80
		% pass rate	100	83	100
UCLES key English test	1	No. of starts	11	9	11
		% retention	45	33	64
		% pass rate	40	67	86
UCLES preliminary English test	1	No. of starts	5	20	18
		% retention	100	50	67
		% pass rate	100	40	67

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

Quality of education and training

131. The overall quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory. Some 43% of lessons observed were good or better. About 14% of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory. In weak lessons, teachers did not differentiate by level of language ability and failed to create suitable opportunities for the practice of oral skills. In some cases, the planning was weak and poor management of activities caused confusion and hindered learning. For example, in one lesson, outline silhouette drawings were used to teach descriptive words such as blonde hair. Often, in such lessons, student files were poorly organised. Many lessons were uninspiring, with too much reliance on handouts from standard eurocentric EFL textbooks.

132. In better lessons, teaching was clearly motivating. Teachers used a variety of activities such as role play, listening and games to maintain interest and to help students to practise new language. Good lessons included the use of language to increase students' self-confidence, language for assertiveness and language used to disagree, discuss and debate. In one lesson, entry level students practised returning items to a shop and focused on strategies to be assertive by understanding their rights in law. Students were corrected until they had mastered the appropriate intonation.

133. The accommodation is of a good standard. However, there is insufficient accommodation in the community. At present, some classes have mixed levels as insufficient classrooms are available at certain times. All staff are trained language specialists but more than half are trained to teach EFL and have had no training to teach ESOL. Two of the community development workers are bilingual.

134. There is effective ESOL curriculum development in the community. A range of partnerships with voluntary and statutory bodies supports the college's basic skills strategy. For example, ESOL staff are working with Portsmouth College on an ESOL in the communities project to support young asylum seekers by linking language development to sport. The project funds daily transport, trips to different venues, crèche facilities and provision of trainers for those students in need. Four-week, modularised programmes provide orienteering and access to local facilities. At present, there are two groups: one for males and one mixed. Some students have progressed to other learning opportunities. In another development, a bilingual worker is employed to liaise with Bangladeshi women and bring them to the centre. The college provides ESOL classes. A crèche is available in the same room. Some of the women have been resident in the country for over ten years and are

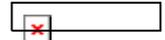
attending classes for the first time.

135. There is a well-developed procedure for admissions and initial assessment for ESOL students. All new students are tested before being placed on a course, using a locally devised diagnostic test. This has been mapped to the ESOL core curriculum, tests all four skills and is effective in placing students at the appropriate level for their learning needs. The results of assessment are available for the teacher to develop an individual learning plan. However, this process is not effective. Short and long-term targets for individual students are not identified precisely and reviews lack rigour.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The management of ESOL lacks clarity and is not sufficiently embedded within the college's basic skills strategy. The college does not produce a separate self-assessment report for ESOL. Much of the provision lies within the EFL programmes and it is not evident that this provides the most appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of ethnic minority residents and asylum seekers. Full-time students attend EFL classes. Neither the structure nor the curriculum within EFL differentiates between the needs of ESOL and EFL students. Managers do not evaluate the effectiveness of ESOL provision for full-time students, where numbers have increased from 48 in 2001/02 to 61 in 2002/03. The senior manager responsible for the provision took responsibility in December and is in the post temporarily. From September 2002, the college has re-focused the basic skills strategy to the skills for life strategy, which includes ESOL. Key managers meet weekly, but there is no clear identification of ESOL and its contribution to the college's aspirations to raise the language skills level of the local population. In the community provision, there is an understanding of the needs of the local area. This team is working well together and developing programmes; new venues have been added to the programme recently. Quality assurance and monitoring systems are in place and, for 2002/03, targets have been set for enrolment, retention and achievement. It is too early to comment on the effectiveness of this process.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good family literacy provision

- good basic skills support in vocational lessons

- effective community partnerships

- some good individual support in the learning centre.

