



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Hertford Regional College

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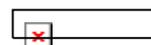
**Basic information about the college**



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Name of college:	Hertford Regional College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Paul Harvey
Address of college:	Scotts Road Ware Hertfordshire SG12 9JF
Telephone number:	01992 411 400
Fax number:	01992 411 885
Chair of governors:	Keith Stevens
Unique reference number:	130722
Name of reporting inspector:	Keith Abbott, HMI
Dates of inspection:	10-20 May 2004

## Part A: Summary



### Information about the college



Hertford Regional College is one of four large general further education (FE) colleges serving Hertfordshire. It has main sites in Broxbourne and Ware and small centres in Bishops Stortford, Waltham Cross and Hoddesdon. It also provides courses in around 60 other locations, including schools and community venues. Enrolment patterns are linked to public transport networks, resulting in the recruitment of many students from North London, Enfield and west Essex. In 2002/03, the college recruited 11,660 FE students and 332 higher education (HE) students. About 79% of the FE students are part time. The college offers academic and vocational courses in all programme areas, although there is little retailing and land-based provision. It has work-based learning provision in engineering, construction, accounting, business administration, hospitality, catering, hairdressing and social care. At the time of inspection, there were around 400 work-based learners. The college also runs a range of HE programmes in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, Middlesex University and the University of Greenwich. Around 1,750 students are enrolled on adult and community learning programmes. These courses were not included in the inspection.

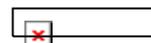
East Hertfordshire is a relatively prosperous area, with a low unemployment rate of around 1.5%. Approximately 4% of residents are from minority ethnic groups, compared with just under 15% of the college's students. All Hertfordshire's secondary schools have sixth forms. The post-16 participation rate in Hertfordshire is high, with 83% staying in full-time education, compared with 78% nationally. The college employs around 945 staff, including approximately 220 full-time teachers, 275 part-time teachers and 450 administrative and support staff. At the time of the inspection, the college was reviewing its mission. The proposed new mission is:

'Enriching our communities through learning for all'

The current mission is:

'To assist individuals and organisations to achieve their full potential by providing quality education and training services'

### How effective is the college?



Hertford Regional College has made significant progress since it was inspected by Ofsted in May 2002, when it was judged to be inadequate. In 2002, provision in five curriculum areas and in leadership and management was unsatisfactory. Provision is now good in two curriculum areas, satisfactory in eight areas and unsatisfactory in two curriculum areas. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college is no longer inadequate. The overall standard of teaching is slightly above the average for general FE colleges inspected in 2002/03. Retention rates on most courses are high. Overall pass rates were unsatisfactory in 2001 and 2002. They improved significantly in 2003 and are now satisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

#### **Key strengths**

- effective leadership by governors and the principal
- strong focus by managers and staff on improving retention and pass rates
- good teaching of adult students
- high retention rates on many courses
- good personal and academic support for full-time students
- reliable management information system
- effective strategies to widen participation
- effective partnerships with local schools, universities and employers.

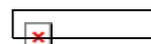
***What should be improved***

- pass rates on some courses
- key skills provision
- the assessment of work-based learners
- provision for part-time students who need additional literacy and numeracy support
- access to some key areas for students with disabilities

- the proportion of staff with teaching qualifications.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

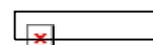


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> There are unsatisfactory pass rates on many courses, particularly general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) mathematics. A few course reviews do not focus sufficiently on improving achievements. There is good teaching which involves students in stimulating and challenging activities. Retention rates are high on most courses.
Engineering	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Pass and retention rates on two major courses are low and there is slow progress towards the achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks. There is weak assessment practice in work-based learning. Development of students' practical skills is good and the teaching of key skills is well integrated into vocational courses. There are good progression rates into modern apprenticeships in electrical installation.
Business studies	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is good on many full-time courses and effective use is made of well-designed teaching and learning materials. There are high progression rates to further study. Pass rates are unsatisfactory on a number of significant courses and a minority of teaching is ineffective. Management of work-based learning in accounting is weak.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high retention rates on most courses. The college has a wide range of full-time courses with good internal progression routes, but provision is not sufficiently work related. There is much good teaching of adults, but some unsatisfactory teaching of students aged 16 to 18. Pass rates are low on a few part-time courses for adults.
Hospitality and catering	<b>Good.</b> There is good vocational teaching and learning leading to high retention and pass rates on most national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses. Students benefit from the good monitoring of their progress, particularly in individual tutorials. The curriculum is well managed, but there is insufficient workplace assessment for foundation modern apprentices. There is a narrow range of part-time and short courses.

Sports, leisure and tourism	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on most courses. Teaching and learning are generally good, particularly on sports courses. There are good progression routes, enrichment activities and opportunities to gain relevant additional qualifications. Key skills provision is unsatisfactory.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Beauty therapy contributory grade: <b>good</b> . Hairdressing work-based learning grade: <b>unsatisfactory</b> . Teaching and learning on beauty therapy programmes is good. Retention rates are generally high and there were high pass rates on most NVQ programmes in 2003. There are good beauty therapy resources. Weak assessment practice in hairdressing contributes to slow progression from level 1 to level 2 courses. There is poor achievement of key skills on all programmes.
Health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> NVQ courses delivered by the Ware Assessment Centre: <b>good</b> . There are high pass and retention rates on NVQ courses and high pass rates on several other full-time courses, but there are unsatisfactory retention rates on several courses. Teaching in a significant minority of lessons is unsatisfactory, but teaching, assessment and management of NVQ provision at the Ware Assessment Centre are very good.
Visual and performing arts	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Art and design contributory grade: <b>good</b> There are high pass rates on most advanced-level courses. Students' work is of a high standard and there is good progression into HE. Teaching develops skills and knowledge effectively in art and design, music technology and acting. Academic and pastoral support for students are good. Retention rates are low in media. There is insufficient formative assessment and some poor written work.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates on many courses are low, but most current students' work is at least satisfactory. Much teaching is good, although inadequate planning in a few lessons reduces the effectiveness of learning. Effective tutorial support for students contributes to high retention rates, but there is poor development of students' key skills and study skills.
Foundation courses	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is much good teaching and learning, although there is inadequate use of individual learning plans to set targets and inform lesson plans. The entry-level basic skills curriculum is well designed. Provision is well managed, but the lack of opportunities to take accredited qualifications and poor progression opportunities have prevented some students from reaching their full potential.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high retention rates on all courses. Pass rates are satisfactory on courses for adults, but are low on key skills courses. There is good planning of individual learning for adults, but formal reviews of progress are infrequent. Key skills lessons do not take account of individuals' needs sufficiently. There is insufficient co-ordination of the teaching of basic skills and key skills.

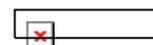
#### How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college is making good progress in addressing weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The principal, senior managers and governors provide

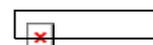
accountabilities are well understood. Management information is accurate, easily accessible and used widely by staff. Target setting is not understood fully by teachers. The management of most curriculum areas is satisfactory, but much practice is new. The quality assurance system is well designed and understood by staff. The overall standard of teaching has improved to the national average. Retention rates are high and pass rates have generally risen to around the national averages. Changes in the management of work-based learning and key skills have yet to improve students' poor achievements. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, but the analysis of data is weak. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

### **To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?**



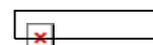
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Initiatives to widen participation are good. Approximately 15% of students are from minority ethnic groups compared with 4% of the local population. Around 1,750 students study at community venues. People with a wide range of learning needs are well supported when they attend the college. There are productive links with schools and employers. Recent initiatives to promote equality and diversity, including a 'celebration of difference' week have been successful. However, there is little promotion of equal opportunities through teaching. The response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) is satisfactory. An access survey has resulted in modifications to accommodation, but a few areas remain inaccessible to students with restricted mobility. Policies are in place to address issues of racial discrimination and to promote racial equality. However, the college has made slow progress in meeting its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. The college collects student data on ethnicity, gender, disability and age, but has only just started to analyse it. The retention and pass rates for minority ethnic students are marginally lower than for other students.

### **How well are students and trainees guided and supported?**



Guidance and support for students are good. Information and guidance for new students ensures that they are recruited to appropriate courses. Most induction programmes for new students are satisfactory. Students who need help with literacy and numeracy, students with behavioural problems, dyslexic students, and for students for whom English is a second language are generally well supported. However, the results of initial assessments are not incorporated adequately into students' individual learning plans. In particular, literacy and numeracy key skills are not covered sufficiently in individual learning plans. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills is not conducted with most part-time students. As a result, some do not receive appropriate support. Tutorial support is mainly satisfactory or good. Most full-time students benefit from regular individual progress reviews and effective group tutorials. Parents are kept well informed of students' progress and they are invited to regular parents' evenings. The services provided by careers staff, counsellors, and welfare advisors are well used, valued by students and regarded highly by staff.

### **Students' views of the college**



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

***What students like about the college***

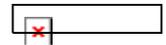
- friendly and supportive staff
  
- the adult environment
  
- good tutorials
  
- good campus facilities
  
- good study resources
  
- good access to computers
  
- work experience
  
- careers advice
  
- good relationships with other students.

***What they feel could be improved***

- prices in the refectories
  
- some of the teaching accommodation
  
- the reliability of computers

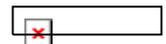
- o the frequent changes of teachers and the poor arrangements for covering staff absence
- o timetable arrangements
- o car parking at the Ware campus.

### 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 LSC. The LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

### Part B: The college as a whole



### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

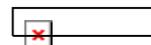


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	61	29	10
19+ and WBL*	68	30	2
Learning 16-18	60	31	9
19+ and WBL*	65	32	3

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



### **16 to 18 year olds**

1. In 2002/03, 2,226 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 79% of those on full-time, full-year courses. In the same year, 1,020 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 7% of the part-time students. In 2001 and 2002, overall success rates (the number of qualifications achieved compared with the number of qualifications started) of students on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were unsatisfactory. In these two years, success rates at each level were below the national average for students aged 16 to 18 in FE colleges. The weakest performance was on level 2 courses where, in 2002, the success rate was 39%. In 2003, success rates improved significantly. At levels 1, 2 and 3 the rates improved by 18%, 22% and 7% to 62%, 61% and 58% respectively. The level 1 and 2 success rates are above the national average. The figure for students on level 3 long courses is slightly below the national average. These significant improvements are due to several factors, including better teaching, more accurate recording of achievements, improved procedures to ensure that students are recruited to appropriate courses and tighter control of examination entries.

2. Success rates are derived from retention and pass rates. In 2001 and 2002, retention rates at all three levels were high. They were above the national average for FE colleges. In 2003, the overall retention rates of 84% and 81%, at levels 1 and 2 respectively, were well above the national average. At level 3, the overall retention rate fell from 82% to 76%, which is 1% below the national average. The low overall success rates in 2001 and 2002 were caused by low pass rates. In these two years, overall pass rates on courses at level 1 to 3 ranged from 11% to 23% below the national average. In 2003, pass rates at levels 1 to 3 improved significantly to 74%, 76% and 76% respectively.

3. Analysis of achievements by broad qualification type does not reveal marked differences between the achievements of students on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ), NVQ, GCSE and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses. Overall achievements of level 1 and 2 students in each qualification category improved substantially between 2002 and 2003. The most significant improvements were on GCSE and level 2 NVQ programmes where the success rates improved by 23% and 27% to 57% and 66% respectively. At level 3, improvements were less marked. At advanced subsidiary level (AS level) and GCE A level, although overall success rates improved in 2003 to 58% from 50%, this remains below the national average for general FE colleges.

4. On average, about 225 students aged 16 to 18 took short course qualifications in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The success rates were 79%, 65% and 87% respectively. These rates compare well with the national average of 71%. They were particularly high in 2003. Students have achieved very poor results in their key skills qualifications. In 2003, out of a total of nearly 1,800 enrolments of students aged 16 to 18 on level 2 application of number, communication or information technology (IT) key skills qualifications, only 14% were successful.