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of initial assessment to inform individual learning plans

- much ineffective teaching

- poor attendance in some basic skills classes

- little use of IT to support students' basic skills development

- lack of clarity in the management of basic skills.

Scope of provision

137. The provision covers literacy and numeracy below level 2. The teaching of literacy and numeracy across the college includes discrete literacy and numeracy classes, additional learning support provided by the learning centre and support for literacy and numeracy within vocational areas. In addition, there are key skills classes in level 1 communication and application of number. A newly formed team of 11 learning development support staff provide individual help for students and team-teach with some vocational teachers. A recent development is to provide additional literacy and numeracy support through vocationally related workshops. Literacy and numeracy are taught across a range of college sites and in the community. 'Return to learn' programmes are available at the Compass centre. The centre manages an extensive range of community-based programmes, including family learning, and there are strong community partnerships that widen access to learning. At the beginning of this college year, a skills for life strategy was introduced. The aim of the strategy is to develop a more cohesive college approach to teaching and supporting literacy and numeracy, learning support, ESOL and key skills. It is too early to judge the impact of the strategy. At the time of inspection, 331 students aged 16 to 18 and 264 adults were enrolled on literacy and numeracy classes.

Achievement and standards

138. There is good development of students' basic skills on vocational courses and through individual support. Basic skills learning and achievement are appropriately linked to students' main programmes and enable successful completion. There is good progression to, for example, other college courses and voluntary work in schools for students on family literacy courses. There is insufficient formal identification and recording of students' personal skills development, particularly for those attending return to learn basic skills classes. There is poor attendance in some basic skills classes. The college has identified poor attendance as a weakness and, at the Compass centre, has introduced procedures for improving attendance. Student success and achievement are celebrated through, for example, articles in the local newspaper.

Quality of education and training

139. Much of the teaching is ineffective. About 30% of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory. Lesson planning is poor and there are no links to individual learning plan goals. There is insufficient differentiation of learning activities that recognises students' differing learning needs. There is over-emphasis on whole-class activities, with all students doing the same activity at the same time, regardless of ability. Teachers do not use a variety of teaching methods and activities to make learning interesting and stimulating. Paper-based activities are used too often for students who have limited reading and writing skills and there is insufficient identification of learning activities that are relevant to students' lives. There is little recording of students' progress during lessons and poor review of learning at the end of lessons. In the better lessons, the differing needs of individual students are recognised and the learning differentiated to meet students' needs. Imaginative teaching methods enable students to develop enjoyable ways of learning. For example, in a family literacy lesson, students were encouraged to learn tips for difficult spellings, such as air hand writing, imagining the word in colour and recognising the shape of words. There is little use of IT to support students' basic skills development. Schemes of work and lesson plans do not identify how IT will be used in lessons.

140. The use of initial assessment to inform individual learning plans is ineffective. The outcomes of initial assessment are linked to the core curriculum for adult literacy and numeracy, but are not used to translate the core curriculum levels into specific, measurable short-term goals to meet students' individual learning needs. Initial assessment does not identify students' personal development needs and there are no other forms of assessment used. Teachers produce excellent student and group profiles that identify areas of personal development plus students' personal circumstances that may affect learning. However, this information is not transferred, when appropriate, to individual learning plans as short-term goals. Individual learning plans are currently underdeveloped and are not informing teaching and learning. The majority of plans only identify literacy and numeracy goals linked to the core curriculum. Overall, short-term goals are too general and lack the detail needed to assist teachers to plan learning and record individual students' progress.

141. There is good basic skills support and development in vocational lessons. Basic skills learning and achievement are appropriately linked to students' main programmes and enable successful completion of course assignments and projects. Effective team teaching is developing between vocational teachers and learning development support staff. Individual student support in the learning centre is generally good. Support is well planned and linked to students' main programmes. Learning development staff use appropriate teaching methods to support students' individual learning styles. Target setting, in the majority of individual learning plans, is clear and there is sensitive awareness and careful management of students' personal issues. Learning development reviews of individual support are generally descriptive, but do not identify students' progress and areas for improvements.