5. In several curriculum areas, there are high pass rates on individual courses. Examples include the first and national diplomas in art and design; national diplomas in performing arts and leisure studies; advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses in travel and tourism, business studies, information and communications technology (ICT), and media studies; NVQ level 2 courses in food preparation and cooking, beauty therapy and the two-year hairdressing programme. In 2003, all of these courses had pass rates well above the national average. The large numbers of NVQ students taking childcare courses through the college's Ware Assessment Centre have retention and pass rates that are well above the national average. Many GCE A-level subjects have pass rates below the national average. For example, in 2003, pass rates on the GCE A2 courses in psychology, law, business studies and biology were at least 10% below the national average. Similarly, in 2003, there were unsatisfactory achievements in several GCSE subjects, including mathematics,

sociology, psychology and travel and tourism. However, the 78% and 81% pass rates in GCSE business studies and ICT were above the national average. It is unsatisfactory that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have not had the opportunity to gain external accreditation for their achievements until 2004. However, these students benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence.

6. Standards of students' work in lessons are generally satisfactory. However, the proportion of lessons in which students aged 16 to 18 were judged to have made good progress, compared with the progress that would be expected at that point in their course, was low at 55%. Attainment was judged to be satisfactory in 37% of lessons and less than satisfactory in 8%. Levels of attainment are generally lower at levels 1 and 2, than at level 3. Students in most curriculum areas produce good practical work and develop relevant skills. Beauty therapy students produce work of a professional standard. Sports coaching students work well with young people and are able to demonstrate high levels of personal performance. Those studying craft catering display confidence in kitchen skills and work effectively with their colleagues. Art and design students produce good sketchbooks and use industry-standard graphics software capably. Business studies students develop good research and analytical skills. Many humanities students acquire a good knowledge of their subjects, but a significant minority struggle to answer questions relevantly and in sufficient detail.

7. The overall levels of retention and pass rates of young people on work-based learning programmes are unsatisfactory. The hairdressing curriculum area has the most work-based learners. In 2002 and 2003, of the 235 learners starting hairdressing advanced modern apprenticeships, only 31 have completed the full framework within the anticipated time scale. The progress of work-based learners on engineering, catering, accounting and business administration programmes is also slow.

### **Adult learners**

8. Of the 17,335 enrolments in 2002/03, over 14,000 were aged 19 or over. Most were studying part time on level 1 and 2 courses. The overall achievements of adult students taking level 1 long qualifications, in 2003, were significantly better than those of students aged 16 to 18. The overall success rate was 77%, compared with 62% for students aged 16 to 18. At levels 2 and 3, adults' overall achievements were slightly worse than those of students aged 16 to 18. In 2003, the overall success rates were 52% and 51% respectively. In each case, these rates are marginally above the national average. In common with students aged 16 to 18, the trend is of significant improvement in adults' achievements between 2002 and 2003. This is due to the maintenance of high retention rates, combined with significant improvements in pass rates. For example, the pass rate of adults on level 2 NVQ programmes improved from 62% in 2002 to 77% in 2003.

9. Analysis by qualification type shows that the better overall achievements occur on NVQ programmes, particularly at level 3, where the 56% success rate is 17% above the national average. Part-time adult students taking NVQs in childcare, early years and playwork, through the Ware Assessment Centre, achieve particularly well. AS-level and GCE A-level students did not achieve well in 2001 and 2002, but improved to marginally above the national average in 2003. The performance of a relatively small number of adults taking GNVQ qualifications in 2003 was satisfactory. Adults on the European computer driving licence (ECDL) course also had unsatisfactory pass rates in each of the last three years.

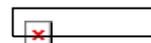
10. There are substantial numbers of part-time adult students taking short qualifications. In 2003, over 4,200 students were enrolled on short courses. Both the retention rates and pass rates of these students have improved significantly between 2001 and 2003. In 2002 and 2003, the retention rates were 97% and 98% respectively and pass rates were 70% and 88% respectively. With the exception of the 70% pass rates in 2002, these figures are above the national average. On average, between 2001 and 2003, there were around 250 enrolments of adults on key skills qualifications. Retention rates are satisfactory, but pass rates have been low in each of the last three years.

11. Adult students' work, observed in lessons during the inspection, was of a higher standard than the work produced by students aged 16 to 18. Attainment was judged to be good or better in 63% of lessons, satisfactory in 32% and less than satisfactory in 5% of lessons. Adult students are well

motivated and generally produce good work. For example, the final projects produced by adults on the access to HE art and design course demonstrate good expression of ideas through sculpture, drawing, painting and print. All of the students who completed this course progressed to related HE courses. In humanities, access students develop good powers of oral communication. The best of their written work displays fluent use of abstract language combined with high levels of critical analysis. Adults on basic literacy courses generally display well-developed listening and speaking skills. In a creative writing lesson, a group of students spoke clearly and effectively about how adjectives had been used to create a tension-packed scene in an extract from a crime thriller. Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have appropriate opportunities to develop their skills. Many of these students progress to supported part-time or full-time employment.

12. Overall attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was 78%. This includes lessons for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Although this is 2% above the national average for general FE colleges, it is an unsatisfactory rate. In health and social care, humanities, literacy and numeracy, attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was less than 75%. There was good attendance on hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism, and foundation programmes.

### Quality of education and training



13. Inspectors observed and graded 220 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 64% of lessons, satisfactory in 29% and less than satisfactory in 7%. The proportion of good or better lessons is 2% above the average for general FE colleges inspected in 2002/03. Teaching is most effective on foundation programmes, in hospitality and catering, and in sports, leisure and tourism lessons where 93%, 69% and 69% respectively of lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better. Teaching is least effective in engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and ICT lessons where 53%, 55% and 57% respectively of lessons were good or better. Lessons taught by full-time staff were generally of a slightly higher standard than lessons taught by part-time and agency teachers.

14. Teaching is significantly better in lessons involving primarily adult students. Some 68% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 61% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was also lower at 3%, compared with 10%. Analysis of the standard of teaching by level shows that the best teaching is on entry-level courses and the weakest is on level 3 courses. Analysis by qualification type reveals that the best teaching is on GNVQ foundation and intermediate, GCE A-level, and NVQ level 2 courses. The weaker teaching is on GCSE, AS-level and national diploma courses.

15. In many curriculum areas, the best lessons link theoretical and practical activities effectively. Over 75% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 65% of practical lessons and 52% of theory lessons. In the better lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching methods to maintain students' interest and develop learning. All health and social care students have good opportunities for work experience and teachers link clearly the teaching of theory to students' practical experience. Practical lessons for students on foundation programmes provide good opportunities for students to learn in real work environments. Hospitality and catering students are reminded in many practical lessons of opportunities to make calculations that can be used as evidence in their key skills portfolios. In many curriculum areas, there is effective group work. In visual arts lessons, well-planned activities enable students to learn from mature criticism of each others' work. In business studies lessons, role play exercises, short quizzes and case studies are used effectively to develop learning and check understanding. Group work is also effective in other areas, for example, sports and humanities lessons.

16. There are a variety of reasons for unsatisfactory teaching. A few humanities lessons were planned poorly; as a consequence, the aims of these lessons were not achieved. In a few visual and performing arts lessons, students were not sure what they were supposed to do, because their

teachers' introductions lacked clarity. Similarly, in several health and social care, and science and mathematics lessons, students were unsure about the purpose of activities. These students lacked motivation and were distracted easily. In several curriculum areas, including engineering, science and mathematics, and business studies, teachers did not make sufficient checks on students' learning. In these areas, during lesson discussions, some students were allowed to remain passive and uninvolved.

17. Key skills provision is unsatisfactory. Inconsistent practice across the college contributes to poor achievements. The college's key skills policy sets out students' entitlement to have their key skills assessed, developed and accredited. All students aged 16 to 18 have an initial assessment of their key skills levels. In 2003/04, central support for key skills teaching in the departments was strengthened by the appointment of co-ordinators for application of number, communications and IT. However, it is left to individual departments to decide how key skills will be organised and taught. In some curriculum areas, for example, hospitality and catering and business studies, there is effective integrated teaching of key skills. However, there is too much unsatisfactory practice. In humanities, too little attention is paid to the development of key skills. In other curriculum areas, a few key skills teachers, in both IT and application of number lessons, are not aware of students' assessed ability levels, so their teaching takes too little account of individuals' needs. In a few curriculum areas, for example, hairdressing and beauty therapy, opportunities are missed to collect key skills evidence from experience in the workplace.

18. Learning is generally satisfactory or better. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 62%, 31% and 7% respectively. Learning is better in lessons involving adults. The proportion of lessons involving primarily adults where learning was good or better was 67%, compared with 60% of the lessons for students aged 16 to 18. Learning was unsatisfactory in 3% of lessons for adults and 9% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18.

19. Students' work is generally marked accurately and returned promptly. The quality of written feedback ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Good verbal and written feedback is given on students' final assignments in catering, visual and performing arts and in business studies, where careful annotation shows students the standards that are expected of them and what they need to do to improve. In mathematics and science, encouraging feedback helps to build the confidence of students who find mathematics difficult.

20. In several curriculum areas, for example, health and social care, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and literacy and numeracy, inspectors observed examples of unsatisfactory feedback, including comments that were too brief, work that was not graded, uncorrected spelling and grammatical errors, and comments that were illegible. In art and design, students would benefit from more feedback on the developmental work in their sketch books. In one numeracy lesson, work was marked by other students rather than the teacher. This wasted time and failed to inform the teacher of the students' strengths and weaknesses.

21. Monitoring of students' progress, particularly the progress of full-time students, is conducted regularly and effectively. For example, the good motivation and performance of many hospitality and catering students is due to frequent individual tutorials when targets are set and monitored. In health and social care, the systems for monitoring students' progress are clear and robust.

22. Internal verification practice on most courses is effective. It is particularly thorough in hospitality and catering, humanities, health and social care and business, but it is weak in literacy and numeracy. The internal verification system is well managed. Managers ensure that assessment, verification, moderation and recording arrangements are suitable for students. Most work is graded consistently, fairly and in accordance with awarding body requirements. The college scrutinises external verifiers' reports carefully. Actions that departments are required or recommended to take are monitored closely.

23. There is much unsatisfactory assessment practice in work-based learning. In hospitality and catering, there is insufficient workplace assessment of foundation modern apprenticeships. Insufficient and weak planning of assessment in hairdressing and beauty therapy contributes to the

low pass rates of modern apprenticeships. In engineering, assessment is planned poorly, there is insufficient support for work-based assessors, insufficient rigour in work-based assessment and inadequate procedures to ensure that assessment is consistent.

24. Pre-entry information and advice ensures that students are generally enrolled on the right course. Good links with schools enable many school pupils, aged 14 to 16, to study at the college. The central admissions service ensures that prospective students have a welcoming and impartial first point of contact. Most induction programmes for new students are satisfactory. They enable students to get to know each other, settle into the college and check that they are on the right course. Induction for health and social care, and sport, leisure and tourism students is particularly well planned.

25. The additional support needs of all full-time students and work-based learners are assessed when they join the college. The results are fed back to students appropriately. Further diagnostic assessment is carried out when more specific identification of individuals' needs is required. In 2003/04, over 340 full-time students receive additional learning support. Many of these students need help with literacy and numeracy. There is also support for students with behavioural problems or dyslexia, and for students for whom English is a second language. In general, the support they receive is appropriate. In lessons, support is provided by teachers or specialist support staff. Outside lessons, it is provided either by teachers or support staff, or through specialist support workshops. Students are very satisfied with the additional support they receive.

26. In a few instances, additional support is not effective. At the start of 2003/04, a shortage of learning support staff delayed the provision of additional support in several curriculum areas. Too often, the results of initial assessments are not incorporated adequately into students' individual learning plans. In particular, literacy and numeracy key skills are not covered sufficiently. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills is not conducted with most part-time students. As a result, some do not receive appropriate support.

27. There are comprehensive arrangements for assessing students with specific learning needs and physical or sensory disabilities. The support provided is good. The college has appropriate specialist equipment including laptop computers, Dictaphones, adjustable tables, portable loop systems, outsize monitors and document enlargers.

28. Tutorial support is mainly satisfactory or good. Most full-time students benefit from regular individual progress reviews. However, tutorial support in several departments, for example, engineering, business studies and art and design, would be improved by more effective use of individual learning plans. Inspectors observed examples of plans that lacked clear targets, were not up-to-date, or which were completed by students with too little reference to their tutors. Group tutorials for full-time students are generally effective. For example, in business studies, they cover a wide range of relevant topics. Many departments use outside speakers to talk to students on issues such as drugs and sexual health. Group tutorials for students on GCSE, and AS-level and GCE A-level courses are not always relevant to individuals' needs, because of the mix of students from different courses within each tutor group. Tutorial support for most part-time students is appropriate to their needs.

29. The central student services team is well managed. Course tutors and careers advisers liaise well and provide sound advice on progression to further study and employment. Often, this is well integrated into the vocational curriculum. Careers staff, counsellors, and welfare advisors are qualified and experienced appropriately. Their services are well used, valued by students and regarded highly by staff. A sexual health service is provided one day each week by a local doctor and nurse.

30. Parents are kept well informed of students' progress and they are invited to regular parents' evenings where they receive reports on their children's progress. The college has strengthened attendance monitoring and improved attendance by appointing attendance monitoring officers to work with specific departments and courses. This is having a positive impact, but overall attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was 78%. Although this is 2% above the national average for all colleges, it is unsatisfactory.

31. The college has a procedure for dealing with child protection issues, including the action to be taken if a member of staff is accused of abuse. Two members of staff are the designated college nominees on child protection matters. Their role is to co-ordinate action within the institution and to liaise with other agencies. Criminal record bureau checks have been completed on all members of staff working with young people, but it is unsatisfactory that there has not yet been any liaison with the local Area Child Protection Committee, nor training for the nominees or other college staff.

32. Most teachers have relevant vocational qualifications and appropriate industrial or commercial experience. However, only 75% of full-time teachers and around 40% of part-time teachers have a teaching qualification. Most staff without a teaching qualification are working towards achieving one. A high proportion of lessons are taught by part-time staff. This is due partly to difficulties in recruiting managers and teachers in some curriculum areas. The shortage of teachers has resulted in the cancellation of a few courses.

33. The main campuses at Ware and Broxbourne comprise a mix of small buildings of varying age and condition. In general, they provide satisfactory teaching accommodation, although some rooms are uncomfortably hot in the summer. Both main sites are safe, clean and well maintained. The college reception areas are attractive and there are good refectory and social areas at both sites. The sloping nature of the Ware campus makes access to some buildings difficult for people with restricted mobility. At Broxbourne, the base rooms for psychology and sociology, and the science rooms are inaccessible to wheelchair users. All teaching rooms are equipped appropriately with whiteboards and projection equipment. Some 14 teaching rooms are fitted with data projectors and 9 with interactive whiteboards. A few rooms on both sites are susceptible to noise from adjoining rooms. At the time of inspection, the college was refurbishing some of the buildings on the Ware campus. In addition, new buildings were being constructed primarily for students on foundation programmes.

34. The college has good libraries at each campus. Each library has an open access learning resource centre and an appropriate range of textbooks, journals, videos, CD ROMs and language tapes. The libraries operate a useful central service for loaning media equipment such as data projectors, video cameras and digital cameras. It is most unsatisfactory that the upper floor of the library at Ware is inaccessible to wheelchair users, although a lift will be installed in summer 2004. The college belongs to a library network with three other colleges and the University of Hertfordshire. Network members share a common, online library catalogue and can borrow books and journals from any of the institutions in the group.

35. The college has adequate computers for staff and the students. There are over 1,000 computers for students and nearly 500 computers for staff. The vast majority of computers are up-to-date, but a few are too old to support the most appropriate software. In general, the computers are well maintained and there is a plan for the replacement of outdated machines. The college's virtual learning environment is beginning to be used effectively to support learning in business studies and ICT. The college has a satisfactory range of specialist equipment to support its vocational courses. However, the computers used for computer-aided design (CAD) courses do not have large enough monitors to support the latest software.

36. The college's response to the SENDA is good. In February 2003, the college commissioned an extensive access survey. This led to plans to modify and improve facilities, for example, by installing lifts and stairlifts in buildings with restricted access. The college has adequate specialist resources for students with visual and auditory impairments, including a reading machine to provide audio commentary from written text.

37. The college also has effective strategies to widen participation. Just under 30% of students are from local areas that are targeted under the college's widening participation strategy. Three outreach centres, located in these areas, provide training opportunities for over 2,000 part-time students. Around 15% of students are from minority ethnic groups compared to 4% in the local community. Several good initiatives encourage participation of minority ethnic students. For example, a group of Turkish speaking mothers are provided with childcare to enable them to attend English language courses. Thriving courses in literacy, numeracy, English language and skills for life are run at venues in the community. One basic skills programme, for employees of a major supermarket, takes place

on their premises early in the morning and on Sundays to fit in with shift working.

38. The college provides a good range of courses, at all levels, and in varying modes of attendance, that meets the needs of students and local employers. A particular strength is the college's Ware Assessment Centre, which provides NVQs in playwork, residential care and childcare for over 900 employed students. In contrast, there is a narrow range of part-time catering courses. There are work-based learning opportunities in a satisfactory range of curriculum areas, including hairdressing and beauty therapy, engineering, business administration, catering, construction and social care. However, the overall number of work-based learners is low for a large college.

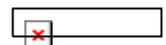
39. The college has a good knowledge of its market. Each year, it carries out a detailed environmental, socio-economic and occupational sector analysis. This highlights local employment needs and skills shortages, and informs new course developments. Most curriculum areas provide good progression routes. There are good opportunities for entry-level students. In 2002/03, over 750 students enrolled on entry-level programmes. Nearly 200 of these students progressed to level 1 courses in 2003/04. There are also effective partnership arrangements with local universities which aid progression to HE.

40. The college has strong links with local schools. Around 180 school pupils, aged 14 to 16 attend the college under the increased flexibility (IF) programme. These pupils have a wide choice of options including, for example, hairdressing, beauty therapy, construction, engineering, ICT and sport. Effective systems to monitor attendance, behaviour and progress have been developed with partner schools. There has also been some joint development of learning materials. Several good initiatives encourage the participation of young students. These include the development of a web portal so that students aged 14 to 19 can access learning materials at home and at school. In 2003/04, over 70 students enrolled on the entry to employment (E2E) programme. Most of those that left the programme progressed to suitable employment.

41. The college has good community links. It plays a leading role in the local learning partnership and has established strong links with many local and regional groups involved in regeneration and cultural integration. It works with other providers of adult education to plan local provision. The college has good links with employers who provide visiting speakers and work experience for students.

42. Opportunities for enrichment activities are satisfactory. There are relatively few cross-college social, cultural or sporting activities. However, most departments offer enrichment activities as part of students' programmes. For example, in visual and performing arts, hairdressing and beauty therapy, business studies, hospitality, sport, and travel and tourism, good use is made of visiting speakers, residential visits, additional qualifications and work placements to broaden students' experiences. There are few similar opportunities for science, mathematics and humanities students. Students' entitlement to key skills is not delivered consistently in all curriculum areas. The key skills policy is not applied effectively in, for example, sports, humanities and foundation programmes curriculum areas. Some NVQ sport students did not begin their key skills until six months into their NVQ programme.

## **Leadership and management**



43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has made good progress in addressing weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The principal, senior managers and governors provide a clear strategic direction. Changes to the management structure have improved communications and clarified responsibilities. Management information is good. Reports are based on reliable data and they are used widely by staff. Teaching has improved. The proportion of good or better lessons observed by inspectors was significantly higher than at the last inspection. Retention

work-based learning programmes and in key skills remain poor. The quality of provision has improved in 4 out of the 12 curriculum areas, but it remains unsatisfactory in two areas.

44. The principal provides good leadership. Appointed shortly before the last inspection, he has established successfully an accepted set of values and standards. The strategic planning process is good. Governors and staff are involved fully. The draft strategic plan for 2004 to 2007 sets out clearly the relevant key objectives. There are targets to improve retention and pass rates, staff qualifications and employer engagement. The accommodation strategy is aligned closely to future curriculum requirements. Governance is good. Governors have a wide range of expertise. They are well informed about the college and understand the curriculum and the key issues facing the college. They are involved actively in a wide range of college activities. Individual governors are linked to departments. Corporation committees are well conducted and attendance is good. Members have good working relationships with senior managers. They set appropriate and demanding targets.

45. College management was restructured in 2003. Accountabilities are clear and lines of communication are short. Heads of department are enthusiastic, but some lack experience. Senior managers act as their mentors and they receive ongoing management training. Heads of department are expected to teach 10 hours a week. The effectiveness of some heads is impaired because they exceed this requirement. Managers expect higher standards from teachers than at the time of the last inspection. This has improved the quality of teaching, but it has contributed to high staff turnover. The college has found it difficult to recruit sufficient well-qualified, full-time teachers. Consequently, there is a high proportion of part-time teachers. In a few areas, staffing issues, for example, difficulties in finding substitute teachers, have affected students adversely.

46. Overall curriculum management is satisfactory. Appropriate attention is paid to indicators of efficiency, including staff utilisation and lesson size. Courses that perform poorly are identified and appropriate action is generally taken to bring about improvements. Some aspects of management are underdeveloped. Departments have yet to develop comprehensive operational plans that are linked to college strategic objectives. Nevertheless, most curriculum areas are well managed. Well managed areas include hospitality and catering, humanities, beauty therapy, art and design, and health and social care. In these areas, challenging targets for retention and pass rates are set and owned by staff, and students' progress is monitored effectively. More realistic entry criteria have been set and induction arrangements have been improved. Aspects of management are weak in engineering, science and mathematics. Changes in the management of work-based learning and key skills are very recent. Outcomes for both areas remain poor.

47. Quality assurance has improved since the last inspection. Procedures have been simplified and are well understood. Teams and managers review courses systematically throughout the year. Recruitment, attendance, retention and pass rate data, external verifiers' reports and surveys are used to inform judgements. Course reviews are mostly satisfactory, but a few are insufficiently rigorous because they do not set out clear strategies for improvements or identify how good practice will be shared. In some areas, new systems have not yet had time to impact on students' achievements.

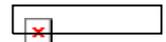
48. The system for observing lessons is well established. Teachers are observed annually and the outcomes are linked to appraisal. Teachers who receive unsatisfactory observation grades are well supported by mentors and advanced practitioners. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate, both in terms of the grades awarded to curriculum areas and the college's assessment of standards of teaching. The comprehensive staff development plan provides good opportunities for staff to develop their skills through internal and external training events. It takes into account the college's strategic objectives, development plans, lesson observation and staff appraisal outcomes. The appraisal system is satisfactory, but in 2002/03, the college did not complete all staff appraisals.

49. Promotion of equality of opportunities is satisfactory. The equality and diversity policy is up to date and incorporates a race equality action plan. The action plan has clear objectives which, if achieved, will meet the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. However, progress in some areas is slow. Actions to widen participation are good. The college works well with partners in the community. People with a wide range of learning needs are well supported. The tutorial programme is used effectively to promote equality and diversity. External visitors, including a

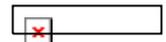
theatre company, explored equality issues with students and staff. This culminated in a 'celebration of difference' week that included displays of students' projects. The college collects student data by ethnicity, gender, disability and age, but has only just started to analyse it. The retention and pass rates for minority ethnic students are generally lower than that of other groups. Few course reviews have strategies to address this issue or how to redress some gender imbalances.

50. The college's management information system is good. Procedures to ensure timely and accurate student data are effective. Staff can access most reports on the staff intranet. Managers understand course costing. The college's projected income is calculated daily and displayed on the staff intranet. However, the management information system cannot be used for timetabling or tracking students' progress. The college has had financial difficulties in the past. These have been addressed effectively through wage controls, purchasing controls and other savings. A small revenue surplus is predicted for 2003/04. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Science and mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- high retention rates on most courses
  
- good teaching
  
- good feedback on students' assessed work
  
- appropriate action to address unsatisfactory GCSE mathematics provision.