142. Family literacy provision is good and engages parents who may have had poor previous experiences of education. Imaginative projects include: dads' group, which led to them writing and performing a play about bullying; bewitch children with story telling; and one step ahead of your children. Students across the college receive good support for their basic skills. High levels of satisfaction are recorded through student questionnaires.

143. All teachers of basic skills are appropriately qualified and experienced, including two who are core curriculum trainers. All learning development support staff have teaching qualifications and some have basic skills teaching qualifications. Those who do not have basic skills teaching qualifications are encouraged to gain them. Staff development opportunities are linked to the outcomes of appraisal. Cross-college basic skills awareness training has recently taken place. It is too early to judge the impact of the training on teaching and learning. The learning centre has a specific section of easy reading books, including some books with little or no writing, for students with limited reading skills. The books include topical issues; for example, relating to learning difficulty, mental health and self-advocacy. There is a similar breadth of books at the Compass centre. Staff development and training needs are identified through appraisal and the college is responsive to those needs.

Leadership and management

144. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is lack of clarity in the management of basic skills across the college. There are no clear procedures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the skills for life strategy. It is not clear who has overall responsibility for implementing the strategy and ensuring basic skills across the college is co-ordinated and effective. Management strategies are currently fragmented. There is no overall co-ordination or monitoring of the effectiveness of basic skills provision and support. Managers now meet weekly but it is too early to judge the impact of these meetings on improving quality. Communication and contact between those who teach and support basic skills in different areas of the college are insufficient. There are no procedures in place to share good practice. There are effective community partnerships in a range of community locations across Portsmouth that widen access to learning. Examples of partnerships to improve levels of basic skills include: working with people recovering from mental illness; the probation service; and staff in hospitals, such as porters, kitchen staff and nurses. Many projects are being developed as a result of successful bids for external funding.

Part D: College data

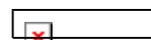


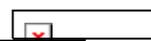
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age September 2002



Level	16-18	19+
1	12	9
2	27	26
3	10	15
4/5	0	6
Other	51	44
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age group 2001/02



Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	491	532	4
Land-based provision	31	28	0
Construction	935	2,025	11
Engineering, technology and manufacture	733	1,450	8
Business administration, management and professional	159	2,583	10

Information and communications technology	542	4,011	16
Retailing, customer service and transportation	58	565	2
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	673	1,403	8
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	419	371	3
Health, social care and public services	584	4,246	17
Visual and performing arts and media	150	1,251	5
Humanities	36	452	2
English, languages and communication	733	784	5
Foundation programmes	1,062	1,319	9
Total	6,606	21,020	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
		1	Starters excluding transfers	1,044	744	581	979
	Retention rate (%)	73	84	74	80	82	81
	National average (%)	80	79	*	78	78	*
	Pass rate (%)	57	70	77	69	68	75
	National average (%)	65	68	*	66	68	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,368	1,263	1,066	1,833	1,950	1,979
	Retention rate (%)	73	77	72	77	82	80
	National average (%)	76	76	*	79	78	*
	Pass rate (%)	62	57	66	65	68	79
	National average (%)	66	69	*	65	69	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	755	532	485	2,447	2,192	2,088
	Retention rate (%)	76	79	77	86	85	85
	National average (%)	76	77	*	78	78	*
	Pass rate (%)	71	66	75	68	61	77

	National average (%)	74	76	*	66	69	*
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	30	3	0	679	625	397
	Retention rate (%)	80	*	*	85	86	86
	National average (%)	79	82	*	81	84	*
	Pass rate (%)	86	*	*	68	60	62
	National average (%)	66	55	*	56	53	*

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 2000/01-2001/02: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 2001/02: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for 2001/2002: provided by the college in spring 2003.

* data not available

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)	53	35	11	71
Level 2 (intermediate)	49	45	5	71
Level 1 (foundation)	65	30	4	23
Other sessions	65	26	7	38
Totals	55	37	8	203