#### **Weaknesses**

- unsatisfactory pass rates on many courses
  
- low GCSE mathematics pass rates

- o unsatisfactory aspects of quality assurance.

### **Scope of provision**

51. The college offers a wide range of level 2 and 3 courses in mathematics and science. These include GCSE mathematics, human biology and science, and AS-level and GCE A-level biology, human biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. Courses are offered mainly at the Broxbourne site. In addition, the three GCSEs, AS-level human biology and GCE A-level biology are offered at the Ware campus. The structure of the GCE A-level human biology evening course, at Ware, allows students to complete the course in one year or two years. The majority of students are full time and aged 16 to 18. GCSE mathematics for adults is offered on both sites during the day and in the evening.

### **Achievement and standards**

52. Over the past three years, retention rates have been high on the majority of courses. For example, in 2003, the retention rates for AS-level mathematics, physics, chemistry and human biology were 75%, 90%, 86% and 82% respectively. Pass rates on many courses were low in 2002. There were improvements in 2003, but many pass rates remain unsatisfactory. For example, in both 2002 and 2003, AS-level human biology, AS-level mathematics and GCE A-level biology pass rates were well below the national average. GCSE mathematics pass rates are low. However, the college enters many GCSE mathematics students for the foundation and intermediate level GCSE examination. This is a reasonable policy, but it precludes the award of the pass grades A\* to C. In 2003, out of 86 students entered for the foundation examination, 42 improved their grade. This is a satisfactory outcome.

53. Most students are interested and attentive in lessons. They have neat, well-organised notes with some good use of highlighting to show key points. They can understand and apply basic concepts. Mathematics and science students are confident in the use of technical terms. Teachers' emphasis on discussion and discovery leads to the development of good learning skills and increased confidence. Progression is good for students who complete their GCE A levels successfully, with around 70% entering university.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	338	459	312
		% retention	75	81	85
		% pass rate	15	9	27
GCSE human biology	2	No. of starts	35	35	**
		% retention	97	83	**
		% pass rate	24	34	**
GCSE science and technology	2	No. of starts	**	30	36
		% retention	**	63	81
		% pass rate	**	5	52
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	25	**	34
		% retention	88	**	79

		% pass rate	23	**	52
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	**	16	22
		% retention	**	75	86
		% pass rate	**	75	68
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	24	27	40
		% retention	96	74	75
		% pass rate	43	20	40
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	*	20	33
		% retention	*	75	85
		% pass rate	*	53	64

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

**\* course not running**

**\*\*fewer than 15 students enrolled**

### **Quality of education and training**

54. Teaching in all lessons observed by inspectors was satisfactory or better. Staff share good practice and provide stimulating activities. Most lessons are well planned. Teachers explain concepts in clear, unambiguous language. Their enthusiasm and commitment maintains students' interest. In the best lessons, a variety of activities are used to engage students and aid learning. In a chemistry lesson, students recorded molecular shapes on the board, demonstrated molecular formulae using models, and used cards to match and describe reactions of alcohols. In a physics lesson, students watched a powerpoint presentation on radioactive decay, plotted graphs, measured background radiation using a Geiger Muller tube, and used a computer simulation to examine types of radiation. Staff provide good individual support for students both in and outside of lessons. They work hard to build the confidence of students who have difficulty with mathematics. Optional, additional workshops are offered to chemistry and mathematics students. Students have useful, regular personal and group tutorials.

55. In a few lessons, the pace is slow. Time limits for activities are not set, so some students work too slowly. Students spend too long on routine tasks and opportunities for development are missed. A few teachers' questioning techniques neither involve all students nor require them to provide sufficient explanations of challenging concepts. Consequently, a few individuals dominate the discussions while the others remain passive. In these lessons, students' learning is not checked thoroughly. In many lessons, the low number of students restricts the range of teaching methods and limits opportunities to share ideas and learn from others.

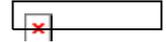
56. Assessment of students' work is rigorous and includes examination questions, practical exercises and assignments. All work is marked carefully using examination criteria and it is returned promptly to students. The best examples of marked work show target grades, actual grades and targets for improvement. Regular reviews help students to judge their own progress.

57. Teachers are qualified appropriately. They have relevant degrees and teaching qualifications. The laboratories and classrooms are well equipped and fit for teaching all the subjects offered. Technicians are well qualified and provide a high level of support. Students have good access to computers. Library stock at both sites is generally adequate, but the range of higher-level mathematics and human biology resources is limited.

### **Leadership and management**

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The team meets regularly and shares good practice. The appointment of new managers and teachers has led to improvements in teaching, but the changes have yet to raise many pass rates to satisfactory levels. In particular, the college has sought to address unsatisfactory GCSE mathematics provision by improving initial advice, tightening recruitment procedures, using more full-time teachers and appointing a new team leader. Aspects of quality assurance are unsatisfactory. A few course reviews do not focus sufficiently on students' achievements and data is not used consistently to set and monitor realistic targets for improvement.

## Engineering



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

### **Strengths**

- good progress to modern apprenticeships and employment
- good development of key skills
- good development of practical skills.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention and pass rates on major courses
- ineffective individual learning plans
- slow progress of modern apprentices
- weak assessment practice in work-based learning
- unsatisfactory management.

### **Scope of provision**

59. Full-time provision consists of performing engineering operations at NVQ levels 1 and 2, a level 1 award in vehicle maintenance and repair, and an AVCE in engineering. Part-time programmes are limited to performing engineering operations at NVQ level 2 in welding, NVQ levels 1 and 2 in motor vehicle maintenance and repair, and courses at level 2 and level 3 in CAD. There is good progression from level 1 performing engineering operations to modern apprenticeships and employment in electrical installation. The college also offers an extended degree programme in conjunction with the University of Hertfordshire. There are good links with local schools whose students study GCSE engineering, performing engineering operations and motor vehicle studies. At the time of inspection, there were 156 full-time students, 74 part-time students and 20 work-based learning trainees. Of the 250 students, 83 are adults.

### ***Achievement and standards***

60. In 2003, pass rates on two significant courses, the NVQ in engineering manufacture and the national certificate in engineering, were well below the national average. In the same year, retention rates were also low on the NVQ course. Both courses are no longer offered. In 2002, retention rates were low on the AVCE engineering course, but at the time of inspection, the retention rate of current AVCE students was satisfactory. The retention rate for part-time evening students on the CAD programme is high. Retention and pass rates of modern apprentices are low, but there are significant numbers still in learning. Progress towards achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is slow. Most students develop good practical skills and there is generally good development of students' key skills through relevant integrated assignments.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
NVQ engineering manufacture	2	No. of starts	31	21	*
		% retention	35	19	*
		% pass rate	55	75	*
Computer-aided design	2	No. of starts	31	50	31
		% retention	94	98	97
		% pass rate	72	65	77
National certificate engineering	3	No. of starts	21	24	*
		% retention	33	43	*
		% pass rate	100	89	*

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

***\*fewer than 15 students enrolled***

### ***Quality of education and training***

61. Most teaching is at least satisfactory, but the proportion of good or better teaching is below the national average for engineering in colleges inspected in 2002/03. Most students work industriously in workshop lessons and develop good practical skills. In a practical electrical engineering lesson, students worked purposefully on a variety of tasks including wiring a ring-main circuit, and bending and threading steel conduit. The teacher checked each students' progress regularly and gave appropriate help and advice. Course materials are well structured, particularly the materials for key skills teaching. Task sheets and assignments are clear.

62. In the less effective lessons, there is insufficient checking of students' understanding and an over-reliance on undirected questions which allow some students to remain passive. In one lesson, where students were working on a case study of a local company, they received too little help and

encouragement from the teacher. In general, teachers provide good support for individuals in lessons. However, individual learning plans are ineffective because they do not contain helpful and precise targets. Reviews of work-based learners' progress also do not focus sufficiently on setting and meeting appropriate targets.

63. Most classrooms are satisfactory, but two are cramped when large groups are taught. The electrical workshop contains sufficient tools and the electrical laboratory is well equipped. The computer facilities are generally satisfactory, except that they can not run current CAD industrial software and are not equipped with 19 inch monitors. The well-lit mechanical workshop contains suitable machine tools. The welding workshop is well equipped, but needs redecoration. The motor vehicle workshop is drab, but the vehicles are satisfactory. Teaching and support staff are qualified suitably.

64. Assessment in the workplace is planned poorly. In one case, this resulted in work-based learners being assessed four times on car servicing, but not assessed on any other area of work. Assessment in the workplace is often delayed. Many students receive little or no assessment in the first year; one student received no workplace assessment for 18 months. There is insufficient support for work-based assessors. Internal verification is unsatisfactory because it is planned poorly. There are no procedures to ensure the quality of assessment. Internal verifiers do not observe assessment and do not provide sufficient help for new assessors. There are well-planned assignments for AVCE students and for the assessment of key skills, but the feedback provided to AVCE students is often inadequate.

65. The college has good links with electrical contracting companies, HE institutions and schools. However, there is too little effective consultation with engineering employers. There are good progression opportunities from the performing engineering operations course into modern apprenticeships in electrical installation and into employment.

### ***Leadership and management***

66. Curriculum management is unsatisfactory. There has not been sufficiently rigorous action to address unsatisfactory students' achievements and weaknesses in the management of work-based learning. There is an over-reliance on informal communications. For example, the AVCE course team have not recorded any meetings for over six months. Staff shortages have affected students' learning adversely. New strategies to improve retention rates are beginning to be effective. Work placement opportunities for performing engineering operations students are now well managed due to the college's good links with electrical contracting companies.

### **Business studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching on many full-time courses
  
- effective use of well-designed learning materials

- good progression of students to further study.

### **Weaknesses**

- unsatisfactory pass rates on GCE A-level, GNVQ intermediate and NVQ level 2 accounting programmes
- ineffective teaching in a minority of lessons
- unsatisfactory management of accounting work-based learning.

### **Scope of provision**

67. The college offers courses in business, management, accounting, professional studies and teacher training. Full-time provision includes the GNVQ foundation and intermediate programmes in business, AVCE, AS level and GCE A2 in business studies and accounting, and a combined office technology and business course. Part-time students can take NVQ accounting qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4. Professional and management provision includes the certificate and advanced certificate in marketing, the certificate in personnel practice and the certificate in management. The college also offers HE programmes in business studies. Modern apprenticeships are offered in administration and accounting. At the time of inspection, there were approximately 200 full-time students aged 16 to 18, around 1,100 part-time adult students and 25 modern apprentices.

### **Achievement and standards**

68. In 2003, pass rates on some courses improved to above the national average. For example, all students on the certificate in personnel practice course achieved the qualification. On the NVQ level 4 accounting courses the pass rate rose from an unsatisfactory 41% in 2002, to 58% in 2003, which is above the national average. However, pass rates remain unsatisfactory on a significant number of courses and few students achieve high grades. In both 2002 and 2003, less than half the students who started the GNVQ intermediate course achieved the qualification. NVQ level 2 accounting, GCE A-level business studies and AS-level accounting pass rates were below the national average in 2003. Retention rates are satisfactory or good on most courses. The pass rate of modern apprentices is unsatisfactory, but there is an improving trend, particularly in administration. There is good progress to further study within the college, particularly on professional programmes. A significant number of full-time students progress to HE. Last year, around two-thirds of the successful AVCE students went on to university.

69. The standard of students' work is generally good. Research and analysis skills are well developed and students apply their knowledge effectively in simulated business situations. Most students are well motivated. They work effectively in groups, demonstrate confidence in answering questions and contribute well to lesson discussions. Some students are distracted easily and note-taking skills are not well developed. Poor punctuality disrupted learning in several lessons observed by inspectors.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in business studies, 2001 to 2003**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate in business	2	No. of starts	31	35	34
		% retention	77	89	91
		% pass rate	88	48	48
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	34	37	27
		% retention	97	100	93
		% pass rate	61	59	64
GCE A2 business studies	3	No. of starts	56	34	25
		% retention	84	85	92
		% pass rate	34	62	43
AVCE double award in business and precursors	3	No. of starts	64	44	58
		% retention	69	84	64
		% pass rate	93	68	78
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	44	39	42
		% retention	89	85	81
		% pass rate	69	73	53

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

### **Quality of education and training**

70. Much teaching is good or better. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with students. Effective strategies are used to encourage the development of students' research and analytical skills. A good range of stimulating teaching and learning techniques is used, which challenges and inspires students; this includes role play, short quizzes and topical case studies that develop learning and check understanding. Students in an AVCE lesson used the Internet to research the expansion of the European Union. They gathered information on economic performance and responded enthusiastically to questions on the implications of the admission of new member countries. There is good integration of key skills within lessons. In a lesson on recruitment policies involving individual presentations, students assessed their own and each other's communication skills effectively. Guidance from the teacher enabled students to provide evidence for assessment in communication skills. Effective use is made of students' experience from work on professional courses. In a minority of lessons, teaching is ineffective, insufficient use is made of students' experience and teachers talk too much. They do not engage the students or check their learning systematically.

71. Well-designed materials support learning on most courses. Good workbooks enable students to work independently and provide well-organised reference materials for revision. Students make good use of online learning materials, prepared by their teachers, when working in the college and at home. All modern apprentices are employed in appropriate positions that provide good opportunities to develop their competence for assessment.

72. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified, some have recent industrial experience and there are good professional development opportunities for staff to develop their teaching skills. Library facilities are good with an appropriate range of electronic media as well as books and journals. Computer facilities are satisfactory. Electronic teaching aids are available in a number of classrooms. However, they are not always used effectively to enhance learning.

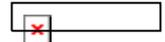
73. Assessment and monitoring of students' work are satisfactory. Work is marked and returned promptly with useful feedback, but in some cases, the feedback is insufficient to help students to

improve. Students benefit from study visits, visiting speakers and business related assignment work. Tutorial support for full-time students is good. It includes a structured group tutorial programme and regular individual tutorials to discuss progress and set targets. Individual learning plans for full-time students were introduced in 2003/04, but target setting to improve performance is insufficiently rigorous and takes too little account of initial assessment results. There is insufficient tutorial support for part-time students.

### ***Leadership and management***

74. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff work effectively in teams across the two sites. Rigorous course reviews result in actions for improvement. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. There are effective procedures to monitor and report on attendance. The management of work-based learning in accounting is unsatisfactory. There is ineffective communication with employers and some elements of the modern apprenticeship framework are slow to be arranged with students. Staffing shortages on accounting courses, in 2003/04, disrupted learning.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on most courses
  
- good internal progression routes for full-time students
  
- much good teaching of adults
  
- good support for students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory pass rates on ECDL and AVCE single award courses
  
- insufficient opportunities for work experience
  
- insufficient work-related provision

- o insufficient sharing of good teaching practice
  
- o too little use of initial assessments to inform teaching and learning practice.

**Scope of provision**

75. The college offers a good range of full-time courses, including GNVQ foundation and intermediate IT, introductory and first diplomas in computing, GCSE, national certificate, AVCE and foundation degree courses. Part-time courses include certificates for IT users at levels 1 and 2. Good progression routes exist for full-time students at all levels. At the time of inspection, there were 213 full-time and 384 part-time students. Of the full-time students, 185 were aged 16 to 18.

**Achievement and standards**

76. Students' achievements are satisfactory on the majority of full-time and part-time courses. On most courses retention rates have been, at or above, the national average for the last three years. Pass rates on several courses, for example, the GCSE IT and AVCE single award courses, were low in 2001 and 2002. Pass rates on most courses improved significantly in 2003, in several cases to well above the national average. Examples include the GNVQ foundation IT course and the AVCE double award. However, pass rates remained unsatisfactory on the AVCE single award course, the City and Guilds diploma in computer applications and in IT key skills. Pass rates on the ECDL course for adults are also unsatisfactory.

77. Adult students gain a wide range of IT skills and work with confidence. Most full-time students demonstrate good practical skills. In a web-design lesson, one student produced a very good website on body building. Some full-time advanced-level students struggle to learn programming skills. Adult students are punctual for lessons, but the lateness of some full-time students, aged 16 to 18, occasionally disrupts lessons. The standard of work in students' files is generally satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	71	*	25
		% retention	82	*	84
		% pass rate	48	*	95
GCSE IT	2	No. of starts	23	36	28
		% retention	91	72	57
		% pass rate	10	31	81
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	56	70	64
		% retention	88	86	84
		% pass rate	67	63	67
City and Guilds diploma	2	No. of starts	27	92	39

applications		% pass rate	59	81	59
ECDL	2	No. of starts	110	227	119
		% retention	89	32	93
		% pass rate	17	39	47
AVCE IT (double award)	3	No. of starts	**	75	89
		% retention	**	56	60
		% pass rate	**	67	96
AVCE IT part award	3	No. of starts	31	27	25
		% retention	68	96	80
		% pass rate	14	0	45

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

\* **data unreliable**

### **Quality of education and training**

78. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Lesson plans ensure generally that there is an appropriate sequence of activities and that learning takes place in small progressive steps. In the most effective lessons, varied activities are used to maintain students' interest. For example, in a foundation GNVQ lesson, a quiz based on the dominos game was used as a revision aid. In a GCSE lesson, the teacher demonstrated poor health and safety practice skilfully by setting up a work station with ergonomic faults and then leading an effective question and answer discussion. Much of the teaching of adults is good. Lessons are well managed and individuals' needs are met effectively.

79. In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to motivate students. The pace is slow and students are distracted easily. There were a few examples of disruptive behaviour. In several lessons, teachers did not use question and answer techniques effectively. For example, in one lesson, students shouted out their answers and made irrelevant comments. The teacher failed to control this inappropriate behaviour. Full-time students do not undertake work experience as part of their course, consequently, the curriculum is insufficiently work related. However, students on the Ware campus have recently operated a useful help desk for staff and students with IT problems.

80. The assessment of students' work is mainly satisfactory. Students know what is expected of them. Work is assessed and returned promptly, and tutors provide helpful comments on how students can improve. Pre-entry guidance and support are improving and generally ensure that students are enrolled on to the most appropriate course. Induction for full-time students is effective and valued by them. It includes an initial assessment which identifies individuals' additional support needs. However, the required support is often not provided in lessons. Tutorial support for full-time students is good.

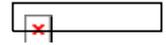
81. Teachers have good specialist knowledge, but some lack recent industrial experience. Computing resources are generally sufficient and up to industry standard. The college is developing a virtual learning environment which staff and students are using increasingly. Most rooms are laid out well for theory sessions and practical work. However, the wide variety of computer specifications used in the college affect learning adversely. In a few rooms computers are slow and this restricts the effective use of some software programmes.

### **Leadership and management**

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Computing and ICT courses are managed by three heads of department who are starting to establish common ways of working. However, there is still insufficient sharing of good practice. New quality assurance procedures are beginning to have

an impact on some courses. For example, improved management of the ECDL course has improved the quality of provision. There is inadequate use of outcomes from lesson observations by course teams to improve teaching and learning, but there are good opportunities for professional development and some useful staff development that has focused on improving practical IT workshop lessons.

## Hospitality and catering



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

### **Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates on most NVQ courses
  
- good teaching and learning on vocational courses
  
- good monitoring of students' progress
  
- good curriculum management.

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient workplace assessment for foundation modern apprentices
  
- poor range of part-time and short courses.

### **Scope of provision**

83. NVQ level 2 courses in food preparation and cooking are run for full-time, part-time and modern apprentice students. Full-time students may take an NVQ level 1 course in food preparation and cooking, an NVQ level 2 course in food service, or the AVCE qualification in hospitality and catering. There is an NVQ level 1 course in food preparation and cooking for year 10 and 11 pupils from local schools. Short courses are available in basic food hygiene, health and safety and on-licence operations. There are four part-time adult education cookery courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

84. There are high retention and pass rates on most NVQ courses. Retention rates have improved

over the past three years and, in 2003, were significantly above the national average. Retention and pass rates on the AVCE course are satisfactory. The retention and pass rate of the modern apprentices on the foundation programme improved to a satisfactory level in 2003, when half the trainees completed their programmes successfully within the planned period.

85. High standards are reached by all students. Craft students have confident kitchen work skills; they select appropriate equipment, weigh carefully and work quietly, but with some good humoured banter. They help their colleagues to complete tasks to enable the team to function effectively. Students are less confident in food service. Many are reserved and nervous with customers. AVCE students develop appropriate analytical skills in oral and written work. There are positive progression patterns. Almost all craft students and about half the AVCE students progress to employment in the hospitality industry. The remainder of the AVCE students continue to HE courses in hospitality.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality and catering, 2001 to 2003***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking)	1	No. of starts	16	**	16
		% retention	75	**	88
		% pass rate	58	**	100
NVQ catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking) 1 year	2	No. of starts	33	38	**
		% retention	88	84	**
		% pass rate	52	81	**
NVQ catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking) 2 year	2	No. of starts	*	17	18
		% retention	*	71	72
		% pass rate	*	92	92
NVQ food and drink service	2	No. of starts	29	35	**
		% retention	83	86	**
		% pass rate	83	27	**

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

\* **course not running**

\*\***fewer than 15 students enrolled**

***Quality of education and training***

86. There is good teaching and learning in vocational lessons. In practical lessons, students are questioned about their knowledge and understanding of tasks, ingredients, recipes and menus in well-managed briefing and debriefing sessions. Care is taken to include all students. In theory lessons, a good range of activities is used and visual aids, such as unusual vegetables, or a video about restaurateurs, reinforce learning successfully. The good subject knowledge of teachers results in an authoritative, but supportive presentation style and a brisk pace which maintains students' interest successfully. Explicit attention is drawn to health, safety and hygiene issues. Lessons have clear aims and objectives. In practical lessons, teachers sensitively pair up less able students with those who are more able and in some lessons they provide additional work to challenge faster students. Less able students are well supported and make good progress in practical skills. Helpful reference is made in catering lessons to assessment opportunities for key skills. For example, students are reminded of opportunities for using their recipe calculations as evidence for their key skills portfolios. This demonstrates the value of numeracy skills.

87. Foundation modern apprentices benefit from the same teacher delivering the college-based work, undertaking work-based visits and acting as programme leader. Nevertheless, staff shortages

resulted in a detrimental delay to the key skills element of their programme and there is insufficient workplace assessment.

88. The production kitchen and restaurant have been refurbished recently. They provide a good learning environment which replicates accommodation and equipment in industry. The versatile electronic point-of-sale system ensures students are familiar with a common industry application of IT. The bakery kitchen is dowdy. Its floor and wall surfaces, and extract arrangements do not meet modern specifications. The learning resource centre has a good range of texts, but few by contemporary high-profile chefs. There is good provision of open-access computers. Teachers have appropriate professional qualifications and most have teaching, assessor and verifier awards. There is a productive mix of experienced teachers and those who have been appointed recently.

89. There is sound assessment and internal verification practice on college-based courses. Students receive good feedback on their performance. On the AVCE course, written work is returned promptly, and feedback is thorough and shows students where and how to improve their grades. Students benefit from monthly individual tutorials, where their progress is monitored. They find that the review and target-setting agenda promotes their motivation and achievement.

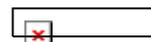
90. A satisfactory range of full-time courses offers school leavers a choice between full-time craft or supervisory courses or work-based programmes. The curriculum for full-time students includes additional vocational qualifications and a good programme of work placement. There is a basic range of part-time and short courses, but this does not extend to advanced, specialist or commissioned courses for industry, or a full programme of adult education courses.

91. Students receive good information about their courses before they enrol through taster days, open days, interviews and a pre-enrolment barbeque to allow new students to get to know each other. There is a thorough two-week induction course, which some students find too long. Students benefit from good pastoral support, but the arrangements for additional learning support do not result in all students with an identified need participating.

### ***Leadership and management***

92. Management of the curriculum area is sound. Courses are well documented and all students receive a course handbook. Regular team meetings are held and the resulting action points are generally achieved promptly. Students' progress is monitored effectively at meetings and action is taken to tackle problems. The retention, pass and attendance rates on courses are monitored effectively using the college reports service. Quality assurance procedures result in clear improvement points, but there is no schedule for ensuring actions are monitored. Statistics on performance by gender and ethnicity have become available recently, but have not yet prompted action to recruit more women to craft catering courses or to recruit more students from minority ethnic groups.

### **Sports, leisure and tourism**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- good teaching on professional sport courses

- well-designed range of courses that aid progression
- good enrichment opportunities.

### **Weaknesses**

- unsatisfactory key skills provision.

### **Scope of provision**

93. The college offers a good range of courses in sport, leisure, travel and tourism for full-time and part-time students. They include full-time NVQs, national certificates, GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses in travel and tourism, professional sport awards and qualifications in exercise to music and personal training. Sports awards include fitness instructor and national pool lifeguard qualifications. Travel awards include the advanced certificate in overseas resort operations and travel planning. At the time of the inspection, there were 195 students aged 16 to 18 and 65 adults enrolled on sports, travel and tourism courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

94. Retention rates on sport and tourism courses in 2003 were high. Pass rates for intermediate leisure and travel, and advanced travel and tourism courses were high in 2002 and 2003. Many short courses also have consistently high pass and retention rates, especially the football association coaching certificate. Retention and pass rates were satisfactory on the national diploma in leisure studies course in 2002 and 2003. Retention and pass rates on the two years of the personal trainer course have been high. Attendance and punctuality are good, partly due to a new attendance monitoring procedure.

95. Students on the new national certificate in sport develop high standards in kayaking and canoeing skills. Written coursework is generally well presented and of a high standard. Many level 3 students demonstrate good research skills. Sports students on the NVQ coaching football course develop high levels of ball control and coaching skills with young people. High levels of theoretical and personal performance knowledge are demonstrated by students on the professional sport instructor and personal trainer courses. Most students gain appropriate employment or progress to higher-level courses.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in sports, leisure and tourism, 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Football Association coaching certificate	2	No. of starts	*	82	51
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	100	94
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	36	31	24
		% retention	83	84	75
		% pass rate	77	77	83

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) personal trainer award	2	No. of starts	*	22	22
		% retention	*	100	86
		% pass rate	*	91	78
National diploma leisure studies	3	No. of starts	43	40	33
		% retention	76	68	61
		% pass rate	72	81	85
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	**	19	29
		% retention	**	95	69
		% pass rate	**	72	90

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

**\*course did not run**

### **Quality of education and training**

96. Teaching in sport and travel is good or better. Lesson planning is effective. Many lessons include a challenging variety of learning activities. Teachers use good open questioning techniques. In one lively lesson, the teacher maintained the interest of anatomy and physiology students through good discussions, group activities and individual tests to identify and explain the functions of major muscles and ligaments. Professional sports students benefit from excellent team teaching with well-prepared theory lessons supporting practical performance analysis in the fitness centre.

97. Key skills are not sufficiently planned and contextualised in most programmes. It is unsatisfactory that NVQ football students did not begin key skills until six months after the start of their programme. Consequently, they are repeating assessments in communication and application of number despite the fact that they have already demonstrated the required competences. Some schemes of work for students aged 16 to 18 do not refer to key skills, despite an expectation for them to be achieved.

98. Leisure and travel students enjoyed an extensive eight-day induction programme. It included team-building exercises and enabled students to try a number of outdoor activities including canoeing and rock climbing. The travel students undertook a guided tour of attractions in London. A good developmental assignment was completed during induction to introduce students to the style of work.

99. Learning resources are adequate. There is a suitable range of journals, but many textbooks are out of date. The college does not have a travel office, but students attend work experience in local travel agencies. The college makes good use of local sports centres and swimming pools. Arrangements are also made for sailing canoeing, kayaking, climbing and caving. Teachers are well qualified and most have recent industrial experience. Many undertake regular training and industrial experience which helps them to maintain an innovative approach to their teaching. ICT is insufficiently used in some lessons. The college intranet has good materials to support travel, tourism and sport, but it is rarely used in lessons.

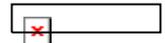
100. Assessment is sound. Students generally understand the assessment criteria. Assessments generally cover a wide range of skills and competencies. They provide the more able students with the opportunity to demonstrate higher-level skills and knowledge. Regular assessment in different working environments enables NVQ football coaching students to achieve at their own pace, and demonstrate high levels of skills. Tutors provide immediate and helpful verbal feedback in both theory and practical skills lessons. This is followed-up with constructive written comments. Students value the support they receive from teachers. Students at risk of failure are set clear targets for improvement and provided with additional support. Good support and guidance are offered to those with specific learning difficulties.

101. School and industry links are good and students benefit from well-organised work experience and other enrichment opportunities. NVQ football students develop and practice their coaching skills with pupils in local junior schools. Enrichment activities include residential courses and regular trips to local visitor attractions and leisure facilities. For example, travel and tourism students attended the world travel market and undertook a residential visit to Barcelona. Sport students visited the Twickenham rugby ground and Lords cricket ground.

### ***Leadership and management***

102. Leadership and management are good. Managers have clear responsibilities. The range of provision has recently been reviewed and appropriate changes have been made. For example, the national diploma in leisure studies has been replaced by a certificate in sport which includes units in outdoor education and sport. This provides better progression from introductory courses. Course teams meet regularly and good minutes record the action to be taken. All staff contribute to course reviews. The progression of students into employment or continued education is well monitored.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

**Contributory grade for beauty therapy is good (grade 2)**

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most NVQ programmes in 2003
  
- high retention rates
  
- good teaching and learning on beauty therapy programmes
  
- good progress by students on one-year beauty therapy programmes
  
- good beauty therapy resources.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory modern apprenticeship achievements

- poor key skills achievements
  
- weak assessment practice in hairdressing
  
- too few hairdressing clients.

**Scope of provision**

103. The college offers NVQs in hairdressing at levels 1, 2 and 3, and beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. Part-time courses include body massage, aromatherapy, reflexology, Indian head massage, cosmetic make-up and manicure. Courses are offered in the day, evening and on Saturdays. There are 317 students aged 16 to 18 and 79 adults on full-time courses. There are 15 students aged 16 to 18 and 225 adults on part-time courses. There are also 108 foundation modern apprentices in hairdressing. In addition, there are 42 students on well-established, school-link courses. These courses provide a good progression route on to full-time hairdressing courses.

**Achievement and standards**

104. Students on full-time, two-year, hairdressing NVQ level 2 programmes, have high levels of achievement. In 2003, the pass rate was 97%. Pass rates on full-time beauty therapy programmes improved significantly in 2003 and are high. Retention rates are high both on hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes. In 2003, the one-year and two-year courses in both hairdressing and beauty therapy had retention rates that were well above the national average. Retention rates are also high on part-time beauty therapy programmes. For example, in 2003, all 40 body massage students completed the programme. The achievement rate of modern apprentices is low. Over the last four years, out of 235 starters, only 31 trainees have completed the full qualification. Achievement of key skills qualifications by hairdressing and beauty therapy students are poor. In 2003, the pass rates were 18% and 10%, respectively.

105. Many students produce good written work that demonstrates depth of research and understanding of the required tasks. For example, level 3 students used IT effectively to produce well-planned exercise routines and level 2 hairdressing students produced an imaginative presentation illustrating hairstyles of celebrities. Most students make good progress in the development of their practical skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	70	96	99
		% retention	46	56	76
		% pass rate	70	83	97
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	2	No. of starts	92	75	82
		% retention	87	71	93
		% pass rate	69	79	92
NVQ beauty therapy (2	2	No. of starts	35	39	52

year)		% retention	60	67	75
		% pass rate	38	65	85
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	47	50	50
		% retention	94	90	94
		% pass rate	43	60	87
Body massage	3	No. of starts	*	32	40
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	100	100

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

**\* course did not run**

### **Quality of education and training**

106. There is much good teaching and learning on beauty therapy programmes. In both hairdressing and beauty therapy, lessons are generally well planned and all teachers set high professional standards for the students. Teachers in both areas display high levels of technical skills and subject knowledge. In general, good planning takes account of individuals' needs. Additional work is organised for the more able students who complete tasks early. A small minority of lessons are not well planned. In these lessons, objectives are not clear and the range of activities does not adequately meet the needs of different students. Lack of variety in a few lessons results too little interaction between students and their teachers. There is too little use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons.

107. Assessment practice is satisfactory. The requirements of awarding bodies are met. Students' work is marked and returned quickly, but feedback is sometimes uninformative, particularly on hairdressing programmes. For example, it may only consist of a circle around the word 'competent' on an assignment front sheet. Tracking and recording of hairdressing students' progress are also weak. The assessment of hairdressing students is hampered by an insufficiency of clients. This prevents students from timely progress from level 1 to level 2. However, all students on the 2003/04 one-year beauty therapy programme completed in two terms and progressed quickly to level 3.

108. All full-time students are assessed prior to their interview. This helps to identify the most appropriate level of programmes. Full-time students receive good tutorial support. Their progress is reviewed and targets are discussed and set. Similar support is provided for work-based learning trainees, but it is unsatisfactory that there is no appropriate tutorial support for part-time students. Opportunities for work experience are very good. Every student has either a two-week block of work experience or one day a week throughout their course. The students are well supported throughout their work experience and are regularly visited by college staff.

109. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and hold appropriate professional qualifications, but the proportion of part-time lecturers is too high. The six well-equipped beauty salons all reflect a realistic working environment. Three of the five hair salons are good or satisfactory, but two are in need of refurbishment. The two reception areas both provide good access for students with restricted mobility.

### **Leadership and management**

110. Management of hairdressing and beauty therapy is satisfactory. There are clear lines of communication, and team and departmental meetings are held regularly. However, the management of the assessment of level 1 full-time hairdressing students and work-based learners is unsatisfactory. Although the new management information system is beginning to be used to monitor progress and achievements, staff are not yet fully proficient at using management information when

they set targets for retention and pass rates.

## Health and social care



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

**The contributory grade for NVQs in care and early years education provided by the Ware Assessment Centre is good (grade 2)**

### **Strengths**

- high pass and retention rates on NVQ courses
  
- high pass rates on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma, certificate in childcare and national diploma in public services courses
  
- very good teaching, assessment and management of NVQ at the Ware Assessment Centre.

### **Weaknesses**

- unsatisfactory retention rates on several courses
  
- poor attendance on full-time courses
  
- unsatisfactory teaching in a significant minority of lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

111. The college offers full-time courses in care, childcare, early years education, and public services. There are around 280 full-time students aged 16 to 18 on these courses. There are progression opportunities from foundation level programmes through to national diplomas and an AVCE course. Students can progress to HE certificates and a foundation degree. The college's Ware Assessment Centre has enrolled over 1,000 part-time adult students on NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 in care, playwork and early years care and education. The centre offers a good range of programmes that are responsive to the needs of students and local employers. The Centre has good links with, for example, Hertfordshire Social Services, Enfield Borough Council, adult care services

and a wide range of care agencies. The centre's students are primarily assessed at their workplaces, but they also attend college. The college also offers short courses in first aid, health and safety and counselling.

### **Achievement and standards**

112. Pass rates on NVQ courses are very high. They are significantly and consistently above national averages. Pass rates on many full-time courses are high. For example, in 2003, the first and national diplomas in public services, respectively, had 94% and 100% pass rates. The number of students achieving high grades on CACHE diploma in childcare and education is satisfactory at around the national average. The number of students achieving high grades on other full-time courses is below the national average. Retention rates on NVQ courses are very high, however, in 2003, they were unsatisfactory on the full-time national diplomas in public services and early years education. The attendance rate on full-time courses observed by inspectors was low at 69%.

113. In most lessons, students demonstrate appropriate skills and progress for the stage of their course. In a good lesson on the impact of poverty on society, students presented well-argued critical evaluations of established theories. In a few lessons, students' attainment is unsatisfactory. For example, in one lesson, students were unable to effectively link the professional standards and values required for early years' staff to their workplace experience.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	**	33	83
		% retention	**	67	79
		% pass rate	**	73	80
NVQ early years care and education	2	No. of starts	**	45	56
		% retention	**	62	68
		% pass rate	**	82	87
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	**	29	39
		% retention	**	97	72
		% pass rate	**	71	100
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	19	84	62
		% retention	89	80	77
		% pass rate	76	72	92
National diploma in early years education	3	No. of starts	*	25	20
		% retention	*	76	55
		% pass rate	*	89	91

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

**\*course not running**

**\*\*fewer than 15 students enrolled**

### **Quality of education and training**

114. Teaching on the NVQ courses provided by the Ware Assessment Centre is very good. It effectively develops students' academic and occupational skills. Teachers clearly explain the links

between theory and work experience. Most teaching of full-time students is well planned and there is effective use of good teaching and learning resources to develop students' skills and knowledge. In a lesson on the impact of diversity and equal opportunities on the public services, the teacher used a good range of strategies to ensure that students understood how the issues and policies related to the conduct of public service professionals. Key skills teachers generally link their teaching to the vocational area, but the teaching materials are uninspiring. Teaching is unsatisfactory in a significant minority of lessons. In these lessons, students are easily distracted and they do not listen to the teacher or to each another. Some teaching does not motivate students and some of the planned activities are inappropriate for the level of the programme and the students' ages. The links between theory and practice are not clearly explained and students are unsure about the purpose of some activities.

115. All full-time students undertake work experience. Management of work experience is good. A placement tutor consults each student about placements that match their learning goals. There are regular visits to students on work experience and the resulting reports form part of the personal tutor's records of that individual's progress. There is good academic and personal support for full-time and part-time students.

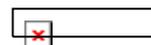
116. There is very good assessment practice on NVQ programmes. Clear and robust systems are used to monitor students' progress. Assessment plans are used effectively to inform individuals' programmes. Internal verification systems for all courses ensure that all forms of assessment and recording are appropriate for students and their courses. Students' work is graded fairly and in accordance with awarding body requirements, but teachers do not always correct spelling and English. Some feedback on assignments does not explain how the work could have been improved. In general, monitoring systems are used effectively to inform full-time students of their progress.

117. Full-time staff are well qualified and have good opportunities to update their skills. Assessors in the Ware Assessment Centre are rigorously selected and their professional development is carefully tracked to ensure that their occupational skills are updated in line with awarding body requirements. A well-resourced study support centre for full-time and part-time students helps them to develop good research skills and the ability to study without supervision. Full-time courses have their own base rooms, with lively displays of students' work. The teaching room in the Ware Assessment Centre is too small for the number of people using it.

### ***Leadership and management***

118. Leadership and management are good. On full-time courses self-assessment incorporates effective target setting. Progress towards these targets is monitored regularly. This has contributed to improved pass rates. Management of the Ware Assessment Centre is good. Very good quality assurance systems support the large range of provision and maintain consistent standards in all aspects of training and assessment across the range of training and assessment sites.

### **Visual and performing arts**



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

**Contributory grade for art and design is good (grade 2)**

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most advanced level courses

- high standards of practical work
- good teaching which develops students' skills, knowledge and confidence
- innovative development of students' key skills.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on AVCE media and declining retention rates on AS-level media studies
- poor management of group work in a minority of lessons
- insufficient formative assessment.

### ***Scope of provision***

119. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time vocational courses in media, art and design and performing arts. The art and design provision provides good progression opportunities with courses at levels 1 to 4. The art and design courses include foundation GNVQ, first diploma, AVCE, a national diploma course with options in fine art, three-dimensional design and graphics, a diploma in foundation studies and an access to HE course. There is a satisfactory range of art, design and craft courses for adults. In media and performing arts, there are two national diploma programmes offering options in acting, dance, musical theatre, media, multimedia and music technology. At the time of the inspection, there were 457 students' aged 16 to 18 and 98 adults enrolled on full-time courses. There were over 2,300 adults studying part time.

### ***Achievement and standards***

120. Pass rates on most advanced level courses were high in 2002 and 2003. On the national diplomas in design and performing arts and diploma in foundation studies, both pass and retention rates were high. There is good progression into HE from level 3 courses. In 2003, 84% of students who completed level 3 courses progressed into HE. Similarly, over 90% of students completing foundation courses progressed on to intermediate courses. In 2003, there were low retention rates on many courses. For example, the rates of 57% and 55%, respectively, on the AVCE courses in media and design were unsatisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are good.

121. There are high standards of practical work across all courses. Students are well prepared for their lessons. Sketchbooks are good, with lively and investigative observation drawing from natural forms. Students can use colour, and express their ideas using collage, painting and three-dimensional model making. Graphics and media students capably use industry-standard software. Music students can read sheet music and play major and minor scales. They understand chord

sequences and how to practise a performance piece. This is evidence of very good progress, since most students lacked keyboard skills and the ability to read music at the start of the course. Dance students learn how to warm up and maintain body flexibility and acting students develop good role-play and rehearsal skills.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	40	38	19
		% retention	90	84	95
		% pass rate	83	94	78
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	16	36	26
		% retention	94	89	77
		% pass rate	80	75	80
AVCE media communication and production	3	No. of starts	25	26	37
		% retention	68	50	51
		% pass rate	65	85	89
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	138	106	111
		% retention	79	81	75
		% pass rate	86	92	99
National diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	41	34	32
		% retention	56	59	75
		% pass rate	91	95	100
Diploma in foundation studies (art and design)	3	No. of starts	38	29	30
		% retention	92	93	100
		% pass rate	97	97	100

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

***Quality of education and training***

122. Well structured and purposeful teaching in art and design, music technology and acting develops students' skills, knowledge and confidence. Lesson plans are detailed with clear learning outcomes. Generally, activities are planned to take account of individuals' needs and learning styles. At the start of each lesson, teachers review students' progress and set personal targets for that lesson. Students are encouraged to learn from each other. They acquire good critical skills and can talk about their work and the work of other students. Key skills development is good. Opportunities to develop key skills are identified on project briefs. AVCE art and design students review their own progress in key skills at various assessment points. The teacher responsible for the national diploma in fine art has successfully integrated key skills communication with art history. In a minority of lessons, there is poor management of group work. Tasks are not clear, equipment is not ready for demonstrations and teachers do not ensure that all students are involved in the activity.

123. Resources are good. Staff are well qualified and many are current practitioners. The fashion and fine art studios are spacious and well lit. Media, three-dimensional design and graphic design students have good studio space with readily accessible computers. Performing arts facilities are adequate. There is no coherence to the creative studies space. The use of disparate locations impedes the spread of good practice. The noise from some performing arts and music lessons can disturb nearby lessons, consequently, the range of activities can sometimes be restricted.

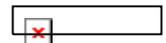
124. Assessment is satisfactory. There is good verbal assessment and feedback in lessons and effective self-assessment and peer-assessment. In one ceramics lesson, students working in pairs described their work to each other, graded it against the assessment criteria and confidently presented their judgements to the group. Judgements were accurate and the resulting discussions helped students to improve their work. Summative assessment of students' projects is rigorous and provides good written feedback. There is insufficient formative assessment. Written, research and design work, is inadequately monitored prior to the final assessment. Often written work is copied from a secondary source. In media, there is an overemphasis on Internet research. Graphics students do not always link experimental work to their finished designs.

125. There are a few links with employers, but there is not a consistent approach to work experience. The college careers advisor and vocational staff provide good guidance for students who want to progress to employment or HE. Students have opportunities to go on trips. For example, they have been to the Tate, Tate Modern and National Galleries, and the Henry Moore Sculpture Park.

### ***Leadership and management***

126. Leadership and management are good. Managers are focused on improving teaching and learning. The internal lesson observation system and support from advanced practitioners has created opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching skills. Students have benefited from the well-structured lesson plans, with clear, short-term goals. The programme managers and course teams work well together and produce evaluative course reviews that contribute to the department's self-assessment report and development plan.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates
  
- much stimulating teaching well matched to individual students' needs
  
- effective tutorial support for students
  
- good initial assessment and careers guidance for adult students
  
- successful action to address weaknesses.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on many courses
  
- inadequately planned learning activities in a few lessons
  
- poor development of students' key skills and study skills for students aged 16 to 18
  
- insufficient use of essay writing for assessment purposes on AS-level and GCE A-level courses
  
- ineffective target setting at programme level.

### **Scope of provision**

127. The college provides GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level humanities courses, taken mostly by full-time students aged 16 to 18. They account for approximately 230 enrolments. The popular subjects are psychology, sociology and law. The provision for adult students caters well for those who wish to return to learning, and for those who have retired from work. An access to HE course includes a broad range of humanities subjects. There are about 80 full-time and part-time access students. Enrolments on many humanities courses declined in 2003/04, partly due to the more rigorous application of entry criteria.

### **Achievement and standards**

128. Standards of attainment are satisfactory or better. Sociology and psychology students show in their oral and written work a clear understanding of specialist concepts and theories. Access students participate readily in discussion and develop good powers of oral communication. The best of their written work displays fluent use of abstract language combined with high levels of critical analysis. Whilst many students aged 16 to 18 make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of their subjects, a significant minority has difficulty in answering examination questions relevantly and in sufficient detail. Several psychology students struggled with the statistical analysis involved in correlation because of insufficient mathematical knowledge.

129. Retention rates are consistently high on most courses. In 2003, pass rates in AS-level psychology and AS-level and GCE A-level sociology matched national averages. Elsewhere, they remained unsatisfactory. At AS level and GCE A level, the percentage of students gaining high grades is low. Students' achievements at GCSE level are poor. In 2003, a high proportion of students who began the one-year, day-time access course gained the qualification. In contrast, pass rates for access students on the evening course are low. On completing their courses, most students progress to further study or employment.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 2001 to 2003**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	34	36	44
		% retention	82	89	91
		% pass rate	57	59	75
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	16	43	39
		% retention	75	93	87
		% pass rate	50	30	53
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	15	30	15
		% retention	100	83	80
		% pass rate	73	28	50
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	*	16	45
		% retention	*	100	93
		% pass rate	*	56	76
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	*	39	48
		% retention	*	95	83
		% pass rate	*	38	63
Access to HE 1 year	3	No. of starts	**	27	18
		% retention	**	81	89
		% pass rate	**	64	93

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

**\*course not running**

### **Quality of education and training**

130. Much teaching is good or better and none is less than satisfactory. The best lessons are notable for the use of imaginative learning activities, carefully planned to meet students' differing abilities and preferred learning styles. In a sociology lesson, students successfully reinforced their understanding of gender and identity by a combination of reading, playing a musical game and writing brief answers to questions. Most teachers provide effective support to individual students whilst they are working on their own in class or seeking help outside of lessons. Although teaching methods are intended to encourage students' involvement, in a few instances, activities are not planned carefully enough or executed to achieve their purpose. Teachers give insufficient attention to the development of students' key skills and study skills to assist their progress at AS level and GCE A level.

131. Staff are suitably qualified and most have teaching qualifications. Part-time staff are provided with good support. Staff development has been effective in improving teaching. Teachers across different subjects are beginning to share good practice, resources and common approaches. Staff training in the use of IT equipment has stimulated an interest in the development of electronic learning materials. The two base rooms for sociology and psychology have a range of specialist materials, but are inaccessible to wheelchair users. Intrusive noise seriously disrupts concentration in one suite of rooms. Whilst the temporary accommodation is well maintained it is hot and poorly resourced. Students have ready access to computers. Books unavailable in the college library are quickly obtained on loan.

132. On AS-level and GCE A-level courses, teachers do not provide students with schedules of assessment to help them plan their work. Assignments are sometimes repetitive or undemanding.

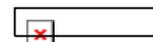
Students have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills in writing essays. Marking is satisfactory. A few teachers provide specific recommendations to help students improve their work. The arrangements to monitor and review the progress of individual students are generally effective, but target setting is more effective on access courses than on AS-level and GCE A-level courses

133. Adult students receive good guidance to help them make well-informed decisions about courses and future career plans. On the access course, students start by sampling different subjects before confirming their choices. Good use is made of the college careers service by students of all ages. Tutors provide wide-ranging and effective support to individual students. Access tutors offer useful assistance to students in managing their workload. Students aged 16 to 18 are encouraged, in frequent meetings with their tutors, to keep their performance under review. Group tutorials are more productive for adult students than for students aged 16 to 18.

### ***Leadership and management***

134. Leadership and management are good. Recently appointed managers have established purposeful teams and improved the co-ordination of provision. Communication is good at all levels. Managers provide a clear sense of direction. A detailed review of courses, involving all staff, has identified weaknesses which are being systematically addressed. Courses for adult students have been improved by better timetabling, the integration of IT, or a reduction in the required number of units necessary for the award of the qualification. For students aged 16 to 18 on AS-level and GCE A-level courses, entry requirements have been raised. Students now receive more appropriate guidance to choose the course that is right for them. Previously unreliable data have impeded the analysis of students' achievements. Targets set for enrolments in 2003/04 were widely missed on several courses. As a result, there are very small group sizes in several GCE A-level subjects, and fewer groups than expected on several adult courses. Teachers' understanding of retention and pass rate targets at GCSE, AS level and GCE A level is poor.

### **Foundation courses**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching and learning
  
- innovative development of entry level curriculum
  
- well-managed provision.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- lack of opportunities for accredited achievements

- inadequate use of individual learning plans to set targets and inform lesson plans
  
- insufficient progression to other college courses.

### ***Scope of provision***

135. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The age profile covers school-link pupils, young adults and adults. There are 10 part-time students aged 16 to 18 on a school-link programme and 45 young people on the E2E programme. Over 250 pre-entry level, full-time students aged over 19 study the certificate in personal development at milestones 1 to 3. There are over 300 pre-entry, level part-time adult students on the modular certificate in personal development at milestones 1 to 3. In addition, college certificates and national qualifications are taken in 'skills for working life'. Over 340 adults participate in a variety of courses delivered at 6 outreach community sites and 40 students with mental health problems are on a community programme. Students have opportunities to progress within the structure of foundation programmes, but few students progress to other college vocational courses, supported employment or employment.

### ***Achievement and standards***

136. The achievements of students with learning difficulties cannot be reliably judged by the college or by inspectors, since the college has not offered any external accreditation to these students. This unsatisfactory position has been changed for students completing in 2004. College practice has been to judge achievement against students' individual learning goals. College records show that most students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are attaining their short-term, informal, learning aims. These aims include communication skills, team-building skills and knowledge related to working life. Some students on the E2E programme make good progress and go on to employment or further college courses.

137. Learning in practical lessons is good. Students learn skills that are relevant to employment. For example, students practising coppicing and woodwork are training in realistic work environments, gaining work-related skills and completing high-quality, finished products, for example, sturdy tables and benches for their new accommodation. Students' personal skills, social skills and confidence are also developed effectively.

### ***Quality of education and training***

138. Teaching and learning are very good. The proportion of good or better lessons is well above the national average of the curriculum area. The good teaching enables students to build on existing communication and social skills and develop new practical skills. These include, for example, familiarity with a range of equipment and tools, the ability to use practical numeracy skills for measurement and an understanding of money. In a vibrant communications lesson, the teacher effectively used art as a basis for developing students' speaking and listening skills. In this lesson, a wide range of materials and activities were used to engage the students and their understanding was carefully checked.

139. Most practical lessons take place in real working environments. Particularly good learning opportunities were provided for horticulture students who were coppicing trees in a local conservation woodland. 'Skills for working life' students practise their catering and communication skills by cooking and serving lunch at a community centre for the elderly. Another group of students developed a short piece of drama and movement to entertain guests at the college's diversity competition, winning a top prize. There is innovative integration of literacy and numeracy on pre-

entry and entry level courses. Many practical activities, such as cooking, craft work and horticulture, provide evidence which can be used to show progress with literacy and numeracy. In a few lessons where there is too little focus on practical activities, the pace is slow and students become bored.

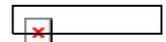
140. Individual and group tutorials are mostly used effectively to involve individuals in their own development through discussion of their learning plans. Students feel that their views are valued and taken into account. However, learning opportunities are often missed because individuals' plans do not set out in sufficient detail the small educational steps necessary for students to achieve their goals. Some teachers do not adequately use the individual learning plans to inform their lesson plans. In addition, the results of initial assessment are not used consistently to inform teaching.

141. Staff are well qualified and have attended relevant training in, for example, deaf awareness and sign language. There are inadequate specialist resources such as computers in base rooms, specialist software and suitable library books. There are inadequate resources to meet the needs of students with some complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students are encouraged to use the students' centre at Broxbourne and they enjoy the experience. At the time of inspection, new buildings were being constructed for foundation programmes at the Ware campus.

### ***Leadership and management***

142. Management has been good since the department was re-organised in 2003 and new staff were appointed to key posts. There are daily informal meetings and weekly team managers meetings. All staff participated in the development of the self-assessment report, which recognised most of the area's strengths and weaknesses. Staff appraisal has informed the staff development needs of the curriculum area. Teaching observations are used effectively as part of the appraisal system. There are strong links with external agencies, including social services, community action groups and local special schools.

### **Literacy and numeracy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates
  
- good planning of individual learning in basic skills lessons
  
- effective use of IT in literacy lessons
  
- good links with industry

basic skills lessons.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor pass rates in key skills application of number and communications
  
- infrequent reviews of student progress
  
- insufficient planning to meet individuals' needs in discrete key skills provision
  
- insufficient co-ordination of basic skills and key skills teaching.

### **Scope of provision**

143. The provision includes discrete courses in adult literacy and numeracy, ESOL, the key skills of communication and application of number at levels 1 and 2, and basic skills support for students following other programmes. There are 423 part-time students enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses for adults. These courses are taught on both college sites and at a number of industrial and community locations. There are 196 part-time students on ESOL courses which range from beginners to advanced level. All full-time students study key skills. Additionally, 90 students of all ages receive literacy and numeracy support where they have specific needs which cannot be met within their main programme.

### **Achievement and standards**

144. The achievement of students is satisfactory. Retention rates are high. Average retention rates on courses for adults were 93% in 2003 and 85% on the key skills courses. In 2003, students receiving additional literacy and numeracy support had a retention rate 3% above the college average and a pass 4% above the college average. Pass rates for adult students are at the national average. Pass rates on key skills courses are poor. In 2003, the overall pass rate on level 1 communications and application of number courses was 12%, which is 19% below the national average. At level 2, the pass rate was 18%, which is 9% below the national average.

145. The standard of work on adult programmes is good. Students display well-developed listening and speaking skills. In a creative writing lesson, a group of students spoke clearly and effectively about how adjectives had been used to create a tension-packed scene in an extract from a crime thriller. They then wrote their own imaginative sentences using the skills they had learned. The standard of work in discrete key skills lessons is mostly satisfactory. In the best examples, assignments are accurate and well presented, but in a small minority of cases insufficient care had been taken and work was disordered and untidy.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy and numeracy, 2001 to 2003**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
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Basic literacy certificate	Entry	No. of starts	*	89	195
		% retention	*	91	85
		% pass rate	*	79	81
Basic ESOL certificate	Entry	No. of starts	*	115	116
		% retention	*	68	97
		% pass rate	*	81	77
Certificate of English language skills	Entry	No. of starts	**	42	63
		% retention	**	95	100
		% pass rate	**	77	87

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

**\* course not running**

### **Quality of education and training**

146. The majority of lessons is were good or better. In lessons for adults, teachers encourage students well and are very supportive in their approach. This gives students the confidence to develop new skills. Teachers use question and answer techniques sensitively to ensure the active involvement of all students in lessons. There is good planning of individual learning in basic skills lessons. Each student has a lesson plan specific to them which defines learning goals and activities. In literacy lessons, teachers effectively use ICT to support learning. In key skills lessons, initial assessment is not used sufficiently to inform the planning of teaching and learning. For example, in one lesson where the aim was to prepare students for an external examination, all students took a level 2 mock paper, even though two students in the group had been entered at level 1. Adult students do not have formal reviews of progress on a sufficiently regular basis to enable the setting of short-term, achievable targets.

147. Resources are satisfactory. There are good IT resources to support learning in adult literacy and numeracy lessons. Accommodation is good for adult lessons and satisfactory for key skills lessons. Staff teaching adults are experienced and well qualified. Some key skills teachers lack the necessary experience and qualifications to teach application of number and communications at level 1.

148. There is good initial assessment. Students who are referred to the additional support team have their progress monitored regularly. Teachers of adult students use the results of initial assessment effectively to plan teaching and learning. Students' work is marked accurately, although there is insufficient written feedback on some assessed work. Internal verification of key skills work is good. Assessment of progress of key skills students is not sufficiently detailed. Key skills students do not have individual learning plans specific to key skills.

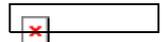
149. There are good links with local industry with on-site classes in major distribution centres. At one centre, 14 different groups of students meet each week to coincide either with the end, or beginning, of shifts. ESOL lessons are held at Stansted Airport to meet the needs of the local workforce. There is growing provision at other workplaces and in the wider community. For example, 51 students have enrolled on recently introduced family literacy courses.

150. There is good individual support for students attending basic skills and ESOL lessons. One student said that he had only continued with his studies because of the encouragement he had received. Previously shy, he is now sufficiently confident to speak with his children's teachers. There has been a threefold increase of students being supported in the last year. However, during the current year, there have been some unsatisfactory delays in this support being put in place.

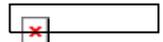
### **Leadership and management**

151. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Poor key skills achievement was recognised in the self-assessment report and action was taken to seek to raise pass rates. There is good management of additional learning support with thorough and effective monitoring of the students' experience. There is insufficient co-ordination of the teaching of basic skills and the teaching of key skills at levels 1 and 2. There is little sharing of good practice and no shared development of learning materials. There has been insufficient joint staff development. Attendance, retention and pass rate targets for basic skills and ESOL courses are not sufficiently challenging.

### **Part D: College data**



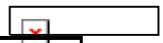
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



<b>Level</b>	<b>16-18 %</b>	<b>19+ %</b>
<b>1</b>	35	65
<b>2</b>	40	16
<b>3</b>	22	9
<b>4/5</b>	0	1
<b>Other</b>	3	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in spring 2004*

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2003/2004**



<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>16-18 No.</b>	<b>19+ No.</b>	<b>Total Enrolments (%)</b>
Science and mathematics	798	405	7
Land-based provision	1	141	1
Construction	128	455	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	159	165	2
Business administration, management and professional	260	704	5
Information and communication technology	879	1,035	11

Retailing, customer service and transportation	1	119	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	429	1,525	11
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	325	360	4
Health, social care and public services	281	1,218	8
Visual and performing arts and media	504	1,138	9
Humanities	342	230	3
English, languages and communication	1,143	1,193	13
Foundation programmes	1,768	1,798	20
Other/unknown	411	187	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,429</b>	<b>10,673</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2004

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	777	754	622	1,702
	Retention rate %	81	78	84	85	78	92
	National average %	75	76	*	69	70	*
	Pass rate %	58	57	74	56	57	84
	National average %	69	71	*	68	71	*
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,695	2,159	1,432	1,679	1,676	1,428
	Retention rate %	78	80	81	81	68	75
	National average %	70	72	*	68	68	*
	Pass rate %	56	48	76	54	57	69
	National average %	69	71	*	68	72	*
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,568	1,596	1,476	1,308	1,194	1,272
	Retention rate %	76	82	76	76	81	70
	National average %	71	77	*	68	70	*
	Pass rate %	63	62	76	58	63	73

	National average %	77	79	*	69	72	*
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*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 2001 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002. National average figures are not yet available for 2003.*

*2. College rates for 2000/2001 to 2001/2002: college data for 2002/2003.*

*\*data unavailable*

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